

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
September 30, 2016

Malachi 2:10–4:6. Complainers.

Acts 28:1–31. Paul in prison.

Job 31:23–40. Job a true worshipper of God.

COMMENTS.

Malachi 2:10–4:6. After God expresses His love for Israel (1:1-5) and charges Israel with indifference (1:6-14), He gives direct warning to the priests (2:1-9), and the people about their unfaithfulness (2:10-16). Those who long for the Lord to appear at the Temple are in for a surprise, He will appear, suddenly, and with judgment (3:1-5). Following this, God points out how the people are robbing God by failing to offer their tithes for the upkeep of the Temple (3:6-12). The people are so involved in materialism that they do not see the point of living for God (3:13-18). Malachi closes with a warning that a day is coming when evil will be destroyed like stubble in a field of fire after the harvest has been gathered in (4:1-6).

Life in God by proper knowledge and by proper love. One cannot walk with God with a complaining attitude; a complaining attitude is certain evidence that a person is not walking in the Lord by *proper knowledge and proper love*. This is true regardless of the temporal circumstances of life. Complaining, moreover, is a sure indication that a person is living the self-centered life rather than the Christ-centered life. Note the pitiful attitudes in 3:13-15. These people were guilty of saying “*harsh things*” against the Lord. For one thing, they felt that serving the Lord was drudgery; it was “futile” to be His servants. The priests may have been the leaders in this complaining, but the common people were just as guilty. ‘We’re not getting anything out of it!’ was their grievance. ‘Things just keep getting worse.’ It is not uncommon to find the same attitude in the church, the Body of Christ, today: ‘We’re not getting anything out of it!’ ‘What is the application?’ We are serve and love God because He is our greatest good; He is the reason for our very existence. Yes, we will be rewarded, but that’s not our *main* motive. Note their second complaint: the pagan peoples around them who didn’t know the Lord were in better shape than the people of Judah! The wicked were prospering while the godly were suffering. Of course, it would have been difficult for the Jews to prove that they were “godly,” because they were guilty of disobeying the Lord. We are to “serve the Lord with gladness” (Ps. 100:2). It’s a sad thing when a servant of God is a drudge, merely doing a job because that’s what he or she has to do or for what they get out of it. The worst thing about it is not so much the complaining or even the materialism. The worst thing is they no longer see God as their greatest good, meaning they no longer love Him as they should and are no longer living in God *by proper knowledge and by proper love*.

Acts 28:1–31. In the first ten verses, God brings Paul and crew to the Isle of Malta (which means “refuge”), where the native people welcomed all 276 of them and did their best to make them comfortable. To the Greeks, anybody who did not speak Greek was a “barbarian.” These people proved to be kind and sympathetic. The storm abated, but the weather was cold; so the natives built a fire. This section ends with Paul under house arrest in Rome. During these two years in Rome, Paul wrote Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. Paul was an amazing missionary. He bravely proclaimed and tirelessly defended the gospel. And his own life reflected the single-mindedness and sufferings of the Lord so he loved and served so well. Luke did not write his book simply to record ancient history. He wrote to encourage the church in every age to be faithful to the Lord and carry the Gospel and the Word of God to the ends of the earth.

Life in God by proper knowledge and by proper love. Note Acts 28:30, *Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.* Love for the Lord *always* translates to love of the Word of God, whether one is a teacher or a student. As we noted in 1 Cor. 13:6, love *rejoices in the Truth*. While love for the Word of God does not necessarily mean that one loves the Lord, love for the Lord will *always* translate to love for the Word of God: John 14:15 *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.* We love to please whom we love. When we love someone we not only honor that person in all that we do, we always seek to know more about the one whom we find such love, delight, and joy in. As we noted in our last Bible class, in biblical faith the believer comes to share in God’s knowledge and life. This sharing in the life of God is what creates a love for truth as such, as well as all of the other virtues as one becomes a partaker of “divine nature,” 2 Pet. 1:4—as one is lifted up, by participating in the nature of God, beyond the natural level. To love the Word of God is not so much a human generated capacity, like all virtues, it is supernatural and a result of sharing the very life of God in a profound manner—it is all about divine concurrence *by proper knowledge and by proper love.*

Job 31:23–40. In his defense, Job now speaks of his life with God. He points out that God has been far more important than material goods like gold and wealth (31:24-28). This is followed by Job’s testimony that he was never guilty of fraud or injustice with reference to his employees (31:38-40).

Life in God by proper knowledge and by proper love. One cannot walk with the Lord if he is a materialist (trust wealth rather than God to bring happiness). Materialism is worldliness, regardless if one is a conservative or liberal regarding social issues. Worldliness is not so much a matter of activity as of attitude. It is possible for a Christian to stay away from questionable practices and doubtful places and still love the world, for worldliness is a matter of the heart. To the extent that a Christian loves the world system and the things in it, he does not love the Father (1 John 2:15). Worldliness not only affects your response to the love of God; it also affects your response to the will of God (1 John 2:17). Doing the will of God is a joy for those living in the love of God. “If ye love Me, keep My commandments.” But when a believer loses his enjoyment of the Father’s love, he finds it hard to obey the Father’s will. He does not enjoy God nor

treasure the things of God. This curse (1 Cor. 16:22) can only be resolved by life in God by proper knowledge and proper love.

Life in God by proper knowledge and by proper love.

Pastor Don