Malachi – The End of the Story

How can we stay faithful to God in an increasingly hostile world? Why do the wicked seem to prosper more than those who follow God? These are not new questions. God's people have been asking the same questions since Old Testament times. "What is the point of serving Yhwh when other nations who worship other gods seem to prosper more than we do?"

The Bible does not shy away from these kinds of questions. God recognises the complexity and the issues of life in this sinful world. How does Yhwh tackle this perceived injustice between God's people and the other nations? He calls his people to look forward to the future – to the future where he himself will act and bring about his judgement and renewal. Let's have a look at the biblical text in Malachi 3:13 – 4:6.

Launch

1) What gives you hope in the midst of suffering?

God Will Act Once More in the Future

Read Malachi 3:13 – 4:6

2) In what way has Israel spoken arrogantly against Yhwh? (v13-15)

    a. Do you feel the same way sometimes about this world? What are some examples of that?

    b. Why do you think that is considered arrogant by Yhwh?

3) How does those who feared Yhwh respond to this? (v16)

4) What is Yhwh's promise to the faithful remnant? (3:17 – 4:6)

    a. Compare and contrast the different outcomes for those who feared Yhwh and those who do not

Those Who Fear Yhwh	Those Who Do Not Fear Yhwh

b. How is hearing about Yhwh's oncoming judgement be encouraging for God's people? (Rom 12:19-20)

c. How do you think those promises will be encouraging to those who hear it?

5) Read 1 Peter 2:7-10. What are some words used to describe those who believe in this passage? (v9-10)

a. How does embracing those identities in that passage help you in life?

6) What is Yhwh going to do in the future? (Rev 21:1-7)

7) How does knowing that God will do in the future help us to persevere on in our suffering/life? (Rom 8:18-21)

As Christians, we know how the world will end. It will end in judgement and the renewal of all things. That is what we are looking forward to. The prophet Malachi calls it the "great and dreadful day of the Lord." Having a clear vision of the future helps us to persevere on in this world. It helps us to make sense of the seemingly unjust reward of those who do not follow Christ. They are prospering while God's people are suffering.

However, ever since the Old Testament, Yhwh has always asked his people to look to the future of his great and dreadful day of Yhwh. On that day, God's people will be vindicated and the wicked will not be spared from his judgement. Human beings often recoil at the mention of God's judgement, but it is clear from this passage and other passages that God's judgement is good. It restores the moral order of God's creation as it was originally designed to be. Christians then should not be afraid of God's judgement, as they would already know God's verdict – not guilty, because of Christ!

Instead, we should look to the future with great hope, for our "present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." (Rom 8:18) Let us trust God and leave unjust matters that we have no control over to God's sovereign judgement in the future.