

Hey, I'm Coming Over! - Malachi 4:4-6

Introduction: Imagine you've moved to a beautiful beach front home on the beach in Southern California. You're just starting to unpack when the phone rings. It's me on the other end, and I say, "*Hey, I'm coming to see you.*" Just what you wanted was company right? Well, you're already tired, but you manage to organize a few boxes, but soon, you fall asleep. Then the next morning comes and you realize you missed me.

But the phone rings, and it's me again: "*I'm on the way. I'll be there soon.*" Again you don't want me to see the house so disorganized, so you get busy unpacking boxes. Well, the day comes and goes, and I never show up.

The next day, I call again, "*Hey I'm on the way over; I'll see you soon.*" You start to think to yourself, "*Right I've heard that before.*" So you continue to unpack and organize, but this time, you're not in such a frenzy. Well, this continues for a week. On the eighth morning I call again. And again I tell you, "*I'm on my way over; I can't wait to see you. I'll be there soon!*" By now you're thinking, "*Yea, and Elvis is alive too!*" So today you decide that since you've got the house in order, and since you've been waiting for me to come for a week and I haven't showed up yet; today you're going to finally go out and enjoy the beach. As the sun sets into the Pacific you walk back up to your house and find a note taped to the door. It says, "*I Drove eight days to get here, but you weren't home. Sorry I missed you! Pastor Steve.*"

From the start I was coming. It takes awhile to drive from Georgia to California, but I was getting closer all the time!

That's the way it is with Jesus. He's said for centuries that He's coming, but just because He hasn't come yet doesn't mean He won't come.

When we began in Malachi, we said that the theme was "*Getting Ready for the Coming of the Lord.*" His message has been a call for sinful people to get ready for the Lord's coming. So it's fitting that the book closes with a final reminder and a final call to be ready for the coming of Christ. And in these last few verses, it is as if He is saying, "*Since I'm on my way, here's how you ought to live.*" And we ought to live in not only in expectation of His coming, but with Preparation for His coming.

John speaks of being prepared for His coming. He says in **1 John 2:28 (NIV)** “*And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.*” And in these last three verses, Malachi also talks about being prepared for the coming of the Lord.

Are you expecting His return? Are you prepared for His coming? Would you want to meet Him in the condition you’re in right now? Let’s look at how Malachi says we should live in light of Jesus’ coming. First, he says we should:

1. Remember the Law of God (4)

God, through the prophet Malachi, takes the people back to the Law which He gave Moses and tells us to remember His Word. The word “*remember*” means to reflect, to reconsider, to think upon and then act on what is remembered. They were to remember that it wasn’t Moses’ law, but God’s law (“*I gave him at Horeb*”). They were to remember that the “*decrees and laws*” spoke of all the commands, statutes, and ordinances that regulated their life; they were given to be as a way to point them to God and a way of life. The call to remember emphasizes two things. First:

A. The Importance of God’s Word.

Joshua 1:8 (NIV) says, “*Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*”

Psalms 1:1-2 (NIV) says, “*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.*” God’s Word is so important in our life, we shouldn’t just occasionally read it, but daily remember it. It’s not just important for us to read it on Sundays or when there’s a crisis, but it’s food for the soul every day of our lives.

You wouldn’t think of not eating from Monday through Saturday would you? Well, we shouldn’t miss being nourished from God’s Word every day either. But it seems as though a lot of Christians are suffering from spiritual malnutrition.

A Barna Research Group survey conducted among a sample of 641 adults proves this. Among Christians in the survey:

22% thought the Book of Thomas was in the Bible.

27% said that Jonah is not a book of the Bible.

11% thought the Book of Isaiah is located in the N. T.

16% said Jesus was born in Jerusalem, and 8% said it was Nazareth. 6% didn't know.

The study said that the only 18% of all Christians said they read the Bible every day, and 23% said they do not read the Bible at all. Yet 93% of all Americans own at least one Bible, and most own more than one.

(Christianity Today, April 23, 1990.)

Someone has written an interesting viewpoint on Bible reading habits *entitled "The Bible and the TV Guide."*

On the table side by side, The Holy Bible and the TV guide.

One is well worn, but cherished with pride (Not the Bible, but the TV guide.)

One is used daily to help folk decide. It isn't the Bible; it's the TV guide.

As pages are turned, what shall they see? Oh, what does it matter, turn on the TV.

The confusion reigns, they can't all agree On what they shall watch on the old TV.

So they open the book in which they confide. No! It isn't the Bible; it's the TV guide.

The Word of God is seldom read, Maybe a verse 'ere they fall into bed.

Exhausted and sleepy and tired as can be, Not from reading the Bible - from watching TV.

There was a Christian man in Detroit who was badly burned. Upon recovery and discovering he was blind; his greatest regret was that he could no longer read his Bible. He requested that he be taught to read the Bible in Braille. When the tips of his fingers were tested, it was discovered that because they were so badly burned and scarred there was no sensitivity in them. His toes, his lips, were tested but the same result. Finally they tested his tongue and he learned to read the Bible with his tongue.

I'm afraid that not only to a lot of Christians lack the desire to read the Bible, they also lack the discipline and dedication to read the Bible. But it should be so important in our life. It's our guide, our teacher, our

comfort and our hope. We need to remember it every day. But this call to remember also emphasizes:

B. The Instruction of God's Word.

If there's going to be a daily living of God's Word, there must be a daily learning of God's Word. It's good to read daily, but it's more important to study it and learn from it.

Someone said, *"This book will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from this book."* Well, if that's true, then there must be an awful lot of Christians who are allowing sin to keep them from reading it and studying it. There must be an awful lot of Christians who are allowing sin to keep them from Sunday School and church. But if we are to live as though Jesus was coming again, this book should be our guide.

Psalms 119:33-34 (NIV) says *"Teach me, O LORD, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end. Give me understanding, and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart."* So, we should remember the importance of God's Word as our daily guide, but secondly, we should:

2. Recall the Lessons of the Godly (5-6)

In verses 5-6, Malachi looks to the future and speaks of Elijah's return. It's a prophetic statement that Elijah will return to this earth before the return of the Lord.

Jews still look for the return of Elijah. When they observe the Passover they always sit a place at the table for Elijah. A cup of wine is set at his place at the table and the door is opened to welcome the spirit of Elijah.

According to what Jesus said in Mt.17:11-13, John the Baptist was a partial fulfillment of this prophecy. John had come in the spirit of Elijah. John's message had been *"Prepare the way for the Lord."* The message of Elijah was, *"Be prepared for the coming of the Lord."* It was a call to remember the lessons of the godly and be ready for the Lord's coming!

In vs. 6, he speaks of the *"fathers."* This referred to their godly ancestors who had faithfully walked with God, and the *"children"* referred to the contemporaries of the prophets.

It was a call for the children to remember their *"fathers"* and how they had overcome temptations in their lives. It was a call for the *"children"* to learn the lesson of their *"father"* Noah who trusted the Word of God and not the reasoning of man. It was a call for the *"children"* to learn the lesson of their *"father"* Abraham who

had an unshakable faith in God in spite of God's seemingly cruel instruction to kill his own son.

It was a call for the "*children*" to learn the lesson of their "*father*" Moses who, in spite of his past and his limitations, became the mighty deliverer.

It was a call for the same standard of life to be applied to their life. They were to return to the same godly walk of their fathers. They were to repent of their sins and be clean.

As we get ready for the coming of the Lord, we seek to repent and be clean too. **1 John 3:2-3 (NIV) says,** "*Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*"

Getting ready for His coming calls for personal examination, is there a sin to confess? A grudge I need to make right? Some failure I need to repent of? Some matter that needs forgiving?

I close of the words of Edwin Orr, "*Search Me, O God.*"

Search me, O God, and know my heart today;

Try me, O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray.

See if there be some wicked way in me;

Cleanse me from every sin and set me free.

Is that your prayer tonight?