

## Faith Gives Its Best To God

Text : **Malachi 1: 6-14**

### INTRODUCTION :

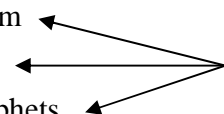
**A. Our God is an Awesome God ... the ruler of all the universe.**

1. Many pay Him lips service, but few give Him the respect He deserves.
2. Many who claim to believe have no real faith.
  - a. Faith creates an irrepressible feeling of awe.
  - b. Faith creates a deep sense of respect, of reverence, of fear.
  - c. Faith takes over one's life and controls it. **II Cor. 5: 14ff**
3. No one who has faith in the God of Heaven lives to himself.

**B. God knows those who have faith and chooses them for His own.**

**II Tim. 2: 19-** Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness."

1. God chose Abel over Cain. **Why ? "By faith Abel offered to God .." Heb. 11: 4**
  - a. Cain believed in God, but he placed his own will over God's.
  - b. He grew up outside the garden - - outside the fellowship. ( **hearing stories** )
  - c. He interpreted stories of God's mercy to his parents as weakness.
2. There were many men on the earth at the time of the flood.
  - a. They all knew who and what God was.
  - b. All but Noah chose to defy God - to live their own lives.
  - c. Eventually, God's patience was exhausted and judgment came upon mankind.
3. Likewise, there were many men on the earth when God chose :
 

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Abraham</li> <li>b. David</li> <li>c. The prophets</li> </ol>		Why did God choose these ? Faith !
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4. God looked into the hearts of men and chose those who truly had faith in Him.
  - a. The stories of their lives demonstrate their faith to us.
  - b. God knew the faith of Abraham, but we know it only by his life.
  - c. David and all the prophets demonstrated their faith by their deeds, e.g, **Daniel -vs- lions**

**C. Even today, the unchanging God looks into the hearts of people to see faith.**

1. Since we cannot look into the hearts of others, we see only the actions.
  - a. For us to even attempt to judge the heart of another is forbidden.
  - b. We are too often fooled by skilled hypocrites.
2. Though we cannot even see faith in ourselves, faith ALWAYS bears visible fruit.
3. That's why God used the stories of the lives of great men of faith to teach us. ( **Heb. 11** )

**D. Today, God still selects and calls people based upon their faith.**

1. Without a sincere faith in God no one will be saved.
  - a. **Heb. 11: 6- And without faith it is impossible to please Him,**
  - b. **Eph. 2: 8- For by grace you have been saved through faith;**
2. Many who have no faith do religious things. ( preachers, elders, deacons )
  - a. There are active church leaders who believe in God, but trust only in themselves. ^
  - b. Many Christians believe but have no faith.
  - c. There are even a few who don't really believe, but have always "done church."
3. True faith takes control of our lives.
  - a. **II Cor. 5: 14- For the love of Christ controls us, ... <sup>15</sup> and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves,**
  - b. People of faith still have a life, but the entire direction of that life is controlled by God.
  - c. People without faith ridicule that concept, sometimes on there way to and from church.

**People of the world want to have the best they can get for themselves.  
They want to give the very best of everything to their family and to their children.**

**By natural people of faith want to give God the very best of everything.**

**Matt. 10: 37- He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me;  
and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.**

**I. God has never been willing to accept second best.****A. When God gave his law, He forbade offering anything less than perfect – the best.**

1. **Read ... Lev. 22: 17-25**
2. **Exod. 23:19- You shall bring the choice first fruits of your soil into the house of the LORD your God.**
3. Those who truly believe in God would give Him nothing less than the best.

**B. God has never accepted anything less than the best of anything.**

1. Remember our text ... esp. vs 10 ... “I’m not pleased with you ... nor will I accept..”
2. To offer less than one’s best is to be disrespectful of God. ( **Applies to everything.** )

**C. Even today, God will not accept average :**

1. **Rev. 3: 16-** So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.
2. God will not accept the Christian or congregation who accepts average as acceptable.
3. Some Christians / congregations do not have the ability to do better than the average, but God expects for us all to do the very best we have the ability to do for Him.

\* **Just drifting along has never cut it with God.**

**ILL. –** A wrestler told his coach he could do no more, he was exhausted. Coach pushed wrestlers face down in the mat so he couldn’t breath. For a full minute the wrestler fought ferociously to free himself. The coach compared the desire to win to the instinct / desire to live. **A Christians desire to give God the very best should be an instinct.**

**II. What are some of the areas in which Christians must give God their very best.****A. We give our very best in worship.**

1. We must make sure that our worship is an expression of a devoted heart.
  - a. **Matt. 22: 37** ... Christians must love the Lord with all their heart ... **most do.**
  - b. **John 2: 24** ... God only accepts worship which comes from the heart.
  - c. **Eph 5:19** ... God listens to the melody of our hearts while we sing words to each other.
2. Worship is not just the ritualistic performance of “acts of worship.” ( **It’s a blind lamb.** )
  - a. The leaders must put forth effort make the assembly a spiritual event.
  - b. The worshippers must prepare their hearts to spiritually connect with God.

**B. We give our body to God in the best condition possible.**

1. **Rom. 12: 1** ... The physical body of the Christian becomes God’s upon conversion.
2. **I Cor. 6: 19-20** ... We must keep our body pure because God’s Spirit dwells in it.
  - a. **I Cor. 3: 16-17** Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? <sup>17</sup> If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. ( **One must maintain God’s temple.** )
  - b. **Eph. 2: 19-22** ... We must continually be improving and growing His temple.

3. **Rom. 6: 13** ... We must refrain from sin because our body's are tools in God's hand.
  - a. God purchased our bodies so He can use them to do HIS work.
  - b. Thus, in every way, we must make our body the best we have the ability to make it.

**C. Christians must give God the very best of their possessions.**

1. America is the most prosperous nation on the earth. ( **Yet we complain it's not better.** )
  - a. Our technology makes our workers the most productive on the planet.
  - b. Our people work much harder than most others.
  - c. Our poor are considered rich in much of the world. ( **100s of 1000s want visas** )
2. Americans expect to have nice things. ( **Others work harder and have less.** )
  - a. Americans are generous from prosperity, but not sacrificial. ( **rich = barns full** )
  - b. People in other countries would fight for houses we condemn.
3. Every blessing is a test. ( **We are God's and all we have is His for His use.** )
  - a. Will we use it to serve God or consume it on ourselves ?
  - b. **Mal. 3: 8-10** “Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, “How have we robbed You?” In tithes and offerings.<sup>9</sup> You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you!<sup>10</sup> Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of Heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.”
  - c. Some withhold their possessions from God even when they die.

**D. Christians must give God the very best service possible.**

1. Many believers espouse faith, but do not serve God.
  - a. They may well object, “What do you mean; I go to church every Sunday.”
  - b. The Apostle Paul makes a distinction between worship and service.  
**Rom. 1:25-** For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator

\* **One serves when he accomplishes the work of the one he serves.**
2. Serving is more than just believing.
  - a. **James 2: 19-** You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.
  - b. A salesman may believe his product is the very best, but he still has to get out there and sell it.

\* **The servant must accomplish the work of the one he serves.**

3. Serving is not abstaining from breaking the rules. ( **Obeying commands** )
  - a. Consider an earthly parallel :
 

**A Caterpillar employee goes to work. He shows up on time, he doesn't forget any of the safety equipment, he doesn't violate any of the rules, he doesn't let any of his fellow employees break the rules, but he does not do any work during his shift.**

**Will his boss be pleased with him ? Will Caterpillar prosper ?**
  - b. **One who serves God must do HIS work on the earth.**
4. Likewise, God does not accept average.
  - a. **Rev. 3:16-** So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. ( **We can never accept average as ok.** )
  - b. God requires that we put forth our very best effort in all we do for Him.
 

**Col. 3:23-24** Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, <sup>24</sup> knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

### III. Our faith is tested daily in our attitude toward God.

#### A. People of faith devote themselves to God and to His objectives.

1. We live in the world so it's hard to have different values from all those around us.
2. It's hard to keep in perspective that not all who call themselves Christians have faith in God.
3. It's easy to settle back into a comfortable rut when those around us are doing the same.
 

**ILL.- Our whole team began to slow down as a unit during wind sprints. We got away with it as long as we all stayed in our proper places.**

#### B. We cannot fool God.

1. We cannot just go along with the crowd. ( **They're not going where we're going.** )
 

**II Cor. 10: 12-** ... When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.
2. God made each and every one of us different.
3. God placed specific, differing abilities within each and every one of us.
 

**\* Every ability is a stewardship for which we will give an accounting to God.**

#### C. Just as you are different from every other Christian, this congregation is different.

1. We have unique abilities and limitations. ( **We're not compared to anyone else.** )
2. Just as we are not responsible for or excused by other individuals, so it is as a group.

**D. All of us stand before God individually accountable only for our very best.**

1. No one can judge you -or- this congregation.
2. God knows exactly what HE has put within each of us.
3. God knows exactly what we can and cannot do.

**CONCLUSION :**

**A. God is a fair and honest Judge.**

1. He knows all the facts.
2. He is NEVER fooled
  - a. by spin,
  - b. by excuses, ( **symptomatic of the lack of faith** )
  - c. or misrepresentations.

**B. God wants for us to succeed. ( Our successes brings glory to Him. )**

1. He does not look for ways to condemn.
2. He does not put obstacles in our way.
3. He will help us if we have the faith to ask and to trust him to do so. **Eph. 3:20-21**

**C. However, He does expect us to give Him our very best in all we do.**

1. He doesn't accept an offering / a service just because it is offered.
2. The things we do glorify Him ONLY when they come from a sincere heart.
3. A sincere heart commits itself wholly to what it does for God.

**D. Apply to activities of the church.**

**INVITATION :**