***The Terrifying Thing Not to Know You Have Sinned***

Malachi was a prophet sent by God to reprove Israel. Yet each time he went to the people with a strong message, they reacted with mock innocence. The first time Malachi came to them, he preached, "You have profaned the holiness of the Lord! You know how to weep and cover the altar with your tears. But God has rejected all your sacrifices - because you're in sin!"

The people reacted with total shock. They answered, "But, why? What have we done wrong?" Malachi answered: "the Lord regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. Ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously" (Malachi 2:13-14).

Their sin was they had been divorcing their wives and marrying heathen women. And all the while they had continued going to the altar, performing all the religious activities, with their hearts full of sin. These men had openly rebelled against God's commands. But they denied it to themselves, saying, "What are you saying? We're clean!" So Malachi came to them a second time, preaching: "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words" (Malachi 2:17).

In other words: "You are saying things that have absolutely shocked God. Your profanities have wearied Him!" Again, the people responded with mock innocence: "Wherein have we wearied him?" (Same verse).

They said, in essence, "How could we have wearied God? We've done no wrong." Malachi answered: "When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?" (Same verse).

You see, the people had been encouraging evildoers in the congregation. They knew full well that these rebels were in sin, but they assured them all would be well, that no judgment would fall on them. Simply put, they were blunting God's message: calling evil good, and good evil. Yet they said to Malachi, "Why are you saying this? We are innocent of any wrongdoing."

Again, Malachi came back to them, this time crying: "You have robbed God!" And again, the people answered with their stock response: "What do you mean? How have we robbed God?" Malachi answered: "In tithes and offerings" (Malachi 3:8). He said, "You bring only garbage to the Lord's altar! You offer animals for sacrifice that are lame, blind and halt. These aren't the tithes and offerings that belong to God. You are robbing Him of your best!"

Finally, Malachi gave up preaching to them because they wouldn't hear him. The final chapter of this book tells us he bypassed them all and turned to a small, discerning, repentant remnant. These people received his reproof, and their hearts were moved by the Spirit of God. They acted on Malachi's convicting words and in turn, God blessed them mightily!

**How Different David's Attitude Was from the Mock-Innocent Hearers!**

I think of how terrible it is to not know I am doing wrong, that I am offering blemished sacrifices, lame offerings; in other words, left over, thoughtless offering and worship. The thought that I rob God of my worship; this is deception, evidence of a hardened heart. This is not the heart we want.