

Fanning the Fires of Faith

Malachi 1:1-5

Introduction:

- A. A fire is one of the most d_____ forces
1. Recent C_____ wildfires displaced 200,000 people
 2. Michigan's T_____ experienced two deadly fires (1871 and 1881)
- B. A fire is one of the most u_____ forces
1. Fuel has to c_____ in order to run your car.
 2. Fire is a source of h_____ that will keep you warm.
- C. Our faith is like a fire that is h_____
1. Sometimes we are on "fire" for the Lord but other times our faith is just an ember.
 2. When our faith is just an ember, we need to f_____ the fire in order to revive our complete dependency on the Lord.
- D. God raised up the prophet, Malachi, to address Israel's little faith.
1. Malachi was written between 450 and 425 B.C. and was the last recorded p_____ message until the time of Christ.
 2. The Jerusalem temple had been rebuilt and s_____ had been restored since 516 B.C.
 3. The people of Israel's faith was dying down as they were impatiently waiting for God to fulfill His promise:
 - a. That the Lord would come to His t_____
 - b. That their l_____ would become prosperous.
- E. Malachi (which means, *my a_____ or messenger*) declares the ORACLE of God's word (v. 1).
1. The word is rightly translated by the KJV as b_____, because the nature of the message was very negative.
 2. However, the message was designed to motivate them to f_____ their faith so as to be completely dependent on God.
 3. How can you fan the fires of your faith, when they seem to be dying down?

Recognize God's E_____ Love (2) - *I have loved you, says the LORD*

- A. Out of all the people groups of the world, God had chosen to l_____ Israel as His people.
1. There was _____ years of history that God had with the people of Israel.
 2. The people of Israel respond to the LORD's word – *But, how have you loved us?*

- a. The Lord answers that He c_____ them, not Esau.
 - 1) Abraham's son, Isaac, had twin sons, Esau and Jacob.
 - 2) God chose to bring the promises of Abraham through Jacob, not Esau
 - b. Deut 7:6-8 gives the reason for His choice of the people of Jacob (remember, Jacob's name was changed to I_____)
 - 1) It was not based on w_____ (Rom 9:10,11)
 - 2) It was simply because He chose to l_____ them.
- B. The people of Israel knew God's word but ignored it and let their experience determine t_____.
1. They were in p_____, so they concluded that God was not with them.
 2. They were being oppressed by their enemies, so they concluded that God did not l_____ them.
- C. Is this how we who believe in Christ might think sometimes?
1. When things are not going well, might we question if God really c_____?
 2. But who defines God's love- you, me, other people, or God?
 - a. When we demand that God love in a certain way, we are defining God's love.
 - 1) If You love me, then give me better h_____.
 - 2) If You love me, then give me f_____ security.
 - b. The Lord has defined His love toward us
 - 1) He s_____ us from our sins even though we were not no good, filthy sinners (Rom 3:2; Is 64:6) - 1Jn 4:19 declares that the only reason we love, is because He loved us f_____.
 - 2) The emphasis of God's word is on His unconditional c_____ to love us to the point of saving us.
 3. When things go wrong in your life, don't start with your circumstances but with God's word.
 - a. Starting with your circumstances will cause your faith to die down (*God where are you? Don't you care?*)
 - b. Fan the embers of your faith with God's word
 - 1) Heb 13:5,6 – He will never l_____ us
 - 2) Matt 28:20 – Jesus will be with us a_____
 - 3) Eph 2:8 – It is by g_____ (undeserved gift) that you have been s_____.
 - 4) Rom 8:38,39 – n_____ can separate us from God's love.

Remember God's displayed love (3,4)

- A. The LORD replies to Israel's denial of God's love for them by pointing to the people of Edom. – *The LORD says, "I loved Jacob, but hated Esau."*
- The word "hate" seems too strong for us because we are taught not to hate, not even our e_____
 - There is a righteous w_____ - we are incapable of having it (Jms 1:20; Rom 12:19)
 - There is a righteous h_____ - only God is capable of having it. We all deserve it but God rejected Esau and chose Jacob as the means of fulfilling His promise to Abraham.
 - Edom
 - This people group descended from E_____
 - This people group, though "brothers" to Israel, helped the Babylonians d_____ Israel 125 years earlier.
 - God punished Edom for harming Israel
 - The *jackals of the wilderness* refer to desert tribesmen who c_____ all of Edom's territory.
 - The Edomites would be forever deemed as a w_____ territory and the object of God's wrath.
- B. The Lord used the Israelite's experience to prove His wrath upon Edom and His love upon Israel even though experience is not to be the determination of truth.
- God's w_____ is the truth.
 - Experience can be used to c_____ truth but never to deny truth (i.e. to contradict what God has said).
 - If you ever doubt the truth of God's love toward you, look at His displayed love. It will fan the fires of your faith.
 - In history (Rom 5:8; Jn 15:13) – Jesus suffered and d_____ to pay for our sins by laying His life down.
 - In your ex_____ - go back to your conversion.

Refocus through God's sovereign love (5)

- A. The Lord d_____ Israel for their sins against Him (Rev 3:19 - *the Lord disciplines those whom He l_____*)
- B. The Lord promises that they will see that His love is sovereign
- They'll say, *The LORD be magnified beyond Israel's border!"*
 - Rom 11 explains the eventual return of Israel to the LORD.
- C. View your life through God's sovereign love
- His discipline – motivates you to do right and repent from sin.
 - T_____ - how He has brought you through past adversities.