**Baggage Week 5 - Malachi**

**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview:**

(Check Series Road Map)

**Grab the Room (Intro):**

NVK “How Long Did They Last?” YouTube Video

**Tension (What’s the Struggle):**

Impatience can cause us to question God’s love.

**Text (+ Supporting Text):**

Genesis 3:15

Malachi 1:2

Malachi 3:1

Malachi 3:16-18

Galatians 5:22-23

**THP**:

Let go of the impatience you’re holding on to.

**Supporting Points (Not Required):**

N/A

**Application (Call to Action)**:

Slow Down

Cut Something

Limit Your Phone

*Red – Scripture*

*Blue – Personal Story*

*Green – Prop*

***THP/Main Points – Bold***

**Grab the Room (Intro):**

Alright, raise your hand if you’ve seen the Marshmallow Test?

*\*\*Give 5 seconds or so for students to respond\*\**

The Marshmallow Test is where you put a kid in a room with a marshmallow, or several marshmallows. You tell them not to eat, and if they can wait long enough, they can double the number of marshmallows they started off with. However, if they eat the marshmallow or marshmallows without waiting, then they don’t get double the food.

Well, our Northview Kids team recently tried this Marshmallow Test on the kids of our church their YouTube channel, and I figured you’d want to see how they did. So, check this out…

NVK “How Long Did They Last?” YouTube Video

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxLjk4Hsdsc>)

Those kids are pretty impatient, huh? Well that’s not surprising to me, and it’s probably not surprising to you. Because in fact, I think we as people are naturally impatient.

**Tension (What’s the Struggle):**

To wrap up this Baggage series, I want to look at the book of Malachi, which is the very last prophetic book written before the coming of Jesus. And so what other context do you need to know about the book of Malachi? Well to put it short and simple, God’s people were apathetic, just like we talked about last week in Haggai. But also, they may have been a little impatient too.

But, rightfully so, right? I mean the book of Malachi was written in the 5th century B.C. And so God’s people had been waiting for a Messiah…well, forever. They had been waiting for the coming of Jesus literally since the beginning of time.

Don’t believe me? Well, let’s check it out in Genesis 3, the same chapter that Adam and Eve sinned against God by eating from the tree.

As sin enters the world, God says to Satan in Genesis 3:15,

And I will put enmity

 between you and the woman,

 and between your offspring and hers;

he will crush your head,

 and you will strike his heel.”

Did you catch that? Re-read it carefully if you have to. It says, “…and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” What’s that saying? It’s basically saying that out of man’s offspring will eventually come a man; and not just any man, but a man that will crush the head of the serpent (or Satan) with his heel.

So do you see it now? Literally since Adam and Eve, all of creation had been waiting for a Messiah!

Now, let’s do some quick math. Again, Malachi lived likely in the 5th century. Some experts pinpoint his book to have been written around 430 B.C. So, there’s over 400 years. Additionally, experts say that Moses wrote Genesus between the 15th and 13th century B.C. So, there’s another 1,000 years, give or take a hundred. But then, think about all of the generations from Moses all the way back to Adam. We could do the math, but that would honestly take up too much time.

Regardless—it’s safe to say that mankind had been waiting for a Messiah for thousands of years!

And so again—all this to say—we can assume that God’s people were impatient. So much so, that they grew cynical and pessimistic.

We even see that right away in the book of Malachi, where Malachi 1:2 says,

“I have loved you,” says the Lord.

“But you ask, ‘How have you loved us?’

In the minds of the Israelites, God was not meeting their needs. And so they were so fed up with waiting, that they asked God, “How have you loved us?”

Have you ever wondered why God isn’t meeting your needs? Have you ever wondered why you can’t feel Him, hear Him, or see Him working in your life? Have you ever grown impatient with Him? So much so, that you question how He has loved you?

Again, this is where the Israelites were at in the start of Malachi.

**Text (+ Supporting Text):**

But then, just a bit later, God offers hope.

Malachi 3:1 says,

“I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty.

Did you hear that? A Messiah is coming…finally! After thousands of years, a Savior is coming!

Jump down a few verses, and Malachi 3:16-18 say,

16 Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name.

17 “On the day when I act,” says the Lord Almighty, “they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him.

18 And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

Students, those who have a healthy fear of God desire His best. And so those that desire His best are patient.

And that leads me to the last piece of baggage we all need to drop…**Let go of the impatience you’re holding on to**.

*\*\*PAUSE\*\**

**Let go of the impatience you’re holding on to**. It is only then that you can seek out His best for you by picking up patience.

Now you’re probably wondering to yourself, “Why? Why is patience part of God’s best for us? Why is patience part of God’s best for me?”

Well one, like we just saw, impatience can lead us to question God’s love for us. And if there’s anything we should know as followers of Jesus, it’s that He loves us.

*\*\*PAUSE\*\**

He loves us. That is truth that we see over and over and over again throughout Scripture. He loves us. He loves us…so much so, that He sent His son Christ to die on a cross for us!

So patience helps us guard our hearts and our minds from that lie that He doesn’t love us.

And so now, the second reason as to why patience is part of God’s best for us is because He desires us to be present. And you can’t be present without first being patient.

“Well why does He desire for us to be present?” Because when we’re present, we’re attentive; when we’re present, we’re in tune with the Holy Spirit.

Paul knew this, which is why he wrote in Galatians 5:22-23…

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Patience is literally a fruit of the Spirit! Obviously along with eight other things of course. But that’s beside the point.

The point is…God desires patience of us. God desires us to **let go of the impatience we’re holding on to** so that we can pick up the patience He’s calling us towards.

But how do we do that practically? How do we practice and actively pursue patience?

**Application (Call to Action)**:

Has anyone ever heard of *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer? It’s a book we’ve mentioned a few times before, and it introduces four spiritual disciplines that can help eliminate hurry from our lives. And so one of those four practices is called “Slowing.” Which, slowing is basically another way to say practicing patience.

And so based on this idea of “slowing” mentioned in John Mark Comer’s book, I want to help you practically practice patience by giving you three tangible takeaways. Because again, God desires us to (1) be reminded of His love for us, and (2) be present and attentive.

So, here are those three ways to practice patience.

1. Slow Down

Now you’re probably thinking, “Seriously? That’s it? What does that even mean?” Well, it’s exactly what it sounds like. Just…slooooowwwwww…dooooooowwwnnnn…in everything that you do.

Try taking a deep breath before anything and everything that you do. Or better yet, trying counting the three! Or to my drivers in the room—drive the speed limit! Better yet, get in the slow lane, or even come to a FULL stop at a stop sign! At least see how it feels. And how about this challenge for my middle schoolers—don’t cut the lunch line…you can wait! Your stomach will make it a few extra minutes. Or how many of you just recently went to King’s Island with us? Remember those lines we had to wait in? Remember how some of us tried to seek out the shortest lines? Well…give the longest lines in your life a try. For example, the grocery store or the concession stand.

Whatever you do, just try doing it more slowly. And in that slowness, try to be present; try to notice the little things…like how good it feels to NOT be in a rush; or how good it feels to catch a glimpse of that beautiful sunset you may have not noticed before. Whatever you do…slow down.

1. Cut Something

Do you have a schedule? A calendar or a planner of some sort? Or how about a journal? If not, start there; write out everything that you do each and every day. Then from there…CUT SOMETHING. Straight up, just cut something!

“Wait wait wait, do what now?! \_\_\_\_\_, that’s just not possible! You don’t understand my commitments and what I have to do.” Oh really? You don’t think so? Trust me…it IS possible. You know why? Because you’re not everything to anyone; you can’t do everything. Yes, you may need to do some things.; but you definitely don’t need to do ALL things. Because at the end of the day, you’re not Jesus…you’re just not. And so, you truly CAN eliminate a few things.

Not sure where to start? Well, here are just a few ideas:

* TV.
* Social Media.
* Video games.
* Extra social obligations.

Students—you don’t have to say yes to everything. You can in fact say no to some things. And when you do…you’ll feel much more present; you’ll feel much more in the moment and attentive to all that’s going on in you and around you.

1. Limit Your Phone

Alright, this is where it gets real fun. But also, to be honest…this is where it gets extremely challenging too.

Limiting your phone can look a lot of different ways. You can remove pointless apps; you can delete, or even silent, social media apps; you can put your iPhone on focus mode; you can do a lot of things! Heck, you can even try putting your phone away for extended periods of time or during certain parts of the day.

And so by doing these things, you’ll start to notice that you’re less and less addicted to your phone. And when you’re less addicted to your phone, you’re more present with the people around you. And not only will they appreciate that, but you will appreciate that as well.

And so, there you have it…three ways in which you can practice being patient.

But to be honest, although I gave you only three…I’d be failing you if I encouraged you to do each three. Because if we’re being honest, trying to do all of them at once would quickly become overwhelming, and we’d end up doing nothing.

So, here’s my challenge. Pick one you feel like you need to work on the most. Are you constantly in a hurry trying to get from point A to point B? Then maybe choosing to slow down is your best step. Or are you feeling too involved and constantly overworked? Are you feeling like you constantly have too much going on? Then maybe cutting something is the route you should go. Or lastly, are you addicted to your phone? Go ahead and check out your screen time in your settings. If you’re spending more time on your phone than you do with people…or if you’re spending more time on your phone than time asleep…then limiting your phone might be the move.

Regardless—whatever you do—just focus on choosing one. What is ONE thing you can do starting tonight? What is ONE thing you can do to realistically help you practice patience? Only you know the answer.

And by doing that, you’ll be able to **let go of the impatience you’re holding on to** and pick up the patience God is calling you towards. Because when you’re patient, you’re reminded of God’s love for you; when you’re patience, you’re attentive and reminded of what it means to be present.

*\*\*GENERAL CLOSING & PRAYER\*\**