***Malachi 3:10-18 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try 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 such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. 11“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” Says the Lord of hosts; 12“And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land,” Says the Lord of hosts. 13“Your words have been harsh against Me,” Says the Lord, “Yet you say, ‘What have we spoken against You?’ 14You have said, ‘It is useless to serve God; What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, And that we have walked as mourners Before the Lord of hosts? 15So now we call the proud blessed, For those who do wickedness are raised up; They even tempt God and go free.’ ” 16Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, And the Lord listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the Lord And who meditate on His name. 17“They shall be Mine,” says the Lord of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels.And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him.” 18Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him.***

When God introduced Himself to Moses, He said, “I Am that I Am.” Some translations say, “I Am who I Am.” The meaning in the Hebrew has the idea of “I will Be as I will Be”. God will Be as He will Be – He will Be what we need, when we need, how we need, in all our needs. Most of all, He is Who we need in His Son, Jesus. Never once does God say, “I Have what I Have…. I Possess what I Possess.” No. As I have grown in God, I notice that what I possess has taken on less and less importance. Who I am… my Christ-likeness… the Good I can do for others has taken on more and more importance. We rob God in many ways. Money is probably the least of them. We rob Him of our talents, our time, and our love… usually with the thieving words… I’ll do that tomorrow.

 Verses 10-12 *Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try 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 such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. 11“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” Says the Lord of hosts; 12“And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land,” Says the Lord of hosts.*

***Bring*** *all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house,* The ancient text has the idea of bringing all that which is owed to the storehouse, the Temple, ON TIME. Make good on the solemn promise before God. The storehouse here would have been a large storeroom in the Temple for storing offerings. For the purpose of providing for the services and ministers in the Temple, Priests, Levites.*And try 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 such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.* This is the only place I know of where God says, “Try Me now in this.” Test Me. Make an experiment for your own proof. God then tells what the result of the test will be, when we are Faithful. He will open the windows of heaven and pour out plenty in proportion to the gladness of heart with which we give. Talents, Time, Love, Money – a tenth and God will send showers of blessings, bringing forth an abundance in our lives. Not always money – sometimes an abundance of healing, an abundance of relationship fixing, an abundance of things lasting longer, an abundance of help when we need it desperately. In this time, there was a drought and people were mortgaging their homes, vineyards, and fields to buy food. Nehemiah 5 tells us of this. Often, God is said to either open the windows of heaven or shut the heavens. Open = abundance. Shut = scarcity. 2 Chronicles 31:10 tells of a similar situation. Hezekiah broke down the false idols and the people began to bring the tithes. Listen, *And Azariah the chief priest, from the house of Zadok, answered him and said, “Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat and have plenty left, for the Lord has blessed His people; and what is left is this great abundance.* The result of Faithfulness to God is always abundance, overflowing. Luke 6:38 *Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.* This is not prosperity Gospel stuff. God knows what we need perfectly and our Faithfulness will always be outgiven by God in the ways He knows will bless us most. *“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” Says the Lord of hosts.* Worms, locusts, pestilence will not devour the crops. The vines will not drop their fruit before they are fully ripe. There will be no scorching winds or damaging storms. *“And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land,” Says the Lord of hosts.* All nations will know and recognize God’s blessings. Your land will be known as a pleasant. Love and abundance will be a blessing to those in the nation, as well as those outside the nation. Overflowing blessings touch many lives.

 Verses 13-15*“Your words have been harsh against Me,” Says the Lord, “Yet you say, ‘What have we spoken against You?’ 14You have said, ‘It is useless to serve God; What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, And that we have walked as mourners Before the Lord of hosts? 15So now we call the proud blessed, For those who do wickedness are raised up; They even tempt God and go free.* ***Your****words have been harsh against Me,” Says the Lord, “Yet you say, ‘What have we spoken against You?* Malachi now changes gears. He begins to speak on the wicked and blasphemous way the people have spoken of God. No reverence. God draws a sharp line between the righteous and the wicked. The wicked have dishonored, accused, dismissed God. He has heard and now calls them to account. But they deny this, blinking with innocence, What have we spoken against You? God is perfectly willing to respond - *You have said, ‘It is useless to serve God; What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, And that we have walked as mourners Before the Lord of hosts?* They may not have said this with their lips, but they’ve murmured it in their thoughts, and screamed it with their actions or lack of Faithfulness. The text has the idea of “There is no advantage to us for serving God. Again, not saying it out loud doesn’t mean it wasn’t said. God sees the heart. He sees them thinking – what profit is there to keep God’s commands and ordinances? They continue to wonder what good it does to walk as mourners, in sackcloth, while the wicked appear to prosper. They conclude there’s no benefit to walking in repentance and humility with God. *So now we call the proud blessed, For those who do wickedness are raised up; They even tempt God and go free.* Now, the people are celebrating and calling the wicked and proud blessed! That sounds familiar!! We see people “Doing what feels good”, “Doing what makes you happy”, “You do you” – God says, “No.” We watch as Hollywood and much of the country blaspheme the Word of God. Israel had their own versions of Hollywood and Sports stars. The wicked seemed to flourish. They blasphemed and tempted God and seemingly went without consequence. God says, “No.” Consequences don’t always come in this life. Let’s not be deceived. God is not mocked. For as a man sows, so shall he reap. Sometimes in this life. Most assuredly in the life hereafter.

 Verses 16 – 17 *Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, And the Lord listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the Lord And who meditate on His name. 17“They shall be Mine,” says the Lord of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels.And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him.”* ***Then*** *those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, And the Lord listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the Lord And who meditate on His name.* The contempt grew, but the righteous spoke to one another, knowing that God’s ways were not our ways, knowing God has a plan and judgements would come. They encouraged one another, speaking of the Truth of God. They edified one another, recalling God’s trustworthiness and His unchanging nature. Even while wickedness spewed forth, the righteous remembered. And the Lord heard. He committed to His unfailing memory these righteous believers. He still does that today my friends. *“They shall be Mine,” says the Lord of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels.And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him.”* They shall belong to Me. They will be my vessels of honor. Precious jewels in My Kingdom. I want to be a precious jewel before God. They will be spared, which makes me think of the church being taken up before the Tribulation. God will spare those that have remained Faithful. He will spare us as a father spares his own son. When He sees us, we will be covered by the blood of His own Son and He will spare us, because He sees His Son, because we have become sons and daughters of the most High King.

 Verse 18 *Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him.* Then, you will again see clearly between the righteous and the wicked. Now, you’re confused and your vision is blurred. But God will bring clarity. You will see clearly who is truly serving God with a righteous heart and who is doing it only for show or not at all. Those that resent and despise the service of God show contempt for Him and His Temple. God will reveal the difference between the truly Holy and the profane, the godly and the ungodly.

 So tonight we leave Malachi. He has given us a glimpse, a glimmer of what is to come in Malachi 4. We’ll get a glimpse of the coming Savior and His Kingdom. God will soon fall silent for 400 years. When God speaks again, Righteousness and Truth will be living among us, the Word of God become flesh. As Malachi says, Jesus brings clarity. May we stay clearly focused, seeking to serve Him, while the lost may yet be saved.