***Malachi 2:10-17 Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously with one another By profaning the covenant of the fathers?*** *11****Judah has dealt treacherously, And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, For Judah has profaned The Lord’s holy*institution*which He loves: He has married the daughter of a foreign god.*** *12****May the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob The man who does this, being awake and aware, Yet who brings an offering to the Lord of hosts!*** *13****And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the Lord with tears, With weeping and crying; So He does not regard the offering anymore, Nor receive*it*with goodwill from your hands.*** *14****Yet you say, “For what reason?” Because the Lord has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant.*** *15****But did He not make*them*one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.*** *16****“For the Lord God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one’s garment with violence,” Says the Lord of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously.”*** *17****You have wearied the Lord with your words; Yet you say, “In what way have we wearied*Him?*” In that you say, “Everyone who does evil* Is*good in the sight of the Lord, And He delights in them,” Or, “Where*is*the God of justice?”***

Last week, we looked at the corrupt priests leading the people to do wrong. We saw how they defiled the altar and God held them accountable. They declared that the service of God was too much of a burden and the amount they received was inadequate for the work they were expected to do. God held them accountable for that as well. God hears our hearts and knows our motives. The same words spoken with different motives or a different level of trust are met perfectly and justly with God. Zacharias questioned Gabriel and was made mute. Mary questioned and was blessed. The difference God found in the heart.

 Verse 10 says *Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously with one another By profaning the covenant of the fathers?* Malachi changes direction and speaks of other sins. He starts by bringing to mind the unity of the people and the common ancestry they share. He highlights that God is their only God, and idolatry is forbidden. He reminds the priests that God made a covenant with the children of Israel. Why do we deal treacherously – Marriages to people of strange tribes, as found in the Book of Ezra, something Nehemiah addressed as well, is in view here. To marry outside of the Jewish people is a violation of God’s covenant. God separated the Children of Israel and made them His people. By intermarrying, they are profaning this covenant. Malachi’s words echo what Ezra himself said a few years earlier.

 Verse 11-13 *Judah has dealt treacherously, And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, For Judah has profaned The Lord’s holy institution which He loves: He has married the daughter of a foreign god. 12May the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob The man who does this, being awake and aware, Yet who brings an offering to the Lord of hosts! 13And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the Lord with tears, With weeping and crying; So He does not regard the offering anymore, Nor receive it with goodwill from your hands.* ***Judah*** *has dealt treacherously, And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, For Judah has profaned The Lord’s holy institution which He loves.* Malachi continues. The priests that conducted the marriages and the elders have approved the marriages and this profanes God’s Temple, even if the ceremonies were held elsewhere. By profaning the covenant, the Temple, and the Law, the priests carry that guilt into their Temple service and profane God’s Holy Institution. *He has married the daughter of a foreign god.* Rather, Malachi is saying that the Jewish people were marrying the daughters that worshipped strange and false gods. *May the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob The man who does this –* May the Lord punish with death the man that convinces the people that sin and intermarriage between the Jews and the worshippers of false gods is acceptable. This applies as well to the man taking the woman as his wife. Both the priest and the person know better. B*eing awake and aware, Yet who brings an offering to the Lord of hosts!*  As in Isaiah 50, the priest is to be awake to the wisdom of God and he is charged to make the people aware as well. The disciples, or the learners, were to have an alert ear for the things of God. Malachi now highlights that God will leave neither the teacher nor the student unpunished, as both have ignored the teachings of God. The priests were guilty of marrying women of foreign gods, just as the people were. All the while these may bring a large offering, God demands obedience. Without repentance, the offering is not accepted. *And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the Lord with tears, With weeping and crying; So He does not regard the offering anymore, Nor receive it with goodwill from your hands.* This verse has the idea that the priests were not only marrying women from strange tribes, but they were divorcing their Jewish wives first! God is hearing the outcry of these women, their tears are washing over the altar. God heard the words of these wronged wives so clearly that He refused the sacrifices of the husbands. God hears the prayers of His servants and children. When they lift wrongs to His attention, He will address the complaints.

Verses 14-15 *Yet you say, “For what reason?” Because the Lord has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant. 15But did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.* ***Yet*** *you say, “For what reason?* Now Malachi says that the priests will ask of God why their offering is not accepted. God will gladly give His answer, and give it clearly -  *Because the Lord has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth.* God has seen the way the wives are being dealt with, cast off and scorned when they’ve grown older or a younger woman catches the man’s eye. God sees the contemptuous way these women are being treated. *Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant.* God sees marriage as a lifetime covenant. Taking a wife, the man and woman become one flesh. It was that way in the beginning, in our scripture, and, make no mistake, today as well. As Jesus says in Matthew 19:4-5  *And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ 5 and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one f*lesh. God could have made many men and many women so we could just run around and sin all we wanted, but He made one woman and one man, a picture of devotion one to another.  *Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.* Make a note that to sin against what God has joined together is to sin against God Himself.

Verse 16 *- “For the Lord God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one’s garment with violence,” Says the Lord of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously.”* Divorce does not please God. There are times that it is necessary, but we have made marriage casual. Some change spouses like changing tires. Those look worn out and are getting bald… I’ll change. God hates divorcing the spouse of your promise and He hates divorce for the sake of marrying a younger and foreign woman from a strange nation even more.

Verse 17 *You have wearied the Lord with your words; Yet you say, “In what way have we wearied Him?” In that you say, “Everyone who does evil Is good in the sight of the Lord, And He delights in them,” Or, “Where is the God of justice?”* ***You*** *have wearied the Lord with your words-* Malachi now utters a chilling statement. The people have spoken so much blasphemy, have accused God of injustice, and have perverted His Law and sullied His altar and Temple that God says – You have wearied me. They have tried His patience. *Yet you say, “In what way have we wearied Him?” In that you say, “Everyone who does evil Is good in the sight of the Lord, And He delights in them,” Or, “Where is the God of justice?”* The priests continue to feign innocence. They continue to believe they can lie and deceive their way with God. They point out that the evil are prospering and that is a their reasoning for not following the Law. The priests do not call for an accounting of this evil and instead embrace it and go along. The claim is made that God is rewarding the doers of evil. But, we know that God calls each and every person to account. In fact, we are told in Matthew 12:36-37 *But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.* Galatians 6 assures us - *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.* God sees and God will call for account.

Malachi 2 focuses on the sins of the priests and the sins of those that should know better. This applies to us today. We have no excuse. God sees our motives and He knows our hearts. Malachi continues to call the people to account and they deny. Likewise, people are being called today to account and they deny. God is not deceived. In the end, God will welcome His children into eternal life and He will allow those that rejected Him to go into eternal torment. Let us never be deceived… God is not asleep, He is not looking away. We will either hear Well Done or Depart from Me. Be assured, God is not mocked.