

“God’s Unchangeable Design for Marriage”
Malachi 2:10-16 May 6, 2018

Our focus this morning is a passage from the Old Testament book of Malachi. His prophetic ministry took place during or shortly after that of Nehemiah and Ezra, in approximately 420 B.C. Malachi was the last of God’s prophets before the 400 year period which came to be referred to as the 400 silent years.

To appreciate the context for Malachi’s message, we need to understand that God’s people were living back in the land following the 70 years of Babylonian captivity. Some could have worked with Nehemiah on rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Others could have participated when the temple had also been rebuilt under Ezra. The people were again offering sacrifices, and outwardly following the Law of Moses and the various prescribed rituals. If you had asked how they were doing spiritually, they would have said, “Fine!” But that was not God’s evaluation! Through His faithful prophet, God confronted His people with their apathy and indifference toward His love, and with how they were carelessly rebelling against His plan.

The portion of Malachi’s message which is our concern today comes when the Lord confronts the Jewish husbands about how they had dealt treacherously against their wives by divorcing them to marry younger foreign women who worshiped other gods. In doing so they had violated God’s clear command, including breaking their marriage covenant, and blatantly forsaking God’s plan for marriage and the family. While God’s words of rebuke were written nearly 2500 years ago in an entirely different culture, the unchanging truths He affirms are rich with instruction and exceedingly applicable for us today. During our moments together, I will lift from this passage six unchangeable truths about marriage.

1. God designed marriage to be shared by a husband and wife who share the common devotion of _____ supremely.

2. God designed marriage to be a lifelong _____ relationship between one man and one woman and Himself.

3. God designed marriage as a loving, complementary _____.

4. God designed marriage as He did because of His desire to produce a _____.

5. God designed marriage to be permanent, though He later permitted _____ under certain circumstances due to man's hardness of heart.

6. God designed marriage to be lived out with both husband and wife maintaining a _____, responsive heart toward Him.