
LOVING JESUS, LOVING PEOPLE, PLOWING A COUNTER-CULTURE

TEXT: Malachi 1:6–14

MAIN IDEA: True worshipers give God their first and best.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The **Student Ministry Fall Fest** will be held on **October 29** at our Totowa campus. We've got games, we've got music, and most importantly ... we've got the gospel. No need to register; if you're a student in middle or high school, just show up!
- Our **Student Ministry's Winter Retreat** is happening **February 20–22**. We'll be rocking out at High Point Bible Camp in Pennsylvania. This is a great way for our teens to connect with each other, their leaders, and the Lord. Sign up on the Digital Bulletin.

GETTING STARTED:

- Watch this week's Community Extras Video.
 - **Optional Icebreaker:** Who is someone who has been an example to you in giving God their first and best?
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Polluted Offerings

Read Malachi 1:6–9.



In the Old Testament, a big part of how people worshiped God was by bringing sacrifices to the temple. What are some of the different ways we worship God today?



Ryan began the sermon by saying that a lot about us is revealed by what and how we worship. Can you think of some examples of this?



According to verses 7–8, what was wrong with the worship that was being offered by the people of Judah?



What would be the equivalent of offering lame or sick animals in our worship today?



Why do you think this rebuke is aimed at the priests, when it is the people who are bringing shoddy offerings to the Lord? Doesn't the blame lie more with the people who are not giving God their best?



When was a time when a leader challenged you to give your first and best to God, and how did that turn out?

Great Among the Nations

Read verses 10–12.



In verse 10, God says that he would rather the priests close the temple than allow half-hearted worship. In verse 12, he criticizes the priests for allowing this pollution of his altar. However, sandwiched between these, verse 11 strikes a different note, declaring that God will be worshiped in truth among the nations. Why? What effect does verse 11 have in a passage where God is otherwise rebuking people for their worship?



What is God promising in verse 11? Has God fulfilled this, and if so, how?

Fighting Weariness

Read verses 13–14.



In the sermon, Ryan said that weariness can come from a lack of rest or laziness. In what area of life are you experiencing weariness that prevents you from giving God your first or best, and is it due to rest, laziness, or something else?

Leaders: Weariness in worship is when worship of God feels like a burden.



Why is the proper response to laziness repentance?



Why is it appropriate to call someone who doesn't give God their first and best a "cheat" (v. 14)?

Leaders: The Hebrew word translated "cheat" (nakal) means "to act slickly/cunningly." This can mean either (or both) that they think they're getting one over on God, or that they are deceiving others into thinking they are godly, faithful worshippers.



What does giving the Lord your first and best mean for you in this season of life?

PRAYER TIME

Praise God that his name will be great among the nations.

Pray that God would bring conviction to you about how to better give him your first and best.

Pray that God would help you to fight against weariness.