



malachi

MAKING GOD'S NAME GREAT AMONG ALL THE NATIONS

Whether we look at ancient Israel or ourselves as the church, God's desire for His people is to make His name great among the nations. In Malachi's day, many people brought shame to the name of God; they were not concerned about the glory of God. Why? Malachi provides us with the information—information we can use for evaluation and reflection as we ask the following questions of ourselves: Are we making God's name great among the nations? Could we be shaming and profaning the name of God according to His Word?

Do you know how many conversations you have during any given day? You may be unable to provide an exact number, but if you compiled a list, you would probably be amazed. No doubt your list would include conversations with family, friends, acquaintances, and others—and don't forget the conversations you have with yourself.

Conversations take on a variety of different dynamics. There are verbal conversations as well as voice, email, and text messages. It is estimated that 18- to 29-year-olds send a minimum of 88 text messages a day, and I am guessing this number will only increase.

Not only do we have conversations with those we know, but sometimes we eavesdrop on the conversations of others, don't we?

When we open the pages of Malachi, the last book of the

minor prophets, we immediately are introduced to a series and sequence of conversations between God and His people.

The first chapter of Malachi serves as an on-ramp to help us see and understand the nature of these conversations. I will be skipping through several of these and then will fill in the details.

"The oracle of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi"
(Malachi 1:1 ESV).

An *oracle* is a word, a conversation, but more than that, it is the idea of a burden. There was a burden Malachi, the messenger, needed to share with the people from the Lord:

"'I have loved you,' says the LORD. But you say, 'How have You loved us?' 'Is not Esau Jacob's brother?' declares the LORD. 'Yet I have loved Jacob...'" (Malachi 1:2 ESV).

This may not mean much to you now, but it will. Let's read on.

"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My fear? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who despise My name. But you say, 'How have we despised your name?'... For from the rising of the sun to its setting My name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to My name, and a pure offering. For My name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts. But you profane it... For I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and My name will be feared among the nations" (Malachi 1:6, 11-12a, 14b ESV).

Repeatedly in this conversation between God and His people, God is telling them they are bringing shame to His name, they are profaning His name. Isn't that considered profanity? God's name should be glorified and honored. His name is a declaration of who He is and what He does.

There are different types of profanity, but there is nothing more profane than using the name of God in a trivial, derogatory and condemning way.

God is saying to His people that it is not the words they speak, but the life they live that brings shame to His name. The purpose of those who belong to God is always to make His name great among the nations.

It is the same within a family. Anyone within a family wants the members of that family to reflect the character, heart, nature, and values of the family. When someone doesn't, it brings shame to the family, making the family feel profaned.

God had shown grace to His people and God wanted them to focus on making His name great among the nations.

This is a theme throughout Scripture. In the first book of Genesis, God called Abraham and told him He was going to make him the father of a great nation, and that nation would be the source of blessing to all the earth.

Look at these words from the prophet, Jeremiah:

"For as the loincloth clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to Me, declares the LORD, that they might be for Me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory, but they would not listen" (Jeremiah 13:11 ESV).

God wants His people to bring glory and honor to His name from the rising of the sun to its setting.

"If you don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because you have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because you have nibbled so long at the table of

the world. Your soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great.” —John Piper, *A Hunger For God*

“It is about the greatness of God, not the significance of man. God made man small and the universe big to say something about himself.”

—John Piper, *Don't Waste Your Life*

In Malachi's day, even as in our own, many people brought shame to the name of God; people were not concerned about the glory of God. What was ancient Israel doing to bring shame to and profane God's name?

Malachi provides us with information we can use for evaluation and reflection as we ask this question of ourselves: “Are we shaming and profaning the name of God?”

1. We Bring Shame to God's Great Name Through Ingratitude

“‘I have loved you,’ says the LORD. But you say, ‘How have You loved us?’” (Malachi 1:2a ESV).

This is the equivalent of asking God, “What have You done for me lately?”

Ingratitude. When we show signs of ingratitude, we doubt and defy the grace and goodness of God in our lives.

“There was a growing skepticism about God's covenant love for His people; their religion had degenerated into meaningless ritual and they had lost any concern of godly living.” —John Blanchard

The motivation of Christian living should always be one of gratitude. We should seek righteousness and holiness—a rightness before God not because we are guilty, but because we are grateful for what God has done for us through His great love in Christ.

Nothing could be worse than to say, “God has been gracious to me and now I am going to live a life of ingratitude to Him.”

When the Jews went back to their homeland after being scattered, there was a swell in their economy at first, but eventually their life circumstances began deteriorating in terms of their lifestyle and life quality. They were experiencing a period of economic recession.

They found Jerusalem wasn't what it used to be in status, beauty or wealth. Unfortunately, the people measured the goodness of God and their thankfulness to Him based on their economic status. As their economy deteriorated, so did their view of God.

As a result, God reminded them to look at who they were and what He had done for them.

"The oracle of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. 'I have loved you,' says the LORD. But you say, 'How have You loved us?' 'Is not Esau Jacob's brother?' declares the LORD. 'Yet I have loved Jacob'" (Malachi 1:1-2 ESV).

Jacob was the grandson of Abraham: Abraham... Isaac... Jacob. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Although Esau was the older of the two sons (and by tradition and right would inherit from Isaac), Esau sold his inheritance to Jacob. All this came about through God's providence because God had chosen Jacob, the younger, to become the father of the 12 tribes of Israel, not Esau.

When God talks about Jacob in Malachi 1:2, God is answering the question, "How have You loved us?" by reminding them of His covenant with Abraham and the Jewish nation.

"When therefore God says that He loved the Jews, we see that His object was to convict them of ingratitude for having despised the singular favor bestowed on them alone..." —John Calvin, *Commentaries on Zechariah and Malachi*

The clearest, most telling and convincing promise of their lives and hearts as a nation was that they were Israel—God's chosen people. They had an exclusive role with God. Throughout history, God

had intervened in marvelous and miraculous ways on their behalf. And yet, here we find them sulking, pouting, and basically asking God, "What have You done for us lately? You don't love us!"

"Yet I have loved Jacob but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert.' If Edom says, 'We are shattered but we will rebuild the ruins,' the LORD of hosts says, 'They may build, but I will tear down, and they will be called "the wicked country'" (Malachi 1:2b-4b ESV).

God is telling the Israelites to look at their cousins, the Edomites, in comparison to what He has done for Israel. They are not like their cousins.

In our study of Obadiah, we learned the descendants of Esau (Edomites) were actually under the judgment of God. The Edomites refused Israel passage to cross through their land when the Israelites came out of Egypt. Although the Edomites were cousins to Israel through Esau, they resisted Israel and allowed attacks on them.

God's sovereign, elective love for Israel was indisputable, undeniable and providential. Yet, what did the Israelites do in Malachi? They despised the grace of God.

In Romans 9, we read about how God chose Israel and about God's love and care for them. Even when

speaking to Pharaoh (who tried to annihilate the Jews), the Bible says, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth" (Romans 9:17 ESV).

God said that He used Pharaoh (who did not even intend to be used by Him) because God wanted to bless His people, Israel. And through this, He would make His name great among the earth.

However, the Israelites established a view of God's love based on their current circumstances, not on God's revelation nor His promises. Frankly, the people just made it all about themselves. They were sulking and pouting ingrates.

"Do you feel loved by God because you believe He makes much of you, or because you believe He frees you and empowers you to enjoy making much of Him?" —John Piper

God *has* made much of you, but the whole of your life and faith should be living out the love of God in a way in which you make much of who He is and what He has done for you.

"But you say, 'How have we despised Your name?' By offering polluted food upon My altar. But you say, 'How have we polluted You?' By saying that the LORD's table may be despised. When you

offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the LORD of hosts. And now entreat the favor of God, that He may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will He show favor to any of you? says the LORD of hosts... Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished" (Malachi 1:6b-10, 14a ESV).

Do you know what is the highest form of ingratitude? It is when God has been gracious to you and yet, you give Him back the least you can. It is when you experience grace and then feel you are entitled to it instead of grace changing your heart! That is being ungrateful to a Holy God who has been gracious to you.

The Israelites were sacrificing to God, but they were giving God the lop-eared and blind lambs. They were not bringing anything of value to God.

Do you know the grace of God in Christ, yet worship Him in convenience instead of sacrifice?

What a contrast "the cheat" is in Malachi 1:14 who "sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished" to the words of King David.

The Bible tells us that King David had it in his heart to build a great

house for God—the first temple. Although this desire originated in the heart of David, it would be Solomon, David's son, who would build the temple.

In 1 Chronicles 21, we read that King David approached Ornan the Jebusite about purchasing land for the temple site. Ornan offered to "give it all" to David. But David said, "No, but I will buy them for the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings **that cost me nothing**" (1 Chronicles 21:24 ESV, emphasis added).

When God shows you great grace, do you respond in a minimal way, bringing shame to God's great name? Gratitude should overwhelm your heart and change your life!

2. We Bring Shame to God's Great Name Through Idolatry

There was an issue with idolatry in the book of Malachi.

Ingratitude is an internal attitude that ignores God's gracious work, but idolatry is giving honor and glory to false gods. Ingratitude is an **attitude**; idolatry is an **active work**.

"And now, O priests, this command is for you. If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to My name, says the LORD of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings. Indeed, I

have already cursed them, because you do not lay it to heart" (Malachi 2:1-2 ESV).

There was something wrong in the hearts of the priests, the spiritual leaders of that day. They were leading in the wrong direction. They were betraying their calling. They were not seeking nor honoring God.

"For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 2:7-8 ESV).

And the result?

"Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD which He loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god" (Malachi 2:11 ESV).

The priests who were suppose to represent God to the people and the people to God turned their work into a ministry of apostasy. They did what was convenient and best for them—that which gave them the maximum benefit and profit. As a result, the people were living on cheap substitutes with no intention of honoring the name of God, but living for themselves.

The priests had become a group of spiritual “ear ticklers.”

Paul addressed this same issue in 2 Timothy:

“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into **myths**” (2 Timothy 4:3-4 ESV, emphasis added).

What is mythology? It is all about gods and idols, isn't it? We find mythology when we look back in history to the Greek and Roman gods.

In ancient Israel, the faithless priests had caused a faithless generation to become idol worshipers.

“The Christian preacher is to be neither a speculator who invents new doctrines which please him, nor an editor who excises old doctrines which displease him, but a steward, God's steward, dispensing faithfully God's household truths committed to him in the Scriptures, nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else.” —John Stott

I hope you will pray for your pastor that he will be found faithful, always being a good steward of the truth. One day he will answer

to God for everything he said and to everyone who listened.

It is easier for a pastor to be popular, pleasant and positive than to preach sin and judgment. Every pastor—at some time or another—wonders what it would feel like for people to stand and applaud when he walks in the room because he makes them feel good.

However, pastors are not called to preach only to make people feel good. More often than not, pastors are called to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable with passion and conviction from the truth of God's Word.

Today when you hear the word, *idol*, you may think of a little chubby, ceramic figurine. But in truth, the human heart is an idol factory. Within every human heart, we have the capacity (and often the desire) to make creations from our own hand—to create god-alternatives and counterfeit gods.

“What is an idol? Anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give.”
—Tim Keller, *Counterfeit Gods*

When we begin to see idolatry this way, we realize how much time is spent trying to get from *things* what only God can give.

"Our contemporary society is not fundamentally different from these ancient ones. Each culture is dominated by our own set of idols. Each has its 'priesthoods,' its totems and rituals. Each one has its shrines—whether office towers, spas and gyms, studios, shops or stadiums—where sacrifices must be made in order to procure the blessings of the good life and ward off disaster. What are the gods of beauty, power and money and achievement but the same things that have assumed mythic proportions in our individual lives and in our society?"

—Tim Keller

Most of us don't have figurines of Aphrodite, Apollo, Aries, Artemis, and Athena, but we *do* have gods in our lives.

Do you seek the god of **comfort**, indulging yourself any pleasure, sensation or satiation in order to pacify the desire for comfort? Do you have a little private life unto yourself that nobody else knows about?

It is amazing how much we look to technology to bring us the comfort of socialization, information and connection—even fulfillment.

We often look for comfort in managing our time and schedule in order to do what we want with our lives. After work, are you the "one-eyed monster," watching hours upon hours of endless movies and television, looking for

what makes you feel better at the end of the day?

I'm not saying we shouldn't be able to enjoy some things. There is much to be learned through story, learning, listening and reading. But we all look for comfort—the least resistant, easiest way.

We also look for **control**. We have made much of the god of control in our world—how to control everything and its outcome. We often try to control our schedule and the relationships in our lives. Where is it going to go? What is it going to be?

If you feel defeated and have not found a god that will comfort you, it is often the god of control that makes you think you can take charge of your life—keeping away everything that will hurt you.

A parent knows this, right? Have you ever tried to control your kids? Let me assure you, the more you try to control them, the more you realize how out-of-control you really are.

We have to learn to give our children to the Lord. I don't mean we become flippant by announcing, "Whatever!" But we have to learn that only in the worship of God can we fulfill the biggest responsibilities, relationships and demands upon us through the power and strength that comes from knowing the true and living God.

That is why we have to know His truth and have His Word in our lives. The idols of our hands and heart are always deficient. Every idol promises happiness, joy, and satisfaction, but in the end, idols make us insecure, agitated and irritable. Are you enslaved by an idol today, bringing shame to God's great name?

3. We Bring Shame to God's Great Name Through Infidelity

"And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand" (Malachi 2:13 ESV).

God no longer regarded the offerings of the Israelites nor accepted their lop-eared offerings.

"But you say, 'Why does He not?' Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Did He not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. 'For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless'" (Malachi 2:14-16 ESV).

What a strong portion of Scripture regarding God's standard, expectation, and value of marriage!

Take note. In Scripture, you will never hear the voice of God speak through a prophet or any other form of instruction to a nation, the church or an individual regarding the qualifications of leadership and character that God does not also address the value of marriage and family life. Why?

From the very beginning, marriage was a special order created by God with specificity and intentionality so that through the process of a family, God would bring blessing, strength and security in any society of people. Marriage was never established by God as simply the anthropological progression of human culture.

When God spoke to His covenant people, God gave them specific commands, and every one of those commands always included a command regarding the fidelity of their heart and relationship within the context of marriage.

If no one has ever told you this before, let me be the first. *Marriage was not given by God to make you happy; it was given by God to bring glory to His name!* We shame and profane the name of God when we cheapen, devalue, and trivialize marriage.

Jesus spoke and taught about marriage in Matthew 5. And in

Matthew 19, the Pharisees tested Jesus by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" (Matthew 19:3 ESV).

Jesus answered the Pharisees: "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matthew 19:4-6 ESV).

God makes a big deal out of marriage and yet, we have made marriage the most negotiable contract in American life and in the lives of many of those who claim to know the name of Christ. Marriage is not a contractual relationship; it is a covenant relationship.

A contractual relationship is one of mutual negotiation—one that can be broken at any time. But a covenant is something that is inviolable; it cannot be changed. God puts a standard of protection and care around the matter of marriage.

"You have wearied the LORD with your words. But you say, 'How have we wearied Him?' By saying, 'Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and He delights in them'" (Malachi 2:17 ESV).

The Israelites were calling evil good and good evil. Likewise, our

culture has done the same thing regarding marriage. What God said was good, we call it evil.

What is good according to God? One man. One woman. For a lifetime. Specificity to sexuality. Intentionality for a lifetime of relationship.

To what end did God intend marriage? The Bible says in order that God could have godly offspring.

Children need the stability and integrity of a mother and father who are committed to each other and to God in order to "bring [children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4 ESV).

No, it doesn't take a village; it takes a family! Our world is profuse with the idea that it takes a village in the raising of children. You can have a village all day long, but until we address the issue of the deconstruction of the family, we will never cure the ills of society. The downfall is not something government can solve; it can only be solved in the hearts of people who return to God's covenant commitment of marriage.

Marriage changes things. Marriage makes a difference! It is cultural assassination to think we can destroy the family and have a healthy world. Government has been as much a part of the problem as anything else—creating structures that destroy

families and prohibit marriage from being honorable and helpful. As a result, all of society is affected.

Let's be sure we always deal with the foundational issues and not just the symptoms. We are big on symptoms, aren't we? I don't want to just point out the brokenness of the world; we all know the world is broken. I'm speaking specifically to the church—people who claim to experience the grace of God in their lives. If you are married, give your life to building a great marriage to the glory of God!

I sometimes counsel Christians in my office who say things like, "God doesn't want me to be unhappy in my marriage." May I counter by saying, "He might!" God may want you to be unhappy in order to expose sin and lead you to seek His righteousness, grace, and goodness.

We are not contractual people; we are covenant people! God said we bring shame to His name when we dishonor His call to the covenant of marriage.

I know there are a thousand issues you are thinking about right now regarding marriage and divorce. I dealt with some of those in our study of Hosea. This isn't my answer-to-all-your-questions moment. I am very sensitive to the reality of deep brokenness that comes through deception and rejection in the lives of some who have been faithful. I have personally seen the injury and

impact of it. I've held Kleenex for the tears; I've watched the devastation that occurs in families. However, let's be sure as the people of God that we are not complicit and conceding with infidelity in marriage, both to God's standard and in our own personal lives.

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In the next chapter, God says,

"Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before me" (Malachi 3:1 ESV).

This is a statement of promise. There is someone yet to come.

Jump from Malachi 3:1 to Malachi 4, and let's see who is coming:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes" (Malachi 4:5 ESV).

When you open the pages of the New Testament, you find the one who came to fulfill the ministry of Elijah—to announce the coming of the Lord. "Elijah" was John the Baptist in fulfillment of prophecy.

4. We Bring Shame to God's Great Name Through Money

"From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?' Will

man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me. But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you" (Malachi 3:7-9 ESV).

The following is probably the best-known verse in the book of Malachi:

"Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need" (Malachi 3:10 ESV).

What an amazing passage of Scripture! God's principle for financial management revolves around what He said to His people—something called, *tithe*.

What is a tithe? In English, it sounds like another word we know very well—*tip*. However, a tithe is not a tip. It is not a five dollar bill we casually take out of our wallet and place on a table.

A tithe is a tenth. It is a purposeful plan of giving that involves the first tenth of what God has given. It was the command of the Old Testament law. They were to bring a tithe and to give the first tenth of their earnings to the Lord. It was called the *first fruits offering* and they were to bring it to God.

God said, "Bring the full tithe into the storehouse... And thereby put Me to the test" (Malachi 3:10 ESV).

This is the only place I know in Scripture where God says to put Him to the test. Basically, He is saying that if we do what He tells us to do, He will show us what He can do in our lives.

The issue has little to do with wealth or circumstance; it has everything to do with faith—trust Me, try Me; trust Me, try Me.

Trust what God says. Try Him, and see if there will not be a day when there is no more need for you and no more need for others. God will not be a debtor to any man.

Earlier we addressed the breakdown of families and the impact this has had on our culture. One of the greatest plans God has for meeting the needs of others is through the spirit of generosity in us.

It is the principle of the fountain. What we receive from God flows through our hands to the lives of others. The more we leave our hands open, the more God flows through us to others to not only meet our needs, but also their needs. As soon as we close our hands into a fist, we find we cannot control our own needs nor can we meet the needs of others.

God said, "Put Me to the test" (Malachi 3:10 ESV).

When I think about testing God, I sometimes think about Lee Trevino. Many of you know him as not only being a great golfer, but

also a flamboyant player on the PGA Tour. Trevino once said, "If you ever get caught on the golf course during a thunderstorm, just hold up a one iron, because even God can't hit a one iron."

However, Lee Trevino has the unique distinction of being struck by lightning three times. As a result, Trevino later said that God had taught him He could hit anything, anywhere, at anytime.

You may be thinking that tithing is only an Old Testament law and doesn't apply today. What do you call a New Testament Christian who claims tithing is only for Old Testament saints? Stingy.

Here is what my pastor taught me when I was a young man:

"Any Christian who would let a Jew do more under the law than they are willing to do under grace is a disgrace to grace." —Adrian Rogers

God didn't lower the standard of tithing for New Testament Christians. In fact, can you show me in the New Testament where God lowered any standard given in the Old Testament? You'll find that God raised standards in the New Testament.

We need to honor the Lord by bringing the first fruits of what we have to Him. Isn't it strange that we write, "In God we trust," on our money and yet, in our hearts we often put our trust in and rely on money?

"Money exerts a certain control over us because it seems to hold out so much (false) promise of happiness. It whispers with great force, 'Think and act so as to get into a position to enjoy my benefits.' This may include stealing, borrowing or working. Money promises happiness and we serve it by believing the promise and walking by that faith." —John Piper

Are you believing the lie and experiencing the loss?

God wants to use our money to make His name great among the nations. God does not need your money, but God does teach us in His Word about what money does with our hearts.

God can do much through our hands if we surrender our lives to Him and honor His name. If you want to experience God in your life, then give.

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The study of the minor prophets have been amazing. Every one of these books has taught us something about God, ourselves, and how we are to see and view our lives and our world.

The minor prophets often spoke to the issue of sin, and as we come to the conclusion of Malachi, I end with a quote by John Piper:

What is sin?

It is the glory of God not honored.
The holiness of God not revered.
The greatness of God not admired.
The power of God not praised.
The truth of God not sought.
The wisdom of God not esteemed.
The beauty of God not treasured.
The goodness of God not savored.
The faithfulness of God not trusted.
The commandments of God not obeyed.
The justice of God not respected.
The wrath of God not feared.
The grace of God not cherished.
The presence of God not prized.
The person of God not loved.
That is sin." —John Piper

The Apostle Paul said, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23 ESV).

Here's the good news: "Return to Me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 3:7 ESV).

God sent His son, Jesus Christ.
For all our failures to bring glory to God's name, there is One who does bring glory to His name—
One whose name is glorious!
Jesus!

Today we have the opportunity in Christ to be recovered from the damaging effects of the fall and to be reclaimed for the glory of God that we might make His name great among the nations!



Lord, I pray today that You will work in all of these areas of our lives. Help us to be people who are grateful, people who worship You—the true and living God. Help us to be people who are known for our faithfulness and generosity that Your name might be great among the nations. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

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