



## Don't Forget His Honor (part 2)

### Malachi 1:12-14

1. Worship with purity (verse 12).
2. Worship with enthusiasm (verses 13-14a).
3. Worship with reverence (verse 14b).

In the early days of this world, there were two people who came before the LORD to offer their sacrifices to Him. The LORD looked down with approval upon the one. The LORD looked down with disapproval upon the others. He accepted the sacrifice of Abel. He rejected the sacrifice of Cain. Ever since, it has set the tone of the worship of the LORD. Ever since, it has set the tone of the worship of the LORD. God looks down at all worship offered to Him and either accepts it or rejects it. I trust that you want the LORD to accept your worship. In our text this morning, we will find the LORD rejecting the worship offered to Him. The title of my message this morning is "Don't Forget His Honor" (part 2). The title comes from the lesson we need to learn from those whose worship was rejected.

Our focus this morning is upon verses 12-14. Consider those verses within their entire context.

Malachi 1:6-14

"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?" says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests who despise My name.

But you say, "How have we despised Your name?"

"You are presenting defiled food upon My altar."

"But you say, 'How have we defiled You?' In that you say, 'The table of the LORD is to be despised.' But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Would he be pleased with you? Or would he receive you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts.

"But now will you not entreat God's favor, that He may be gracious to us? With such an offering on your part, will He receive any of you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts.

"Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on My altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD of hosts, "nor will I accept an offering from you. For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering that is pure; for My name will be great among the nations," says the LORD of hosts.

"But you are profaning it, in that you say, 'The table of the Lord is defiled, and as for its fruit, its food is to be despised.' You also say, 'My, how tiresome it is!' And you disdainfully sniff at it," says the LORD of hosts, "and you bring what was taken by robbery and what is lame or sick; so you bring the offering! Should I receive that from your hand?" says the LORD.

"But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord, for I am a great King," says the LORD of hosts, "and My name is feared among the nations."

Those in Israel during the days of Malachi had neglected the honor of the LORD. You can see this in verse 6, "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?" These people were not honoring the LORD in their worship of Him. Rather, they were despising the altar of the LORD (verse 6). In so doing, they were defiling the name of the LORD (verse 7). They were bringing blind, lame and sick sacrifices to be offered on the altar, clearly transgressing the clear commands of the LORD (verse 8).

When the LORD looked down upon these sacrifices, He did not accept them. He hated them. In verse 10, the LORD said, "Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on My altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD of hosts, "nor will I accept an offering from you." And then, in verse 11, the LORD tells those in Israel that He will see to it that He will be worshiped. If the worship of the Israelites is unacceptable before the LORD, He would establish His worship from another place.

Fundamentally, when you think about the LORD's assessment of the worship of these people, it all comes back to one thing: in their actions, they didn't honor the LORD. They didn't treat Him as He deserved to be treated. They failed to honor Him.

I don't believe that the LORD's refusal to accept their worship comes primarily from their failing to fulfill all of the legal requirements of the law (though, certainly, this does have a part in it). I believe that fundamentally, the LORD's refusal to accept their worship comes from their lack of giving honor to the LORD, which led to their neglecting the particulars of the law. Though the details of their failure in worship had to do with their bringing of faulty sacrifices, I believe that this was merely the manifestation of the deeper problem. At the heart of their problem is that they didn't give honor to the LORD.

Everyone knows how it is that you honor another who has authority over you. You submit to them. You speak well of them. You are polite towards them. You make great efforts to help them. You work hard to please them. This is what you do with your father. This is what you do with your earthly boss. You speak well of those you seek to honor. You do all you can do to help them. You submit to them. You do what they

tell you to do. You try to please them.

These were the sorts of things that the Israelites were failing to do. They weren't obeying their heavenly Father. Rather, they were offering up sacrifices contrary to His command. They weren't speaking well of their heavenly Father. Rather, they were "despising His name" (verse 6). They weren't submitting to their heavenly Father. Rather, they were rebelling against Him. As a result, the LORD refused their worship.

And now, today, as we come to verses 12-14, we see much the same thing take place. In fact, this is why my message this morning is entitled, "part 2." The parallels between verses 6-11 and verses 12-14 are almost exact. Look at verse 12. In this verse, the LORD says, "You are profaning [My name] in that you say, 'The table of the Lord is defiled, and as for its fruit, its food is to be despised.'" This is almost exactly the same as the end of verse 7, "You are presenting defiled food upon my altar. ... You say, 'The table of the LORD is to be despised.'"

Consider the end of verse 13, "You bring what was taken by robbery and what is lame or sick; so you bring the offering! Should I receive that from your hand?" This is almost exactly the same as verse 8, "When you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil?" Verse 9 continues, "with such an offering on you part, will He receive any of you kindly?"

Verse 14 speaks of how the LORD is worthy of worship. "'I am a great King,' says the LORD of hosts, 'and My name is feared among the nations'" This is parallel with verse 11, where the LORD says, "from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering that is pure; for My name will be great among the nations."

And so, the title of my message is quite appropriate. "Don't Forget His Honor (part 2)." If we are to worship the LORD acceptably, as the people of God, we cannot forget His honor. Two weeks ago, we considered this theme. As it is repeated for us again in verses 12-14, we will consider this topic again.

Like all of Malachi, we are learning from all of their negative examples. They weren't doing anything right in verses 12-14. In verse 12, they were profaning the name of the LORD in combining the worship of the LORD with their wicked practices. In verse 13, they were bored with the worship of the LORD. In verse 14, they had failed to worship the LORD with reverence.

By way of outline this morning, I want to take each of their failures and turn them positively into an admonition for us this morning. As each of these failures have to deal with the improper worship of the LORD, each of my points this morning will have to do with proper worship. As Malachi was talking about the public worship of the LORD, so also will my applications focus themselves upon how it is that we ought to approach the LORD in worship. Here's my first point, ...

## **1. Worship with purity (verse 12).**

Here in verse 12, we see that the accusation against Israel here was that they were profaning the name of the LORD. "But you are profaning it." The "it" refers back to the name of the LORD, as verse 11 makes clear. This word translated "profane," is a common word in the Old Testament. It means "defile," or "pollute" or "desecrate" or "make dirty". The idea behind the word is that it makes something unclean and detestable. As these people came to worship the LORD, they were actually soiling His name and bringing it through the mud.

In verse 11, the LORD said, "from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations." And yet, through their half-hearted offerings, they were bringing the LORD down. They weren't making His name great! They were making His name small. In so doing, they were slinging dirt upon the name of the LORD.

The LORD tells the priests how exactly it was that His name was being profaned. "You are profaning [my name] in that you say, 'The table of the Lord is defiled, and as for its fruit, its food is to be despised'" (verse 12). This reference to the "table of the Lord" is certainly a reference to the altar upon which the sacrifices were offered. The "food" that goes upon the table is certainly a reference to the animals and grain that would be sacrificed there upon the altar.

How was this profaning the name of the LORD? It was bringing God's name down by offering sub-standard sacrifices upon the altar. At the end of verse 13, we see that they were offering up animals that were "taken by robbery and what is lame or sick." Such actions profaned the name of the LORD.

Doesn't the measure of the gift that you give someone indicate your heart toward that person? You give someone a nice gift and they are appreciative and know that you care for them. You give someone a second-hand gift and they are dishonored by your actions.

For instance, let me give you an illustration. In our home, we have this couch that is in our basement. My wife and I have a different opinion about this piece of furniture. I will admit, it is old. It is probably as old as I am. I will admit that it looks a bit junky looking. I will also admit that it sags a lot. But, I think that it provides a great play thing for our children. They can jump on it. They can use the pillows to have a pillow fight with them. They can drink their juice on the couch without worrying about staining it. It is a perfect plaything! I remember having a couch like that in the basement of our home growing up. I remember the fun that we had pole vaulting onto the couch. I guess, I envision our children having the same sort of fun with this couch as we had with ours.

Now, my wife's opinion of this couch is totally different. I asked her yesterday what she thought of the couch. First of all, she told me that it's an eye sore. She pointed out the fact that it is clearly broken and falling apart. Her opinion is that it is merely taking up space in our basement. She told me that it sheds like a dog, only, it "sheds" sharp tacks, rather than hair. It's her opinion that our kids don't "need" to have a couch in the basement to jump on like a trampoline. It adds to the clutter of our basement. She pointed out yesterday that the room in which it sits right now is a mess, because the kids were jumping on the couch and being reckless with their other toys in this room. Finally, she claims that it adds to the burden of things that we have in our house.

Such is the saga of our downstairs couch. My wife thinks that I have been blinded by something so as not to see the true state of this couch. She claims I'm holding on to it for sentimental reasons. Though I think that the couch is prepared for garbage heaven, I believe that we'll be keeping the couch for a while longer.

Now, suppose that we knew of a man and a woman soon to be married, soon to be starting their life together. They registered at the local Target store, selecting the many items that they would love to have others purchase as gifts to help them start out. Now, suppose that upon that registry was a nice couch. They selected for themselves a nice, dark-green couch that would match their future living room. It was made of high quality micro fiber, suede material that would last them years. Now, suppose that shortly after their wedding, we show up at their house with a pick-up truck and our couch in the back of a pickup truck, with a huge bow on it, and present it as a gift to them.

We tell this couple, "We saw in your registry that you wanted a couch. Here's a couch that will work perfectly for you! When you have kids someday, they can use it like a trampoline. They can also use it to for pole vaulting in your basement!" What would this couple think? This couch isn't only ugly, it's worthless. It doesn't match their room. It deserves only to be taken away to the dump. It's only my sentimental vision of a plaything for my children that keeps it in our home. Giving this couch to them would be dis-honoring to the couple.

That's a bit similar to what the people of Israel were doing with their sacrifices. They were bringing lame and sick sacrifices to be offered to the LORD (verse 13). These animals weren't worth much, so the people believed that they were worthy to be sacrificed. In so doing, they were giving testimony of their view of the LORD. He can have the leftovers. But, such actions were profaning His name.

When the LORD gave instructions in the Old Testament for how it was that the LORD was to be worshiped, it was no accident that He always required a perfect sacrifice, "without defect." It was for a purpose. It was to communicate to everyone of the type of God that He is! It was to communicate to all the people of His own holiness and purity. God wanted perfect animals to be brought to Him to show the people how much they value the LORD and how holy and majestic He was.

Two weeks ago, I took you through a bunch of passages in Leviticus that told time after time after time after time of how every sacrifice offered should be "without defect." I finished all of these Scriptures with the summary from Leviticus 22:21-22.

Leviticus 22:21-22

When a man offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD to fulfill a special vow or for a freewill offering, of the herd or of the flock, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. Those that are blind or fractured or maimed or having a running sore or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make of them an offering by fire on the altar to the LORD.

At the end of this chapter, the LORD gives a reason why the sacrifices were to be offered in this way: they communicated His holiness.

Leviticus 22:29-33

When you sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, you shall sacrifice it so that you may be accepted. It shall be eaten on the same day, you shall leave none of it until morning; I am the LORD. So you shall keep My commandments, and do them; I am the LORD. **You shall not profane My holy name**, but I will be sanctified among the sons of Israel; I am the LORD who sanctifies you, who brought you out from the land of Egypt, to be your God; I am the LORD."

The concept here is exactly what Malachi was referring to in our text this morning. The context is the same (i.e. sacrifices). The language is the same (i.e. the words used). Way back in Leviticus, the LORD informed His priests that if they offered up defiled sacrifices upon His altar, they would "profane My holy name." This is exactly what the priests were doing when they were offering up these blind, lame, and sick sacrifices. They were bringing God's reputation into the mud. They were bringing shame upon His name, rather than lifting it high!

The principle of the application to us is that our worship ought to be pure worship. We ought to act and behave in such a way that we don't bring down the name of the LORD. We ought to worship with purity.

When you come to the LORD to worship Him, you need to come with a pure sacrifice. The good news for us this morning is that **we have a perfect sacrifice!** We have a sacrifice that we know God will accept. It's Jesus Christ. He was a pure sacrifice. His blood was precious blood. He was unblemished. He was spotless. God has received this sacrifice. We need simply to come in faith, clinging to this perfect sacrifice, who was offered up once for all. "By one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

## 2. Worship with enthusiasm (verses 13-14a).

I get this from verse 13, where the LORD speaks to the people, "You also say, 'My, how tiresome it is!' and you disdainfully sniff at it." The idea here is that the priests were bored with the worship of God. They had spent their time in the temple. They had offered their sacrifices to the LORD. If they had offered up one animal upon the altar, they had offered up 150 animals upon the altar. It was all so normal. It was all so regular. It was all so boring. There was no enthusiasm in their worship. It was all a standard day's work at the office. Every day seemed the same.

Think of your life as a priest. Each morning, as the sun was coming up, you would check the incense to make sure that it is still burning (Lev. 24:1-3). Perhaps you would add some oil to keep it burning throughout the day. Each morning, you would fill the laver with the water, washing your hands and feet according to the ritual. Each morning would start with the morning sacrifice. You would select two male lambs, one year old, without defect (Numbers 28:3). You would set one of them aside for the evening offering to be offered at twilight. But, you would take the other lamb and offer it upon the altar in smoke, along with the associated grain offering and drink offering (Numbers 28:4-8).

Then, having prepared the temple for worship, you would open the gates of the temple for the people to come in and present your animals for sacrifice. They would form a long line, waiting for you to serve them. The people would present their animals before you and confess their sins to you. You would accept their confession, take their animal and slaughter it there before them. You would drag the corpse over to the altar and offer it up in smoke. Then, you would bid the worshipers peace, perhaps giving them a blessing. And then, you'd say, "Next!" and service the next worshipers in line.

This new family or individual would present their animals before you and confess their sins to you. You would accept their confession, take their animal and slaughter it there before them. You would drag the corpse over to the altar and offer it up in smoke. Then, you would bid the worshipers peace, perhaps giving them a blessing. And then, you'd say, "Next!" and service the next worshipers in line. And on and on it went, sacrifice after sacrifice after sacrifice.

By the end of the day, just as the sun was going down. You would select a male lamb, one year old, without defect (Numbers 28:3). You would take this animal and offer it upon the altar in smoke, along with the associated grain offering and drink offering (Numbers 28:4-8). You would check the incense to make sure that it had enough oil to burn through the night.

Finally, you would get some rest. Perhaps you would go home to your tent and collapse out of fatigue of the work, only to face the same thing again the next day. And the next day, and the next day, and the next day, and the next day. Such was the life of a priest.

To be sure, on the Sabbath, there were a few differences. The showbread was changed each Sabbath day (Lev. 24:8). There were a few additional sacrifices to be offered up (Num. 28:9). Also, you would have a rest from the many sacrifices that were to be offered. These things changed up the routine a bit. Also, the high, holy days were also different! On Yom Kippur, a huge crowd would gather to watch the high-priest enter the holy of holies to offer up the yearly sacrifice! (Lev. 16; Luke 1). That day was always exciting. At various other feasts, there was an excitement in the air as people came to celebrate. Of course, the Passover merely meant more work for the priest.

These priests of Malachi's day came to despise their jobs. They said, "My, how tiresome it is." They sniffed at their job in contempt. The commands of God had become a burden to them. In 1 John 5:3 we read, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome." But, for these priests it was a burden. There was little, or no enthusiasm for their work. They were tired of offering up the same sacrifices, day after day and year after year.

You would think that these priests came to realize that their work of "standing daily, ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices [could] never take away sins." (Hebrews 10:11). You would think that these priests would anticipate the day when the ultimate sacrifice would come. With such a hope, the mundane of today would take on greater significance. But, that was not the case with these priests. They said, "My, how tiresome it is!" and they disdainfully sniffed at it.

In light of this picture that we get, it makes sense that they would "bring what was taken by robbery and what is lame or sick" (verse 13). Again, picture yourself as a priest. A man comes with a deficient sacrifice. Should you turn their sacrifice away as being insufficient to be accepted according to the Levitical standards, they will only get mad at you! They brought their sacrifice! They have waited in line for over an hour. And now, you are going to tell them to get a new sacrifice, which isn't cheap! And then, you will make them wait in line all over again? Why inconvenience your customer? Why make more work for yourself by inflicting their wrath upon you? Why not just say, "We'll take the blemished animal this time. But next time, please bring an animal without defect." And the worshiper might easily feign ignorance. "Really? This animal isn't good enough? I didn't really know. I promise you that next time, I'll bring my prized lamb from the flock."

And what happens the next time he comes? Though he has promised the best of his flock, he comes again with a lame animal, hoping to get a different priest, who wouldn't remember the conversation. In this way, the worshiper would have vowed the best male in his flock, but sacrifices a blemished animal instead (verse 14).

Such was the life of the priest. Such was the life of the worshipers. All of them were going through the motions, seeking to get a dead animal upon the altar fire, to please God and pacify their conscience. It may have pacified their consciences. But God hated their offerings.

In our family, we have an aunt, who is notorious for giving second-hand gifts. Yesterday, I called a few of my family members on the phone and asked them to recall what sort of gifts they remember receiving from this aunt. When I spoke with one of the members of our family, this aunt was called, "The queen of useless gifts." One of my sisters recalled the time when this aunt of ours gave her a Dr. Seuss book, "The Cat in the Hat." But, this book had a nice coffee stain on the front cover that had been produced by a mug. This same sister remembers the time when she was given about twenty copies of a picture of this aunt with her husband. Apparently, my sister was supposed to distribute some of these pictures to her brothers and sisters, and keep the rest for herself. Another family member remembered how this aunt given one of my sisters a purse that had clearly been used before. On top of that, it wasn't a particularly nice purse. My parents told me of the time that they happened to be visiting this aunt. She was de-cluttering her house, and trying to give my parents much of her junk as gifts. She had tried to give away some well-loved stuffed animals. She had tried to give away other common household items. My parents said, that they rejected her gifts, as they really had no use for them.

This is a bit similar to what the LORD did. He rejected the gifts that were brought to Him. Why? Because these sacrifices that were being offered were leftovers. They weren't worthy of the LORD. If you offer up half-hearted sacrifices like these priests did, don't expect that the LORD will accept your worship. He will reject it. When Israel offered up these sorts of sacrifices, the LORD rejected them. Consider the end of verse 13, "'Should I receive that from your hand?' says the LORD." This is a rhetorical question. Of course He shouldn't receive such an offering from their hand. Indeed, the LORD refused their offering.

The extent of the LORD's rejection of their sacrifice is clear as day when you look at what the LORD said in verse 14. He pronounced a curse on those who worship in this manner. He said, "'But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord, for I am a **great** King!' says the LORD of hosts" (verse 13). "I won't be brought down by your sick and lame sacrifices!" Notice how much of the worship of the LORD returns to the majesty and greatness of God. This theme was seen in chapter 1,

verse 11, "From the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be **great** among the nations." This theme came up in chapter 1, verse 5, "Your eyes will see this and you will say, 'The LORD be magnified beyond the border of Israel.'" Literally, you can read this, "the LORD will be 'made **great**'" The same words are used in both of these verses. God will be great! God will be shown to be far greater than we are.

The problem with the boring, unenthusiastic worship of the LORD is that it brings the LORD down! It makes other things greater than He is!

Imagine someone coming to church to worship the almighty God, arriving just as the worship begins (or just a little bit after). They endure through the service with very little interest. They leave as soon as the service ends and on their way home, they complain that the service was too long. When they arrive at home, they promptly sit in front of their television set and watch a three-hour football game!

Now, you tell me, how does this make God look? When we find our pleasure in other things, but find His worship to be dull and lifeless, does it make God look great and awesome and majestic? Or, does it bring God down? You know it brings God down. But, when we worship the Lord with enthusiasm, it makes God great! When you come into the service with an expectation and joy of worshiping the LORD, God is honored! Bob Bixby is a pastor in town. He's a good friend of mine and a good man. He nailed this issue on the head when he described the worship of his congregation at Morning Star Baptist Church. He said, ...

I love the congregational singing at my church. Our congregation sings with gusto. We forget poise. We disregard finesse. We just belt it out. You should hear our hundred-fold sing "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" after a message on the Person of Jesus Christ. When a congregation feels its redemption individually, it brings the roof down corporately.

I have brothers who talk long and hard about style. But the style that thrills me is probably the same style that pleases God — an uninhibited noise that bursts out of a heart making melody. It is a biblical axiom: redeemed people will sing! And blessed are the redeemed who are in a congregation where performance and professionalism, "special music" and talent exhibitions, are deliberately down-played.

Blessed are the redeemed that don't have to stand and hum to the crooning of a worship team because the entire congregation is the team! The music that dominates our church must be congregational. Unredeemed people will feel out of place in the midst of the redeemed, and this should be especially true when they are singing! There is a mysterious sound that issues from the lungs of uninhibited redeemed folk.

Monotones harmonize with maestros. Tone-deaf growlers blend in with the pitch-tone perfect vocalists. The mysterious sound is the sound of heart melodies uniting congregationally before the Lord. It's a beautiful sound. It's the joyful noise of redemption. [\[1\]](#)

Bob has it right. Fundamentally, it's not a matter of style or aesthetics or instruments that pleases the LORD. It's a matter of enthusiastic worship from the heart, that seeks to lift the LORD up high and magnify His name. When the people of God come and worship Him, in boredom, the LORD is dis-honored. Do you want to honor the LORD in your worship? Then, (1) worship with purity and (2) worship with enthusiasm. And now, let's look at my third point.

### **3. Worship with reverence (verse 14b).**

This comes in the last half of verse 14, where the LORD says, "My name is feared among the nations." Israel and the priests had lost the fear of the LORD. They were complacent about the ways in which they worshiped. They didn't care that their sacrifices were substandard, which profaned God's name. They didn't care that they weren't really too excited about their worship. They didn't come before the LORD with a healthy fear that you need.

It would have been well for them to have remembered back in the early days of the priesthood. It would have been well for them to have remembered what happened to Nadab and Abihu. They came into the presence of the LORD without reverence, and they paid dearly for their mistake. Consider the first three verses of Leviticus 10,

Leviticus 10:1-3

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what the LORD spoke, saying, 'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored.'" So Aaron, therefore, kept silent.

Since they failed to treat the LORD as holy, the LORD rejected their offering. He brought fire from heaven and consumed them on the spot. They were quickly replaced by their younger brothers, Eleazar and Ithamar, who were prohibited from mourning the death of their older brothers, lest they also die (Lev. 10:6-7).

The only reason why the priests in the day of Malachi were still standing is because of the mercy of God. They may not have been offering up "strange fire before the LORD" as Nadab and Abihu were. But, their crime was just as serious. They were offering up faulty sacrifices to the LORD. They were not coming before the LORD with a reverential fear of Him.

The simple admonition for us is that we need to worship the LORD with a reverential fear. We need to realize that the God we worship is the God before whom the world quakes.

Psalm 99:1-5

The LORD reigns, let the peoples tremble;  
He is enthroned above the cherubim, let the earth shake!  
The LORD is great in Zion, and He is exalted above all the peoples.  
Let them praise Your great and awesome name;  
Holy is He.  
The strength of the King loves justice;  
You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.  
Exalt the LORD our God and worship at His footstool;  
Holy is He.

In Revelation 15, we get a glimpse of heaven where those in it are singing the song of Moses.

Revelation 15:3-4

Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty;  
Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!  
Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy;  
For all the nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.

This is the sort of worship that we need to have. It's the sort of worship we need to grasp, if we are to do true justice in honoring the LORD. We need to work hard to worship the LORD for who He is, and realize that apart from the blood of Christ, we are undone! We are ruined! The blood of Christ is our only shield from the wrath of God coming upon us.

As we think of the application of these words, in many ways, this point balances the second point, of how we need to worship the LORD with enthusiasm. There is a way of enthusiasm that greatly misses the fear of the LORD. A minister of music stands up and says, "Good morning everybody!" After a silent response, things could be repeated, "I can't hear you! Good morning everybody!" After a weak response, still yet another call comes out, "I still can't hear you! Good morning everybody! Are you excited about worshiping the LORD today! Let's hear it for the LORD! Stand and sing your praise to God!" Such words certainly help to bring enthusiasm, but they miss the fact that the LORD is to be feared. Our worship needs to combine enthusiasm with reverence. It means that we need to feel it with our hearts. It means that we ought to come to church with some expectancy. But, that doesn't mean slap-happy. It means deep-rooted passion.

If the priests in Malachi's day had feared the LORD, they wouldn't have profaned the name of the LORD by offering up their lame and sick sacrifices (verses 12-13). They wouldn't have grown tired of His worship (verse 13). They would have worshiped the LORD with reverence. Oh, may these things be true of Rock Valley Bible Church this day!

Now, in order to do these things, it's going to take some time. There needs to be some preparation. You can't simply show up and expect these things to happen. You need to spend some time preparing. When you come here to Rock Valley Bible Church on Sunday morning to present your sacrifice of praise, do you come prepared to worship?

Think about a major league ball-player. Whenever I go to a baseball game (which isn't often), I usually arrive 15-30 minutes before the game to watch the players play. But, many of those players have been at the ballpark for hours already. They have spent time warming up. They have spent time stretching. They have taped their ankles, and have tended to any other minor injuries that they might be nursing. Perhaps they have spent time with a few wind-sprints to maintain their endurance. They have taken their batting practice. They have taken their fielding practice. They have worked on their fundamentals. They have studied the opposing team's pitcher that they will face. They have studied where they plan to play in the field against the opponent. They have been careful to eat properly in anticipation for their peak performance in the game. These players don't simply arrive at the stadium 15 minutes beforehand to play a game, expecting a good outcome. To arrive 15 minutes before a game is a surefire way of finding yourself in the minor leagues! In the life of a Major League Baseball player, there is much preparation that takes place for every game.

You can think about your Sunday morning worship in much the same way. Have you spent time meditating upon the Scriptures to bring a mind ready to engage with God? Have you had sufficient rest the night before, that you are filled with energy on Sunday morning? Or, do you wake up Sunday morning on a rush to arrive at church to merely perform your duty? It may just be that your worship on Sunday morning looks like a lame ox to the LORD.

But, it's not only on Saturday evening that you prepare. Your preparation needs to take place throughout the week. Life is busy. There are so many things in this world that are crying for your attention. You can easily fill up your days with activity after activity after activity. Your kids can be involved in sports, and you spend your time shuttling them around. Your kids can be involved in theatre, and you spend your time shuttling them around. Your family can be involved in camping, and so you spend many weekends away during the summer. You can purchase season tickets to the IceHogs or the RiverHawks, and spend your evenings at the ball park.

None of these activities are bad. There is nothing wrong with any of them. God has given them to us to enjoy. But, they might distract you from honoring the LORD throughout the week. Do you schedule time into your schedule to read His word? Do you schedule time into your schedule to pray? Perhaps your time with the LORD comes only after you have finished with everything else. And what does the LORD get? He gets an exhausted mind. He gets someone who falls asleep while praying.

Without time communing with Him, sin comes easily, and it makes it difficult to worship Him with **purity**. Without time communing with the LORD, you become spiritual dull, and it becomes difficult to worship Him with **enthusiasm**. Without time communing with the LORD, you can easily forget His holiness, and it makes it difficult to worship the LORD with the **reverential fear** that is due His name. Oh, may we be busy about our weeks to make Sunday morning the highlight of our weeks. May we (1) worship with purity; (2) worship with enthusiasm; and (3) worship with reference.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on April 15, 2007 by Steve Brandon.  
For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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[1] This quote was taken from Bob Bixby's blog, found at [http://weblog.wordcentered.org/archives/2006/01/03/his\\_favorite\\_song.php](http://weblog.wordcentered.org/archives/2006/01/03/his_favorite_song.php).