

Introduction:

- *“Remember to obey the Law of Moses, my servant—all the decrees and regulations that I gave him on Mount Sinai for all Israel. Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord arrives. His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse.”* (Malachi 4:4-6, NLT)
- One of the responsibilities of John the Baptist was to “turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.” If ever there was a time that this needed to happen, it is now.
- As we look at these closing words of the Book of Malachi, there is one thing I think that we can expect and another thing that comes as a bit of a surprise.
- What we expect is that at the end of the last book of the OT that there would be a bridge/a connecting point to what we are about find in the NT. We have that:
 - In vs. 4 *remember the law of Moses*. A glance back is always good for our faith for we see salvations history. We see how we got to this point. We see the goodness of God at work for us.
 - vs. 5, also part of this bridge, stretches into the NT where we see at the end of the age the Day of the Lord, a day of victory. vs. 4 we look back and the we see the OT of God close and another one, NT, opens ushering us into the great era of salvation.
 - This is what we expect, a look back, a look ahead and bridge that connects the two.
- What we do not expect is this glaring word of *‘turning the hearts of the Fathers to the children and the children’s hearts to the fathers*. And if that does not happen the land will be stuck with a curse. God is after the turning of hearts of fathers and children to each other.

I. Looking Back To What Was Spoken

- A. *“Remember the Law of Moses”* (NKJV) As we read these words at the start of verse four, we have to ask ourselves ‘What does this mean?’ What is Malachi saying to us?
 1. Remember means just what it says! Remember the law of Moses. As the law, the Word was still God’s life given to us. Eat the scroll! It will cause you to live.
 2. Remember has the intention of stimulating some thought, courage, strength, based on past events. The act of remembering is to shape our movement forward.
 3. Remember is to keep in mind for attention and consideration.
 4. What is it that God is saying to us today as dads? I believe that God would have us remember what God has said in His word. That in doing so it will give us strength, courage, wisdom. And we are to keep it before us as we move ahead into our future.
- B. A look at the power of “remember!” Context supplies the strength. Some examples:
 1. Jesus is teaching on His return in Luke 17 and He says these words, *“Remember what happened to Lot’s wife!”* (Luke 17:32, NLT) Those words get a whole verse to itself!
 - a) Jesus uses the words *remember Lots wife* to create a sense of urgency into the future while at the same time warning what happens when you look back to what you have been saved from for comfort.
 - b) Jesus uses these words to this crowd to show them that if they do not remember they will share a similar fate. Let that memory have power in your life. Do not look back at what you have been saved from to comfort you.

2. Here is one you will hopefully remember, "Remember the Alamo!"
 - a) In December of 1835 a group of revolutionaries took the town of San Antonio. A little fort there was called the Alamo. It was guarded by 150 men with 32 reinforcements. Santa Anna and his Mexican army came to route them. They held off the enemy for 3 and half months. At that point fighting became hand to hand until all of them were killed, including Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett.
 - b) The courage of all the Texans were inspired to fight harder to drive out Mexico under the banner, "Remember the Alamo!" They were remembering those who gave their lives for what they believed in.
 - c) *"The past exerts power in the present through the gift of memory!"* John Piper.
3. Remember the Law!
 - a) When we hear Malachi say, "*remember the law*" it should stir the heart like the phrase "Remember the Alamo!" It should ring in our ears, "Don't forget what happened at Mount Horeb! Don't forget how I delivered you from Egypt and gave you my words of life.
 - b) Men you are in a spiritual war and the devil is always going to try and put the lamp of God's word in your heart out! Therefore it is mandatory that you remember! Remember the Word, it gives you life (Jn 6:63). Remember and fight for your freedom of mind!
4. The stakes are high in our Malachi passage! We cant afford to not remember.
 - a) Remember what God sacrificed. Remember what Jesus did for your freedom!
 - b) That is why the Word says in the Shama, *"Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."* (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, NLT) This is remembering daily. And note that it is to be done with the children in mind.
 - c) A high price was paid for our freedom! Remember! So we look back to what was spoken. And then #2 we are to:

II. Looking Ahead To What Is Said

- A. *"Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord arrives."* (Malachi 4:5, NLT) The Day of the Lord is still ahead of us. So there is a shift from the the past to the future...which is a picture of hope for the believer.
- B. Again we see two things in this verse:
 1. It is the DAY OF THE LORD! And He will be victorious!
 - a) In Luke 22:53 Jesus says the Pharisees and those who came to arrest him. *"This is your and the power of darkness' hour, but my day is coming!"* You temporarily have the upper hand. IE. It is like Jesus the champion boxer drops his gloves. Come on hit me. That all you got. Hit me again! Somewhat like Rocky Balboa, he gets beaten to a pulp. Nailed to cross and put in a tomb but Sunday is coming!

- b) God will have his Day, his last Day the Day of the Lord and It will be totally victorious! Jesus will judge the wicked and bless the righteous! Those who put their faith in Him. Victory!
- 2. God will be merciful to those who believe.
 - a) The fact that we read these word in Malachi 4:5 is mercy. It stands as a warning to prepare for what is ahead. You will not be without excuse. God in His mercy has told what is coming therefore, Get ready!
 - b) Repent and prepare for the coming of the Lord! The beauty of this scripture is that God precedes His wrath with the call of mercy. IE. Sodom had Abraham, Nineveh had Jonah, Jerusalem had Jesus, you have me today sounding the alarm.
 - c) The bridge is the cross, the treaty of peace is signed with Jesus blood. Don't put this off. Today is the time to act...before the terrible Day of the Lord.

III. Here Is The Course of Action

- A. Set your course! In verse six we see the unexpected: *"His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse."* (Malachi 4:6, NLT) God in His mercy says to the fathers: turn to your children and they will turn to you. Do this and experience blessing. Don't do this and experience lots of pain. God wants to spare the land from a curse. You see why all creation groans waiting for the appearing of the sons of God?
 - B. What does it look like for a fathers heart to be turned away from his children?
 - 1. When we ignore them. Work so swallows us up that our kids get the leftovers. Our free time we are to numb to engage them. Lost in video games, sports, etc.
 - 2. When we abuse them. Hearts can be so turned away that our words put them down, wound their souls, discourage them. Our action so harsh it turns them away. If you are one of those dads, that is not normal. It is a sign of a wound in your own life that never got healed. There is hope. Prepare, by the mercy of God change.
 - 3. When our hearts are so embittered with disappointment our children's hearts turn away and we are forgotten by them. God wants to change all of this. Give us hope!
 - 4. And children if your heart is rebellious and disobedient you too are inviting the curse upon your life and upon the land.
 - C. How can we turn?
 - 1. Get involved in their lives. At the end of my notes are some helpful pointers to get involved in your child's life.
 - a) It is scientifically and socially proven that the more a dad is involved in his children's lives the more successful they will be. Involved dads = successful children.
 - b) Involved dads raise children that are more emotionally secure. And are better problem solvers.
 - c) Girls with involved fathers have higher self-esteem, and teenage girls who are close to their dads are less likely to become pregnant. Boys show more self direction, less aggression and achieve higher education.

- d) Regular day to day involvement (dinner, game night, walks) is more impactful than the 'big event' vacation.
2. "Fathers encourage competition, independence, and achievement. Self thinkers, risk takers.
 3. Dads in play: roughhouse, stir up adrenaline, create unpredictability. Nothing like a father's 'tickle'. Fathers tickle more, they wrestle, and they throw their children in the air (while mother says . . . "Not so high!"). Fathers chase their children, sometimes as playful, scary "monsters." Fathering expert John Snarey explains *that children who roughhouse with their fathers learn self-control by being told when "enough is enough" and when to settle down. Girls and boys both learn a healthy balance between timidity and aggression.*
 4. Fathers protect. So often we label this as from danger, bad guys, etc. But father protect a child's emotions, heart, their minds.
 5. Fathers discipline. Mothers do it more often but a father is firmer and through that children learn authority. Drs. Kyle Pruett and Marsha Kline Pruett write, *"Fathers tend to be more willing than mothers to confront their children and enforce discipline, leaving their children with the impression that they in fact have more authority."* Educational psychologist Carol Gilligan tells us that fathers stress justice, fairness and duty (based on rules), while mothers stress sympathy, care and help (based on relationships). Fathers tend to observe and enforce rules systematically and sternly, teaching children the consequences of right and wrong.

Conclusion:

- Dads:
 - Remember the Word!
 - Look to the future with hope! Knowing you can go forward in Gods victory. And it is His mercy that He invites you to do so.
 - Set the Course! Turn to your kids. Ie. Sailing, tacking to get where you want to go. Trim your sails according to the wind.

Preschool

- "Go on a walk with your child, and collect leaves or other objects that reflect the changing seasons.
- Create habits that help you connect with your wife and kids, such as phone calls from work or special "daddy" time when you walk through the doorway at the end of the day.
- Post pictures of your children where you'll see them on the way home from work (on your car dashboard, for example). As you look at the pictures, tell yourself, "The next few hours are the most important in my entire day."
- Tell your child a funny story, using voices, motions, facial expressions and sound effects to make it come alive.
- What causes laughter and silliness in your daughter? What brings that mischievous grin to your son's face? Find out, and then capitalize on it for the benefit of your relationship.
- Get on your child's level... squatting, kneeling or lying on the floor...when talking to or playing.
- Read a book with your child, asking lots of questions as you go.

- Be the one to jump up and help when your child has a need. Those are priceless opportunities – and Mom probably could use a break!

Elementary

- Clear some time this weekend, and ask your child, "What would you like to do together?"
- At your child's sports events, make it your goal to be conspicuously and contagiously positive. Set the tone with lots of encouragement and fun.
- Regularly walk or drive your child to or from school.
- Bring home a funny joke or stunt that you can enjoy with your children.
- Ask what skill your child would like to learn in the next year, then commit yourself to help him or her in that area.
- Go for a drive with your child, just to get away and spend time together.
- Do something special for milestones in your child's life, such as his or her 10th birthday.
- Be involved in your child's education – including helping with homework, practicing for sports or other activities, and attending school meetings and events.
- Volunteer for a day or half day at your child's school.
- Start regular daddy-daughter dates or one-on-one outings with your son.

Teen

- Commit to a vigorous outdoor activity over the weekend with your kids. Push the limits, and be creative.
- Listen to music that your child enjoys – keeping an open mind.
- Keep "dating" your daughter and scheduling fun activities with your son on a regular basis.
- Figure out how to have fun with your teen by immersing yourself in his world for an afternoon. Hang out together, read a book she likes, play his games, listen to her stories.
- Connect with other adults who play an important role in your child's life – coaches, teachers, youth leaders – and compare notes on how your child is progressing.
- Shock your son or daughter by doing something together on his or her "turf" – skateboarding, playing hoops at the park, going to the mall.
- Plan special rite-of-passage events when your child reaches milestone ages like 13, 16 and 18.
- Tell your child you'll pay if he goes to a movie with you. Afterward, ask questions about the film's themes." Taken from Focus on the Family