

Week 10 – Malachi

Connect: choose 1 *Connect* question and discuss for 5-7 minutes.

- How long have you had to wait for something promised to you? What was that like?
- Describe a time when you found someone was different than how you first perceived them.

Read these passages aloud:

Malachi 3:1-6 – The Coming Messenger of the LORD

Malachi 4:1-5 – The Great Day of the LORD

Engage the text as a group:

1. What do you **observe** in the text?
 - How is the messenger of the Lord described?
 - What was it that the people were longing for?
 - What will the LORD be judging when the LORD comes?
 - What will the day of restoration be like?
2. What **questions** arise for you from the text?
 - What were the things prompting Judah’s listless faith?
 - What were the people looking for from God that they didn’t feel they were getting?

Why does Malachi matter?

Malachi matters because he was a prophet calling Judah to remember again who God is. The people’s expectation that God would make them who they once were—a significant and prominent nation in the midst of their neighbors, and that the LORD’s presence would dwell in their midst in the temple—were not fulfilled. When the people’s expectations were not fulfilled as they waited for God to show up in the ways they expected, they began to grow doubtful, distrust God’s faithfulness and God’s covenant love.

Malachi comes as a prophet to remind the people of Judah who God is and who they are as God’s people, and to tell them that God would indeed come, but not on their terms or in the ways they demand or expect.

How do we tend to do that? In what ways do we expect God to conform to our expectations and show up in the ways we demand or want or think we need? Malachi’s words are also for us today to remind us of the deep and immense covenant love of God, God’s faithfulness, and the promise of God’s restoration in Christ; and that God has made the church God’s own, so God is faithful to God’s people.

Put this bible story in one sentence:

“In this story, God _____.”

How does Malachi point us to Jesus?

Malachi points us to Jesus in his very words—he tells the people of Judah of a coming Great King. We get to turn the page in our Bibles after the book of Malachi ends and read about the coming of this great king, of Jesus in the book of Matthew. But for the people of Judah back in the day, they had 400 years, *four centuries* they had to wait—before this word was fulfilled. That means people and generations lived and died and passed on this word of promise and hope that God would come to them to the next and the next generation, all the while waiting for God to meet them in this great King. Imagine the waiting, and not knowing when it's going to end. But the coming king is fulfilled in Jesus, and his words about the messenger of the Lord are fulfilled in John the Baptist. Turn the page. Read Matthew; hear of the great king.

So What Now?

- When has someone not met your expectations?
- When has God not met your expectations?
- What situation in life has made you need to remember who God is?
- When have you felt restless in your faith? What was helpful in pointing you back to God? What wasn't?
- What is something you are waiting for right now? What is helping you wait well?
- How will we look for God differently now that we know this story?

Closing of Bible Study:

- What is something different or new that you learned or experienced about God through this study?
- What is something you learned or experienced about the Old Testament through this 10-week study?

Please note the responses, and send a quick summary to pastorjoella@calvin.edu. This feedback is helpful for our evaluation process.

Close in prayer:

Great king Jesus, thank you for your presence with and among your people 2000 years ago; thank you for your presence with us today through your Holy Spirit. Thank you, Father God, for speaking to your people through your servant Malachi. Your covenant love for us that persists is deep and wide and never-ending, and we are humbled and give you thanks. Thank you for making us your people. Send us out as the people of God to bear witness to our great King who is making all things new. Give us the courage and humility and community we need to do this. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.