

Last Testament of Malachi

Excellence: God Deserves Our Very Best

Malachi 4:2-3 - September 7, 2008

Code of the West:

- * Never steal another man's horse. A horse thief pays with his life.
- * Remove your guns before sitting at the dining table.
- * Never order anything weaker than whiskey.
- * When approaching someone from behind, give a loud greeting before you get within shooting range.
- * A cowboy doesn't talk much; he saves his breath for breathing.
- * No matter how weary and hungry you are after a long day in the saddle, always tend to your horse's needs before your own, and get your horse some feed before you eat.
- * Cuss all you want, but only around men, horses and cows.
- * Complain about the cooking and you become the cook.
- * Never wake another man by shaking or touching him, as he might wake suddenly and shoot you.
- * Be there for a friend when he needs you.
- * Never shoot a woman no matter what.
- * Honesty is absolute - your word is your bond, a handshake is more binding than a contract.
- * Live by the Golden Rule.

Summer Blockbusters and Core Values: Community / Family / Excellence

Here's what I know about our Core Values...we simply aren't there yet! That's why we will continue to teach and preach about them. We will do our best as a church to model them before you. These Core Values:
 Salvation, Family, Biblical Authority, Respect, Authentic Worship, Excellence, Prayer, Second Chances, Community, Balance, Generosity and Unity

These Core Values go out before us, as something that we are aiming for...we want to lead this body to these things. They also push us forward, they give us some unshakeable ideas about who we are! We believe that everyone of them are found in scripture and that we should live them out as individuals and as a church.

I really struggle with this value of EXCELLENCE!

I struggle with it personally...I've to ask myself, does God get the very best of me? Even when I "work for Him" am I really doing it for Him or is it for myself? Am I being a good steward of everything that he's blessed me with? Am I worshipping Him with my very best? Am I good to people? Am I a man of my word? To be honest I can only answer...sometimes. How would you answer those questions?

I struggle with it as a leader in the church...don't get me wrong I see a lot of good things, and so many people doing good things for Jesus. But we can't seem to get hardly anyone to help out in the kid's areas for Catalyst? Is that our best? We are limited in what we can do in ministry, how our rooms could look for the children and youth areas, the equipment we use in here, the possibilities of outreach are sometimes limited because of the lack of funds...Is that what God deserves. Tons of people walk into our services 20, even 30 minutes late...because worshipping God, singing praises to Him isn't a priority, besides they don't like the music (you're not the audience!). As a church body, is God getting our very best? That's what excellence really is...as individuals we give him our best...as a church we give Him our best!

My question to all of us are you ready to leave mediocre behind and as a church, as individuals your very best?

Pray

Started off this series on Excellence by simply stating that God deserves our very best, not our leftovers. We talked about being people of our word, that we serve a God who keeps His promises, we should be people who in our community, in our families, on our jobs...who keep their word, keep their promises. And last week, I hope that you left with a sense of urgency. That at any moment, like a thief in the night, Jesus will return... we don't know when, we just know that He's coming again.

Malachi 4:2-3 NLT

2) "But for you who fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. And you will go free, leaping with joy like calves let out to pasture.

3) On the day when I act, you will tread upon the wicked as if they were dust under your feet," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies."

One of my favorite authors says, "We aren't on the times and dates committee, we're on the preparation committee."

We are meant as individuals and as a church to prepare people for Jesus coming again.

We know that when Jesus comes, there are going to be 2 camps, those on his left and those on his right. The goats and the sheep. The lost and the found. Those who have rejected Christ and those who have received Christ.

And we cry out every week...Do you know Jesus! Do you have him? Do you believe in him? Do you love him?

We invite you forward, so that you can walk out of this place, knowing without a doubt that you are saved.

And yet I believe that there are many who come into this place, lost, consumed by the world, searching and seeking, yet stubborn and proud. And when the invitation is given you are afraid. Something is keeping you from making that decision for Christ. Whatever it is...know that God wants you! He loves you! He can't wait for you to love Him by loving His Son Jesus.

That's why the church is here...to show Jesus to the world! White River, our church is just 1 church out of 1000's and 1000's, hoping to do our part in the Kingdom of God. Praying for Him to simply use us as His hands, His feet, His mouth, whatever we can do to serve God and do it with excellence!

Colossians 3:17, ***“And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.”***

Colossians 3:23, ***“Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.”***

How do we motivate one another toward excellence? What gets you revved up for God? I really believe that as individuals and even as a church we can only be excellent at a few things!!

Let's Be Excellent by...

1) How we treat God

Malachi 4:2-4, ***“2) “But for you who fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. And you will go free, leaping with joy like calves let out to pasture. 3) On the day when I act, you will tread upon the wicked as if they were dust under your feet,” says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. 4) “Remember to obey the Law of Moses, my servant—all the decrees and regulations that I gave him on Mount Sinai for all Israel.”***

- In our worship and prayers
 - my kids and praying!
 - How you enter this space matters
 - Make prayer and worship a priority

- In the growth of His Kingdom
 - by living a pure and blameless life

2 Peter 3:14, ***“And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight.”***

- By investing in others, showing Christ to them

- In obedience to His Word

2) How we treat Others

Malachi 4:5-6, ***“5) “Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord arrives. 6) His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse.”*** (this plan could change the world!)

- Set things right between you and others
 - Practicing forgiveness and Patience
- Care for others
 - Starts in the home!
 - by serving in the church (teach in the children’s and youth areas!)
 - going out of your way to help someone

Conclusion:

Good old Malachi...this Last Testament...the charge to God’s people to give their best to Him. It would have to last them 400 years! And in those 400 years, mediocrity set in, carelessness set in, it became less about heart and more about ritual. And then came Jesus...God gave his very, very best. And yet here you and I are...teetering on the edge of the mediocre, as individuals and as a church.

In **Revelation 2:2-5**, John is give a message to the church of Ephesus.