



Big Idea: The Christian life is all about returning to God.

1.) Sin **SEPARATES** us from God (v. 6).

- Rebellion is once again the atmosphere of Israel in Malachi's day.
- The command to return to God makes clear that Israel had, by and large, **DEPARTED** from Him.
- Even though they appeared to be near to God, their sin was separating them from Him (Ephesians 4:18-19, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).
- Disobedience of God creates distance from Him (Micah 2:8, Hosea 11:7).

2.) God longs for our **RETURN** (v. 7).

- Throughout Malachi, God makes clear that Israel's core problem was not the circumstances of the state, but rather the state of their souls.
- In chapter 1, God challenges the quality of Israel's offerings (v. 1:8-13); in chapter 3, He challenges the **QUANTITY** (v. 3:8-10).
- The political and economic troubles of Israel were not the *cause* of the nation's disobedience, but the cursed *result* of it (v. 3:9).
- God loves us too much to let us be **CONTENT** in our separation from Him (Hebrews 12:5-11).
- In every trial and turmoil, there is opportunity for us to draw near to God, trust His sufficient grace, and glorify His name (Romans 8:28).
- God's call to **REPENT** and return to Him is one of the most ubiquitous themes in Scripture (Neh. 1:8-9, Joel 2:12-13, James 4:8-10).

Conclusion

- This text urges us to contemplate our own **NEARNESS** to God.
- *Are you giving God your best or merely what is left?*
- *Is your communion with God close, or is it more often closed?*
- *Do you sense the Fatherly discipline of God at work in your life today? Is He calling you to return to Him? (Hebrews 3:7-9, 1 John 1:9).*
- *“Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.”*