

"WHO ME? EVADING RESPONSIBILITY"

GOD'S PROMISE

**"As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the Lord cut him off
from the tents of Jacob"**

Malachi 2:12

MY PROMISE

"I will guard my spirit and I will be faithful."

Bible Reading

Malachi 2

Something extraordinary is happening in our culture, in our politics, and in the scope of entertainment and in the church. The revelations of improper acts especially in what has to do with the opposite sex are destroying the careers and the reputations of personalities who for years have been admired because of their public presence. It has come to a Point that there does not exist any tolerance on the part of society for those who are accused of improper acts. They are immediately punished, ridiculed, and even fired from their jobs. There is no clemency.

Does this surprise you? The truth is that it does not. The reason is simple. Even though the culture is properly not Christian and without Biblical values, human beings can still discern between those things that

are bad and those that are good.

That is the topic of chapter 2 of Malachi. In this chapter, the people responsible for representing the people in their moral behavior are called to give an account. Those were the priests. The priests were people who offered public service to God before the people. Today, you and I are the "real priests" according to 1 Peter 2. We are responsible to guide others to live healthy and holy lives before God.

THE PROBLEM BEGIN IN THE HEART vv 1-2 - They had not decided with their whole heart

On the outside, anybody can appear to be something, but on the inside, reality can be something totally different. On the outside things can be "correctly" done. On the inside, the intentions can be mistaken, even to being offensive to God. That is why the first thing that God wants to correct in us is our heart. Twice, in these verses, God tells them to decide. The first is a warning (v. 2a) "if you do not decide with all of your heart." The second is an affirmation, "because you have not decided with all of your heart." The first has to do with the opportunity of changing your heart. The second has to do with the consequences of not having changed your heart. This is the time to change your heart before suffering the consequences.

HAVING STRAYED FROM THE WAY - vv. 8-9 - They had strayed from the way.

When we stray from the way, it is a sign that we have lost our way. When we take shortcuts or "alternate" routes, it may be beneficial to us in the natural, but in the spiritual, there are things that cannot be done. For example, Bible meditation cannot be strayed from. Seeking God in prayer cannot be strayed from. Straying from congregating with other believers is not acceptable. We must continue to separate from evil; etc.

When we stray from the way, then the generation who is being raised after us will "trip" (verse 8). The problem then begins to magnify. When we think that we are "fine" we will affect others. Not only that but we also become "accomplices" of their errors because God has said that we should "guard our way." (v. 9b) The results for having taken this detour is obvious. We make "acceptances of people." (v. 9c). What does this mean? Because we do not know the Bible well, we begin to give counsel of things that seem to be "good" and "healthy" but they really are harmful and offensive. Let us mention an example for the parents: The Bible says, "Be not unequally yoked with an unbeliever; because what fellowship does the unrighteous have to do with the unrighteous? What fellowship does the light have with darkness? How does Christ have fellowship with Baal? Or what part does the believer have with the unbeliever? (2 Corinthians 6:14-15) However, many justify the dating relationship of their children or their own personal relationships with people who are not Christians as good. They argue that there is nothing wrong with the relationship. Malachi has another way of saying it, "in the law (the Word of God) we make acceptances to people." (verse 9). In other words, even though the Bible says says "No" I think that it is "Yes". How sad.

When we have already strayed from the way, we can say, do, and justify many things that God calls "corrupt," "vile", and "lowly." (see verses 8-9) Be careful!

LIVES THAT ARE MORALLY UNFAITHFUL - (vv. 10-16) - An unfaithful culture had been created

It is very painful when someone has abandons his or her moral values. God will always confront us when our loyalty towards Him is in play. So much so as the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament as Jesus in the New Testament, it is stated that we cannot have other gods that take the place of God. The way to understand this is to say "you cannot be faithful to two things" instead of God. One reason is that we are going to love one and hate the other or vice versa. This conflict causes that we fall into a moral unfaithfulness.

The warning is direct, "Guard your spirit, and do not be unfaithful with the woman of your youth." (verse 15) This symbolism speaks of the relationship that God had with His children in the beginning but that with time had become distant. This made the children to, instead of seeking God; they looked for moral direction in other places. Worse still, the accepted the moral values that were contrary to what God had given them. Do not fall into that trap. As "healthy" as it may seem, if it is contrary to God's plan, it is not His.

IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS CONFRONTATION, GOD GIVES US EXAMPLES OF RESPONSIBILITY

AND VIRTUE vv. 4-6 - The loyalty of the Levites.

God always tells us that we can live holy lives. In the middle of this chapter, there is an example of how we can avoid having a hard heart, or walking on a stray path, or living a mistaken moral life. Levi's example. Levi was the family that God designated to guard the sacred things of God. Malachi reminds us that their right attitude could have created "life and peace." (v.5a)

Which are the qualities that they had?

Very simple.

Here they are:

- a. The Fear of God (v.5c)**
- b. Being humble before God (v.5d)**
- c. Keep the law of truth in your mouth (v.6a)**
- d. Not to speak iniquities (v.6b)**
- e. Walk in peace and justice (v.6c)**
- f. Help and keep other from iniquities (v.6d)**

If you notice, this list is simple but important. You do not want for the Promise of this lesson be fulfilled in your life. You do not want to be "cut off". What you want is to guard your spirit so that God will give your peace and life. In order to do that, we must take responsibility of our

lives and correct the things that need correcting.