**Sunday 12th Febuary 2017 Message**

**Wrong Connections – Kill and Drain Power**

***Scripture***

**Slide** ***Mal 2:10-17***

***Don't we all come from one Father? Aren't we all created by the same God? So why can't we get along? Why do we desecrate the covenant of our ancestors that binds us together?***

***11 Judah has cheated on God — a sickening violation of trust in Israel and Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the holiness of God by falling in love and running off with foreign women, women who worship alien gods. 12 God's curse on those who do this! Drive them out of house and home! They're no longer fit to be part of the community no matter how many offerings they bring to God-of-the-Angel-Armies.***

**Slide** ***13 And here's a second offense: You fill the place of worship with your whining and sniveling because you don't get what you want from God. (doubtful verse translation) 14 Do you know why? Simple. Because God was there as a witness when you spoke your marriage vows to your young bride, and now you've broken those vows, broken the faith-bond with your vowed companion, your covenant wife. 15 God, not you, made marriage. His Spirit inhabits even the smallest details of marriage. And what does he want from marriage? Children of God, that's what. So guard the spirit of marriage within you. Don't cheat on your spouse.* Slide *16 "I hate divorce," says the God of Israel. God-of-the-Angel-Armies says, "I hate the violent dismembering of the 'one flesh' of marriage." So watch yourselves. Don't let your guard down. Don't cheat.***

***17 You make God tired with all your talk. "How do we tire him out?" you ask. By saying, "God loves sinners and sin alike. God loves all." And also by saying, "Judgment? God's too nice to judge."***

**Introduction**

This last week has provided a lot of prophetic insight and underlining of today’s message entitled wrong connections kill and drain your power. We are continuing our study of the book of Malachi in Chapter 2 beginning at verse 10. If you remember we are looking at why God chose the prophet to preach this message as the people of Israel entered 400 years of silence before the coming of the Messiah. Gods aim was to prepare and encourage the people to establish STRONG LINKS OF FAITH that would ensure Jesus would still find people of faith when He came. The message is as important today as we await the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have faced the challenge this week of dealing with a powerless caravan, a powerless car, and various other electrical faults which have caused things not to work as they should. When you face a number of similar problems we have learnt to ask God what are you trying to say to us and your people.

Not only that I had a “pastoral” meeting with someone outside the fellowship, which has led to a bombardment of telephone calls to the point where we have had to block the person’s number as they have been a total drain on our time and energy.

In all case’s electrical, and spiritual, the thing that has drained and killed power have been wrong connections. They have not been easy to resolve, and in some cases cost a great deal both in time and money, but they had to be sorted otherwise we would have been POWERLESS and ineffective.

**Slide** Malachi is called by God to deal with a very touchy subject, a subject which is counter cultural, anti tolerance, and very personal. Why? In order to, ensure Gods people remained a powerful demonstration and witness of the blessings of living a godly life and a demonstration in faith that believes what God says is the best way. What is he dealing with? Compromising, Gods word on marriage to ungodly connections. This message can also be extended to any partnership with people of other faiths and no faith, the warning is loud and clear

**Slide** ***2 Cor 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?***

***NKJV***

Whilst that verse if often used about marriage, I believe the Holy Spirit speaking through Paul, underlines Gods concern throughout history (do not make covenant with people amongst whom you live), is to protect us from the danger of being bound to another faith.

**What is marriage? Why is it called holy matrimony?**

**Slide** Whilst the state and church have a lot to say about marriage, it was never their domain and was never meant to come under their authority. HOWEVER, Jesus in His attendance at the marriage of Cana recognised the marriage ceremony as an important part of the union to follow that ceremony. God witnesses the spoken vows exchanged. Both have a duty, I believe, to protect marriage as God intended it to be, that is a covenant relationship between one man and one women, sealed in sexual union and becoming ONE flesh. The covenant is WILL you love this person till death do you part?

Holy matrimony is a name given by the church to a relationship, which is separated and wholly towards each other and no one else, formed by the exchange of vows and sexual union.

The purpose of holy matrimony amongst Gods people is for that union to be dedicated to the joint pursuit of a godly life, and the procreation of children who will be bought up to follow after God the Father by the teaching and example of both parents. Your example of covenant relationship is essential for children to understand Gods covenant relationship.

Obey the laws of the land Romans 13:1-5, Titus 3:1

God bears witness to the vows and recognizes the marriage ceremony

WILL you love this person until death a covenant - unconditional

**One Flesh**

We pay little regard, in today’s society, to the truth of God’s word, and the its significance, that upon sexual union, the act of marriage, we become one flesh. Our independent, selfish nature, cries out – no I am my own and I can do with my body what I like. That is true you can do with your body whatever you wish, but there are consequences.

You may have planned against the physical consequences, but there is little you can do about the mental, emotional and spiritual consequences. Your mind will never be wholly toward one person when you have had sexual union with more than one.

Many marriage problems and divorces occur because of mental sexual conflicts that go on. One couple who had had many sexual relations before coming to faith and getting married once said **“Our marriage is like hell whenever we go to bed because all of our previous partners are there in bed with us.”**

**Slide** ***Matt 19:6 So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." NIV***

Every time a sexual union takes place and then the relationship breaks down, we go against what Jesus has asked us not to do, we separate what has become one. We divorce even if we are not legally married in the eyes of the state, we are “married”, one flesh, in the eyes of God.

**Slide** ***Gen 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. NIV***

***1 Cor 6:16-17 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. NIV***

***Eph 5 31"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."***

Jesus has made a way, hallelujah, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness in every area of our lives including making wrong connections and breaking connections. Our selfish acts grieve the Holy Spirit because we are not living as if under the anointing of Christ in us, the hope of glory. May our love for Christ and the anointing that comes lead us into all righteousness.

Even in the OT God the Father responded to the people of Israel as the father of the prodigal always welcoming them back whenever they had walked away in disobedience. He sent prophets to warn them of the dangers of their ways, but whatever state they were in if they turned towards Him He was faithful in maintaining His covenant towards them. Whenever, they had divorced themselves from Him and broke their part of the covenant, He still gave them opportunity to turn and welcomed them back.

**One Father who created us v10**

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Throughout Malachi’s writing he has a framework of thinking, which he repeatedly refers too, and it is the framework of much of the OT. We are familiar with the NT framework which is primarily God is a loving Father, but can you sum up the framework of the OT from that which we have read in Malachi so far? **The framework is God is the creator in our past, the king in our present and the judge of our future.** This how we should approach life.

**Slide** God reminds the people through Malachi in verse 10 of the fact that they were chosen to be His people, just as you as a follower of Jesus Christ have been chosen. As a chosen people they and you are children of ONE Heavenly Father, you have His DNA by His Spirit impregnating your spirit. You are one spirit with Him and that is what will be saved ***1 Cor 6:17***.

Thus, when we separate ourselves from God and go after another “god”, even the god of self-satisfaction, He is grieved.

Note how God sees making the wrong connections affects the community of believers, how come we cannot get along together? Why are we messing up the covenant that God has with us, which should bind us together.

The issue being raised is that our connections should be with people of the same faith.

**Marrying the daughter of a foreign god v11**

Now we may argue that it is okay to make connections, covenants, contracts, with pre-believer’s because they are not children of another god. Unfortunately, whilst they may not be Budhists, Muslims, Hindu, Satanists or anything else, their god is themselves as they believe they have no need of God and their righteousness is their own not that offered through Christ.

***Mal 2:11 Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the Lord loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god.***

Judah has broken faith by marrying the daughter of a foreign god - Broken faith with God

Descecrated the temple (the body is the temple) messing up the holiness of the temple of the Spirit

***If you marry into the devils family you will have trouble with your father in law.***

In joining with believers of another faith or no faith, the dangers are clear, their influence on your life may draw you away from the life that God has for you.

**Slide** ***Deut 7:3-5 Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, 4 for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you. NIV***

Paul teaches from the principle laid down in the OT, not to be unequally yoked, or to marry an unbeliever, because of the inherent dangers to your own faith that God pointed us towards in the OT. Not only are there faith issues that will put a strain on you, there are also cultural issues.

God does not leave us with just an instruction to spoil our fun of exploring the differences and appearing to being tolerant to others, He gives us examples of the consequences in the lives of people in the OT.

* Jezebel & Ahab
* Solomon and many wives and built altars too and worshipped their gods – resulted in the division of Israel into two kingdoms 1 Kings 11
* Numbers 25 – 24000 men who committed sexual immorality with pagan worshipping women then worshipped the gods of the women and Gods judgement on them was severe, they died from a plague.

Despite the warnings and examples, people are fickle in the matters of sexual relations and breaking of covenant. Malachi is speaking to people who Ezra had challenged not many years earlier who had put away (divorced) their foreign wives, who then Nehemiah had also challenged. When will we/they ever learn that God is serious about protecting us from the consequences of **breaking the chain of faith.**

***Ezra 10:17-19***

***and by the first day of the first month they finished dealing with all the men who had married foreign women. 18 Among the descendants of the priests, the following had married foreign women: From the descendants of Jeshua son of Jozadak, and his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib and Gedaliah. 19 (They all gave their hands in pledge to put away their wives, and for their guilt they each presented a ram from the flock as a guilt offering.)***

***NIV***

***Neh 10:30***

***30 "We promise not to give our daughters in marriage to the peoples around us or take their daughters for our sons.***

***NIV 444BC ten years after Ezra had a clear out***

Example – stage a believer aiming to live to a higher calling of holiness has little leverage to pull an unbeliever upto the same level. Yet the unbeliever can easily pull down the believer to their level.

**Divorce causes pain**

**Slide** ***13 And here's a second offense: You fill the place of worship with your whining and sniveling because you don't get what you want from God. (doubtful verse translation)***

What happens when you have married a person who does not believe in the same God as you. God will forgive you but do not divorce, now as a believer you have to example the unconditional love of God to the unbeliever, and fulfil the covenant you have made. God hates divorce ***v 16*** and anyone who has been through divorce will explain the pain in them and the family will understand why God hates divorce. ***You can’t unscramble eggs.***

God criticises the husbands for divorce, not the woman. Suggests it is possible to be the innocent victim in divorce.

**Guard your marriage – He made it not you**

**Slide** ***15 God, not you, made marriage. His Spirit inhabits even the smallest details of marriage. And what does he want from marriage? Children of God, that's what. So guard the spirit of marriage within you. Don't cheat on your spouse.***

We can be so arrogant, thinking we have entered into something which we can make work. God needs to be the third strand in our marriage even when we are unequally yoked. The believer has to remain committed to the covenant THEY made before God. In tough times it is easy to look for temporary comfort elsewhere, wherever possible GUARD your heart it is committed to God.

***Your level of faithfulness towards God is reflected in your faithfulness towards your spouse.***