



Insights - Malachi

Date: Sunday 29th May

Speaker: Lauren Morris (City Centre Site), Kat Densham (South Site)

Key Verses: Malachi 1:8-10; 3:1-7; 4:1-2

Talk Summary:

God is faithful to his unfaithful people. He loves them with an everlasting love, and invites them to return to Him. He promises new hearts and a new world.

Malachi is the last book in the Old Testament, written to Israel around 100 years after returning to Jerusalem from exile. They are disillusioned and disappointed with God. As a result, their worship is half-hearted at best. They tolerate widespread injustice and complain that God does nothing about it. They don't believe God loves them, and their faith has become a formality.

God's invitation is to live faithfully and worship Him wholeheartedly, from a place of knowing we are loved. God is faithful to His unchanging character— true worship, justice and purity always matter. He is faithful to His people, whom He loves with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31v31). He implores them to return to Him (3v6-7).

Malachi points forward to Jesus' death on the cross, where God's perfect justice and perfect love meet. Evil's final weapon of death is defeated.

God promises to purify and cleanse our hearts, so that we can respond in wholehearted worship (Malachi 3v1-4). This promise is fulfilled in the life and death of Jesus (the Day of the Lord part 1, if you like). He also promises to deal once and for all with evil and injustice, creating a perfect world again (Malachi 3v5, 4v1-2). This promise will be fulfilled when Jesus returns as King and Messiah (the day of the Lord part 2). We live in the in-between times, now and not yet people of a now and not yet Kingdom.

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? (*Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it*)

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

- How easy or hard do you find it to have a deep confidence that God loves you?
- How are you doing at living faithfully and worshipping wholeheartedly?
- Where does faith risk becoming a formality (for you, for our church)? What do you/we do about this?
- Consider Jesus' death on the cross. What thoughts and emotions does it create in you today?
- God promises that He will make all things right when Jesus returns again. How can we live as people of hope in these 'in-between times'?

Witness - *How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?*

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?
 - Upcoming Events (go to bvc.so/whats-on for details)