



## Sermon Study Guide

*The Danger of a Dead Faith: Will You Fear God?*  
*Malachi 3:13-4:6*  
*Sunday, February 3, 13*

### Introduction

- Read Matthew 18:21-35, “The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant.”
  - Why does the king forgive the servant’s debt?
  - Why does Jesus tell this parable?
  - How does this parable prepare us to hear Malachi 3:13-4:6?
- Read Malachi 3:13-4:6. Justice dictates we spend an eternity in hell. Grace frees us through the cross.

### The Problem of Justice (Malachi 3:13-15)

- At the heart of Christianity is the awesome claim that the universe is governed by an all-powerful and benevolent Creator-God.
- Why do so many people reject this truth today?
- Unbelievers often raise the problem of suffering. In what ways are believers tempted to struggle with questions of justice?
- How would you counsel someone who does not see justice in this world?

### The Promise of Justice (Malachi 3:16-18)

- God does not guarantee justice in this world, but He does promise justice will come.
- Justice is coming for all, but those who fear God will find His favor.
- What does it mean to fear God? (See Malachi 1:6; Prov. 1:7)
  - Why do so many equate “fear of God” to outward acts of religious formality (church attendance, Bible reading, etc.)?
  - How can you examine your heart to see if *you* fear the Lord?
- The Lord tells those who fear Him that He notices them (v. 16); He remembers them (v. 16); He claims them (v. 17); and He spares them (v. 17).
  - How does this response answer the problem of justice?
  - How is this response an encouragement to the Christian?

### The Price of Justice (Malachi 4:1-3)

- What is the price of justice, according to verse 1?
- To understand the “just-ness” of this justice we have to understand sin. What is sin and why is it so terrible?
- Jesus spoke a great deal of hell. (Luke 13:28; Mark 9:42-50; Matt. 24:41)
- Why do so many believers avoid talking about hell?

- What advantages come from speaking carefully but openly about the reality of hell?
- According to this passage, even those who fear God deserve hell. How do we know this to be the case? (Hint: the answer is in 4:2!)

### **The Person of Justice (Malachi 4:4-6)**

- Malachi ends with the promise of the coming of Elijah. Why was Elijah so important? (See 1 Kings 18; 2 Kings 2)
- What will the coming Elijah do (v. 6)?
- Earthly families are blessed when the hearts of fathers are turned to their children and vice versa. But why is it appropriate to think that v. 6 is also referring to reconciliation between God and His people? (Hint: see Mal. 1:2, 6; 3:17)
- According to Jesus, John the Baptist is the promised Elijah (see Matt. 11 and 17).
- John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as one who would bring justice. (See John 2:29).
- What did the Lamb of God suffer on the cross for sinners like us? (See Mal. 4:1; 1 Pet. 2:24)

### **Conclusion**

- Have can you help a non-Christian understand the reality of coming justice?
- How does Malachi 3:13-4:16 affect the way you treat those who have sinned against you?
- Talk about the last time you had the opportunity to talk to someone about the mercy of Christ.