



GOING DEEPER

Discussion Questions and more from Sunday's message, before we begin, here are the verses for this week's study! Open your bible to the book of Malachi 3:13-18; Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 43:25; 1 Peter 2:9.

How much time have you spent this past week reflecting on Jesus and the hope of the gospel? How has reflecting on Him been of help to you? Because that is how we grow in how we think about our relationship to God and how we bring Him Glory each day, in each conversation, interaction, our work, our family. ***In everything.*** The gospel and the love of Christ should indwell us, and we should be burdened to share that good news with others in these last days. ***Have you shared the good news with anyone this week? Have you showed the love of Jesus to anyone this week?***

Pushback: Is It Even Worth It?

Our offerings... (not money) I often wonder how God views them...

God sees and remembers faithfulness, especially when it feels pointless.

What's one area of your life where it is easy to start thinking, "What's the point?"

As we walk through this week in the sixth and final disputation and it returns to topics in the fourth dispute, post exilic Judah was struggling with the gap between God's promises and their present experiences.

1. Reject cynical thinking that calls obedience a waste

Malachi 3:13-15

13 "Your words have been hard against me, says the Lord. But you say, 'How have we spoken against you? '14 You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the Lord of hosts? 15 And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.'"

The call and respond pattern... Like talking to a toddler...

What accusation does God make against His people in verse 13?

How do people respond to God's charge? What does that reveal about their self-awareness?

There is a Danger in "Cost-Benefit" Obedience

Vs 14 You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the Lord of hosts?

Cynicism turns obedience into a transaction...

and when the "return" feels low, faith feels pointless.

The Question: ***What profit is it?*** reveals doing the right things for the wrong reason.

When obedience is driven by profit, not love, you will eventually resent God.

All about balance: Staff... **Are we bearing fruit?**

Trunk or Treat vs Crafters vs Christ Chapel

A local Church request

In verse 14, look again at what the people were saying about serving God?

What words stand out to you the most? "Vain, profit, or "walking as in mourning?"

How can disappointment or discouragement slowly turn into cynical thinking toward God?

Paul and Profit

USES the word "Profit" 15+ times

Symphērō: what truly benefits and builds up

Kerdos: what counts as gain on a personal ledger

Opheleō: what is actually useful or helpful in real life

IMPLIES "Profit" 70+ times.

NONE are about feelings... "Faith should feel rewarding" is a lie

They equated difficulty with futility.

Faithfulness often feels costly before it feels fruitful.

A farmer doesn't dig up seeds after a week and say, "This isn't working."

When we distort profit we start down the wrong path.

Vs 15 "And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evil-doers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape."

Cynicism distorts reality...

it makes rebellion look rewarded and righteousness look foolish.

It's true... the evil doors always appear to profit

Our culture has distorted the word “blessed”

The real danger... we misread God's patience as permission

God's patience is intended to encourage sanctification

A judge delaying sentencing doesn't mean the defendant is innocent—it means the process isn't finished.

and let's be clear, **God is not finished.**

Why is it dangerous to assume that because judgment is delayed, it will never come?

How do you guard your heart when rebellion looks rewarded and righteousness looks costly?

2. Rest in God's record (not promise) of those who truly fear Him

Malachi 3:16–18

16 “Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name. 17 “They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. 18 Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.”

This is the “call and response” theme we see throughout Malachi...

Walk into a room and can't remember why.

Or worse... Every word to a song from the 80's

Everything is accidentally forgotten or permanently stored...we do both poorly.

God does not have selective memory

Vs 16 Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and **heard them**, and a **book of remembrance was written** before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name.”

Who are “those who feared the Lord,” and how are they different from the people described in verses 13–15?

What does this verse teach us about the importance of godly conversation in hard seasons?

When life feels discouraging, who do you tend to talk to—and how does that shape your perspective?

There are two big points here...

"The Lord paid attention and heard them" - "book of remembrance was written"
it is crucial that we understand both

Let's start with the second one...

1. "Remembrance was written"

yes, this is greater than the Internet. He remembers everything.

But what about...

Psalms 103:12: "as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us."

Isaiah 43:25: "I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins."

Verses with similar context...

Old Testament: 120–160 verses

New Testament: 60–90 verses

So which is it?... Our sins are forgotten, or they are stored in God's mind forever?

BOTH... once again, we cannot put God in a box.

How do we know this?...

2. "The Lord paid attention and heard them"

Heard: (qāshav) To listen with intent. To lean in.

this is an intimate, loving term.

Why does this matter... It's a big deal

Vs 17 "They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him.

God does not merely *observe* the faithful. He claims, values, and protects them as His own inheritance.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Where do you need to trust that God sees and remembers your faithfulness, even when it feels unnoticed or unrewarded?

LIVE IT OUT

Bible Study should ALWAYS lead to taking action with what you learned. Think of it as Vitamin A. "Application" into your day, week and interactions.

Living this study out in our families

Where is it hardest to keep showing patience, love, or consistency at home when it feels like no one notices?

How can we model steady faithfulness in our homes instead of only responding when things are going well?

Is there a relationship in your family where you're tempted to think, "Why keep trying?"

What would trusting that God sees your faithfulness look like in your home this week?

In the church

How can we keep serving in the church with the right heart when the work feels ordinary or unnoticed?

Where are we most tempted to compare visible results instead of valuing simple faithfulness?

How can we encourage one another when ministry feels slow, hard, or fruitless?

What does it look like for a church family to speak to one another in ways that strengthen faith instead of feeding cynicism?

In the workplace

What does quiet faithfulness look like at work when integrity feels costly?

Where are you tempted to measure success the way the world measures it instead of the way God does?

How do you stay faithful when people who cut corners seem to get ahead?

What would it look like to work this week as someone who is seen by God, not just evaluated by people?

In the community

How can we keep doing good in our community even when change feels slow?

Where do you see the temptation to grow cynical about people, culture, or doing good?

What would it look like to be a steady, hope-filled presence in our community instead of a discouraged one?

Who around you may need simple faithfulness from you right now more than impressive results?

Who needs encouragement from you this week because they're tired of doing the right thing?

Where is it hardest right now to keep being faithful when it feels like no one notices?

How should I pray for this life change?

"You don't want to ask the Lord for a trouble-free life. You should ask the Lord this, "Lord, work Your work in my heart, don't give me more than I can endure. Show me grace and compassion, you know my weaknesses and frailties. I want to see Your lovingkindness, but I want You to do Your work. I want You to do Your perfecting work. I want You to do whatever it takes in me to make me what You want me to be." You need to come to terms with that. You need to be able to say that." John MacArthur

Remember:

"We are to run the race with endurance, not in our own strength, but by fixing our gaze on Jesus. He is not only the goal of our faith—He is the source and sustainer of it." R.C. Sproul

"The gospel is not only about changing WHERE you will live for eternity, it's also about changing HOW you will live today." Shane Pruitt

And that is a heart change. So that we glorify God in all we do.

Having Jesus as Savior will cost you nothing. Having Jesus as Savior will cost you everything. How so?

Who do you say God is? You cannot "come after" Jesus unless you come to Him.

Two roads stand before us in this world today. There is the way of the divine things of our Lord, which is the way of Christ. And there is the way of human things of the world. There is a way to save your life, and you will lose it there. And there is a way to lose your life for the sake of the Kingdom, and there you will find it.

How do we follow Jesus' ways? First of all, we turn from our sin and entrust our lives to Him as our Savior and Lord. Then, we seek His will in His Word each day and put it into practice by the power of the Holy Spirit within us. We learn to deny our selfish desires and give ourselves completely to following Jesus.

This choice we have — to seek first the kingdom of God — is the fundamental choice everyone makes when they first repent and turn to Jesus Christ. Yet every day after that, our Christian life will either reinforce that decision or deny it.

Remember the gospel is personal. Your changed life shows that to others around you based on what happened at the cross. You are at a crossroads if you have not accepted Christ. Which road are you traveling on right now? Are you on God's side?



Are you in a Growth Group at First Baptist? In this isolated world, Growth Groups help people connect in a healthy way. God has created us for a deep longing for community. We grow when we are living out our faith in a small group with others and we do this by loving, caring for, and encouraging each other. If you have any questions about our Growth Groups, contact the Church Office for more information.