



## AUTO-SERMON TRANSCRIPT

### *Who is Jesus directing you to reach?*

Real Talk 4 of 4, March 3rd, 2024

"Jesus confronts us with His Gospel gift in the form of a choice."

Malachi 3:16-4 by Ryan Gagnon (@RyGagnon)

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[Music]

But why do I have to be in the villages? This is crazy to me. I'm like you imagine selling technology to villagers. It was tough.

It was really, really, really tough. Now after we had been here for probably about a year and a half. half, we had a new manager that came into my store. Now, my store was not doing all that well. There was a ton of-- it was not a lot of structure. And this new leader came in, and he brought structure. And he brought a vision,

and he brought a mission, and he was able to take our team and turn it in to one of the top performing teams in the entire state in a relatively quick amount of time. time. Now,

I was one of his better reps, I was up there for Jesus, so I was talking to people about Jesus, I was developing people, I was doing what I thought God wanted me to do in that place,

but he had my year-end review with me. And we've been talking about this idea of the real talk, and this real talk that he gave me changed the course of my actual secular life.

career. He sat down with me and he said, "Hey, how do you feel like things are going?" And I was like, "Pretty good." And he's like, "What do you mean pretty good?" I was like, "Well, I'm one of your top performing people.

You can rely on me to open and close the store. I'm helping people out. I'm developing the next round of leaders. I'm helping the culture. This is, yeah, it's going pretty good." And he's like,

"Is this the best you got?" got? I was like, what are you talking about? I'm one of the better, actually, if you look at the rankings, I'm one of the better folks in the entire district. What do you mean?

This is the best I got. He's like, are you gonna work on getting better? And I was like, I think I'm as bad as good as I'm gonna get. And his answer to me was, well, you should probably train stores.

You should probably leave. Because the only people that are gonna be here are people that are gonna be here. are working on getting better. And it doesn't matter how good you are, what matters is are you going to work on getting better? Yes or no?

And if you're not going to be willing to do that, I don't have time for you. That conversation changed the course of my career. From that moment, I understood that autopilot was not actual work.

work. I had done the job for so long that I could do it with my eyes closed, but he challenged me. He wanted me to become a better leader, a better people developer, a lot more work,

a lot more work, and I'm still in the villages. But through that real talk conversation, he explained to me,

"Here's where you are. "here's where you should be, "and based on the choice you make "in this conversation with me, "you're going one of two directions. "This is it, you gotta make a choice." He made it very,

very clear. So the reason that I share that story with you is not to talk about what I do for a regular job. I share it with you because that's what these kind of real talk conversations we've been talking about for the last three weeks are.

The God of the world is the God of the world. the universe was talking to the Hebrews and telling them, "Hey, it's not going well, especially not as well as you think it's going. You need to course correct and we need to fix it." All of that being said,

though, a real talk conversation has to end. And how do they end? They end with explaining two paths. It's either going to be this or it's going to be this and the person who's saying it can't choose for you.

You have to choose. You have to choose which of the two paths you're going to go down. Now many of you have been on the other side of that conversation and you've done that for someone else so you're like oh yeah I remember that but maybe you've been on the other side of them too and maybe you made the right decision Maybe you didn't the way that God interacted with Israel was very very similar We're gonna learn

today that Jesus confronts us with his gospel gift in the form of a choice He gives you the gospel. It is a gift, but it's a choice You can look at that gift and you can say nah,

I'm good. I Want to do what? I wanna do. "I don't want you to be Lord of my life. "I don't want anything to do with whatever this God thing is. "I'm gonna roll this on my own and see how it goes." Well,

we're about to see how it goes because the end of Malachi, God makes it very clear how this ends. So before we jump into the text,

let's begin as our custom. custom by reading the disciples' prayer together. "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,

your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Forgive us this day our daily bread, forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." evil. For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory. Forever, amen. So,

some of you may have not been here for the beginning of the last three weeks. That's okay, we're gonna do a quick recap, okay? So we're in Malachi, end of chapter three, all of chapter four. We're gonna do, it's only like eight verses or something.

It's not gonna be bad, right? But, let's make sure we understand the context of what's going on. So, the book of Malachi, Malachi means my messenger. So God sends someone to talk to them because they're about 100 years out of captivity.

They've gone back, they've rebuilt the temple and things aren't going all that well. They're not listening to God, they're not offering proper sacrifices. They're not following God at all.

It's a problem. So what he does is he sends this messenger to then talk to them and the cool thing about it is that he sends someone to talk to them part about this book is in these previous three chapters God says hey you did this thing and Then he answers How the Hebrews feel but you say how did we do this thing?

And then he answers it and it's almost like a one-on-one conversation But really it's like a one conversation almost like God's talking to himself is the way that it reads. It's really cool But we've learned over the past three weeks a couple couple of things that are really important.

First, we learned that in this real talk conversation that Jesus leads with kindness. His kindness leads us to repentance. He doesn't come running in, slapping them across the face.

He comes in and says, "I have loved you." And their response is, "How have you loved us?" They don't get it.

He doesn't end it. there. We learned in week two that after he talks about how this began with love, now what he's doing is he explains to them all of the ways in which they've been getting it wrong.

He walks them through all of these problems. And we learn in that section of the scripture in chapter two primarily, that a life when we don't follow Jesus leads to consequence and compromise.

So that was week two. Now, last week we learned about the plan. So God started with love, then led with what they were doing wrong, then brought in a plan and said,

"Here's the plan to get you back on track." So we learned in week three, the plan was laid out and that Jesus' redemption plan brings glory to him and salvation to creation.

Feel like you got a better understanding? Now we're gonna jump into the text. You guys cool? All right, let's do it. So we're gonna begin in verse 16 of chapter three. "Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another.

"The Lord paid attention and heard them, "and a book of remembrance was written before him "of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name." name. They shall be minds as the Lord of hosts.

In the day when I make up my treasured possession and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him, then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked,

between the one who serves God and the one who does not serve God. Chapter four, for behold the day is coming,

birthing. burning like an oven, when all of the arrogant and all the evil doers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts,

so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear me, the Son of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like tabs from the stall,

and you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashy. ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I acts as the Lord of hosts. Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb,

for all Israel. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes, and he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers.

Lest I come to you, and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction." So let's begin in this first section. This is verse 16 through 18.

It's important that we understand, we talked a little bit about this last week, the difference between the wicked and the righteous in God's Word is those who serve Him and those who don't.

That's it. For the people who serve God, they are called righteous. It's not their own righteousness, it's Jesus' righteousness that we have put on, but they are called righteous.

Those that do not serve Jesus are called the wicked. He begins talking about those that have respect for God and take him at his word.

He points out that he's not everything. The words that he sees everything are so sweet to the righteous.

They're so scary to the wicked. Because if the God of the universe sees everything, everything includes my heart. He sees it all.

He sees disobedience to him, or disobedience clothed in what appears to be righteous action. He sees all of it. Church attendance isn't the metric Jesus is looking for.

for. It's being the church and you're going that matters. We read it every week. That means here, in the way that we interact with the body and care for one another,

at work when nothing seems to be going right, at home when relationship struggles, feel like they're crippling you, and on the road when someone just cut you off. Also,

the reverse of all those things are true. He sees when all those things are gone. going well and how you're responding to it. He sees your heart in the good. Are you taking credit for all the stuff that He's doing?

God is doing some incredible things with this church body. God has been faithful to us and God has been good to us, but real talk, it's Him.

It's not us. And the moment we start to think it's us, we're way off. The best we can do on our best day is be faithful in our actions.

So what does faithful action even mean? Okay, sounds kind of churchy to me. So faith is just going to be there. glasses. I heard this a long time ago and it's stuck with me.

Faith is seeing things the way that God says they are. Okay? So think for a second, turn them forward in like a couple of weeks. I'm getting there. Think about not wearing the glasses like I'm not wearing right now.

And then you put the glasses on. Things get better, right? You can see everything. Faithfulness having faith in God, is seeing things the way that God says they are.

Faithful actions are acting because you see what God is doing. Following God. On our best day, we can only have faithful actions.

That's it. It's kind of freeing. We should be seeing the woundedness and the brokenness and the hurt of our neighbors who don't know Jesus and our hearts should break for them and we should follow them and pursue them because if we believe what the word says,

it's a big deal. Finally, look how he's bringing it full circle with the example of a father. -son relationship.

This is a reference that he talked about back in chapter one. Talked about the idea that he is a father, and if he's a father, where is his respect from the people? This is a hard truth for a lot of folks.

'Cause for a lot of people, when they hear father, there's a sting there. You hear father and you don't go yay. Right? When God talks about father in a biblical context,

he's talking about the way that relationship was designed to be. Not how sin has murdered. He's referring to what should be happening.

What should be happening is a father should love their kids. A father should be there for their kids. To lift their kids up. up, to hold them when they're in pain, to be there for them, to direct them, and yes,

to discipline them. That's part of it too. But that's what he's referring to. So for those of you who hear the word father and you cringe, I get it. Understand that God the Father is not that.

The difference between the right and the wrong is the difference between the right and the wrong. and the wicked is faithful action So for us a couple of things to notice here first the principle If you're someone the sound of my voice that has clothed themselves in kind of your own version of righteousness Maybe you've made it look like you're following God,

but you know your heart is far from him The word says you're wicked wicked. The word says you don't have righteousness. You have your own righteousness,

and the Bible says your righteousness is as filthy rags. That's what the word says. But it also says he is faithful and just to forgive us,

return to him and he will return to you. We read that two weeks ago. Return to him and he will return to you. over and over and over again.



He's a father who won't quit you. That's the God we serve. He wants you to put on his righteousness not to be stuck in your own wickedness.

Let's keep going. Verse one of chapter four. "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, "when all the arrogant and evil doers will be stubble." stubble.

The day that is coming will set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. Notice a couple of things here.

He doesn't pull any punches. This isn't some watered down version of the gospel. He compares it to a burning oven,

and he says all the arrogant and evil doers will be stubble, so let's unpack that for a second. Arrogant, evil doer. Remember who the wicked are. We've talked about that quite a bit, right? Who don't serve God.

The idea of stubble is something that burns up quickly, and it's worthless. It doesn't even keep the fire. fire going. It's chaff in other translations.

Literally goes into the fire and it's gone. It's completely gone immediately. The idea here is that everything that we do in a physical nature that's about ourselves is wicked and it's gonna be burned up and it has no everlasting meaningfulness.

It's gone. gone. And if we haven't put on the righteousness of Jesus, that's us. We cannot survive that without His righteousness.

Seems really harsh, doesn't it? It seems like not the way you'd want to address a person. It seems like we're all people, we make mistakes.

mistakes. Does that actually make us evil making mistakes? I mean, come on, God. I thought you were gracious, I thought you were loving, I thought you were merciful, I thought you had steadfast love forever.

Do you hear it? That conversation is happening constantly across the earth we live on. It's probably happening somewhere on earth right now.

And many times that conversation is happening without even a Jesus follower in the room. People are talking about, who is this God? He's gonna kill everybody, what are you talking about?

That's not good, how is that a good God? Do you feel it? It's hard, right? Let's really dig into this though for a second.

God created us. He designed a life for us We sinned we chose our own actions over him After that there was consequence,

but he promised a savior all the way back in Genesis He promised that he was going to bring about the way to make the relationship right, but that sin that entered in it's like an infection And how do you get rid of an infection?

You gotta remove it. So God promises Jesus, Jesus comes, born of a virgin, lives a sinless life with us,

shows us what God intended from the very beginning, got down in the dirt and said, "This is how you are to live. "This is what the word means." Then I said, "This is how you are to live." Then after all of that surrendered himself to be sacrificed on a cross,



to be killed, to be tortured for our sins. Then after that rose from the dead after three days to show that he had conquered sin and death.

Then after that hung out with him some more, told them some more crazy cool stuff. He said, said, "First, it's better that I go away "so that you can have the Holy Spirit.

"Second, he left his great commission with us "that we read together each week. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, "the Son, and the Holy Spirit. "And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

"Third, he promised he would return to make everything right." So let me ask you a question. (faintly speaking) The God who did all of those things, who was patient with us in grace time,

who did righteousness acts in front of us, who lived with us, who did not sin, who gave himself up, does he have the right to say that those that deny his existence or his worthiness to be the Lord of their lives that they are in fact wicked.

The answer is yes. The God who did all of those things, he does get to call balls and strikes. He does get to say who the righteous and who the wicked are.

It's not easy. It's incredibly hard. but the grace is now. The opportunity to choose the right path in that real talk conversation is now.

It's not tomorrow, you're not promised tomorrow. It's now. The point of the section is that punishment awaits the wicked. It doesn't have to be that way.

Remember, return to me. and I'll return to you. He says If your righteousness is because you're faithfully following Jesus, this should be directing you to a face You should be hearing this and God shouting into your Steve Bill John Rebecca whoever it is that he's directing you to reach Because he's collaborating collaborating with you in this redemption.

He's using you. It's incredible. And be prepared for that person to tell you that the God that you serve is not a good God. Now the way to overcome that is not to just unload.

It's not. It's to lead with love. love. To lead with kindness. But for those in the sound of my voice that have been struggling with that, you need to hear it. The God of the universe reserves the right to say what's wicked and what's righteous.

Let's keep going verses two and three. But for you who fear my name, the Son of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like cabs from the stall and you shall shall tread down the wicked for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act,

says the Lord. So he transitions from the wicked to who? The righteous, okay. Now we're feeling like, okay, this is gonna be a little less heavy, right? Everybody feel like, yeah, okay, okay. But yeah, so he transitions to the redeemed, right? So for those that respect him and follow him, notice the words here. death doesn't end in a sunset there's a sunrise you see it how cool is that he says the son of righteousness will arise with healing in its wings he says that will skip like tabs okay if you want to get lost on YouTube for like an hour search jumping tabs cuz I did and it's

awesome. They're way better than lambs, that's an inside joke, don't worry about it. (audience laughs) But seriously, like, Jumping Like Cabs,

new life, excited, exploring where they are. That's what he promises, the redeemed. He says to us,

(upbeat music) joy awaits us. Complete joy for the redeemed. The point that he's making is that the righteous will have new life where there's no pain or achiness, no death or resentment. There's joy in celebration. There's reason to rejoice because we are with our Heavenly Father. Now don't misunderstand the treading down the wicked part.

What he's referring to is back to what we talked about with the fire. Nothing the wicked have done will last because it was selfish, it was about them. So, it will return to the dust.

That's what he's referring to there. So, for us, we need to first define joy. Now, we've talked about this a few times, but I just want to make sure everybody's tracking.

Biblical joy means God has not lost the ability, nor the desire to deal with my problems. Okay, we sang about it today, actually. I love how God does this stuff.

So, for those of us who are walking with Jesus now, we have a joy that is beyond understanding. We can walk into crazy situations, and it's not that we don't feel the anxiety,

or feel like all of it, but we know that there's a God in heaven. who's in control. And even when our unbelief is like real strong, we know because he has given us his righteousness that he's got this.

That's the joy that we get to walk in. How cool is that? But this is a different level. That joy that we feel now in the physical world is now made complete because we're in the physical world.

spiritual world in heaven. You see the difference here? That's completed joy. That's standing before God, knowing, oh my gosh, it was real the whole time.

The whole time. Everything the Bible said was real. All of this was real. And even those people who are super locked in with Jesus are gonna be like, whoa.

Oh, because we... we have our own unbelief, it's in there, right? But that's completed joy. And you know what people with completed joy do? They skip like cabs.

How cool is this, right? Doesn't end there. We got two more sections. Yeah.

Yeah, I'll keep I'll keep it on it. It's cool. All right, verse 4 Remember the law of my servant Moses the statutes and the rules that I commanded him at whoreb for all Israel So he's talked about the plan.

He's talked about what's gonna happen to the wicked He's talked about what's gonna happen to the redeemed right? He's laid it all out now all of a sudden. He says, oh, hey, remember my law Remember what I said for you to do "because those things were timeless." When you see the word statutes,

that translates to like engravings, right? Can you take like whiteout on an engraving? Like an eraser? No, it's kind of there, right? Yes, it's kind of there,



right? So he's talking about his engravings, right? And his statutes, and he says, "Remember those, the law of Moses, "because he knows that they're gonna screw up." "We all screw up. "Return to me and I'll return to you." The directions on the righteous path are clearly marked.

Now, quickly, anyone know what that is? Does anyone recognize it? Show of hands if you recognize it. Okay, now, keep your hands up. Don't worry,

I'm not gonna call on you, but keep your hands up. up. For those of you with your hands up, put your hands down if you've never been there. Oh,

wow, a lot of you guys got tourist trapped. Okay, all right, that's cool. I didn't expect that. All right, sweet, thank you. You can put your hands down now. Okay, why do you guys know what this is? It's on the interstate,

and there's 700 signs. (audience laughing) There's 700 signs. Now, from what I understand, they're closed. now, but just go with me on this. Seriously, there's a million signs.

Every like half mile, it's like 126 miles 'til south of the border. And then another half mile, it's like 125 and a half miles 'til south of the border. And I remember being a kid and I'm like telling my parents,

I'm like, we just gotta go. And it clearly worked for a while, right? Now, why do I show you this silly sign? Yeah,

nor God's word. God's word is clear. The directions on the righteous path are clearly marked. There's not a debate here.

God is absolutely certain on what you should and should not be doing and has said it from the beginning and after he had explained to them the truth. of their life whatever was going to happen wherever they were going to go he explained it all right you follow the wicked path you don't serve me this is what's going to happen you've served me this is what's going to happen he then led to remember my word because you

need it we need to know what God says a couple of things with this one of the ways God speaks to us is through his word.

To do the faithful actions he's called us to, it requires growing in knowledge of him. It's a process. Now the churchy word for this is sanctification, okay? Whenever you hear that word,

just here's the idea. The idea is becoming more like Jesus. God is in the process of making us more like his son, Jesus. That's what sanctification is. When Pastor Michael was talking about earlier,

it's a process, right? We're all in different different segments of that process but he's working on all of us. Don't hear what I'm not saying though. You accept Christ today,

God can use you to lead a million people to know him. You just need to know the gospel that doesn't make it okay to not want to learn more about what God has to say.

You understand? So, God, in this womb right now, you accept Christ. Hallelujah, amen, that's the greatest thing ever. But if it ends there,

are we serving God or did we get heaven insurance? Feel it? It's kind of, yeah, right?

Right, it's different. Right, serving God is a life. life. It's surrendering to Him, following Him, and He will use you wherever you are. I have been a part of some crazy cool God stuff that I had no right being a part of.

Because it's not about me. It's about Him. Maturity is a goal, and growth comes from obedience to Jesus.

All right, we're coming to a close. Last two verses. "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes and he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction." He's calling his shot.

He's saying he's gonna send an announcer to declare what's going to happen. before it happens It's as if he's doing the same thing. He's been doing since the beginning and being clear in his word There's that father illustration again,

right? Do we feel it? Once again, God clearly articulates what he's doing and the why behind it Does this God have a right to call what's righteous righteous and what's wicked wicked?

wicked. He does. He's the God who created that. It's just, I mean, come on, that in the jump -and -calf thing.

We're now, we've heard the gospel, we know what God's plan is, we've seen it, We've seen the grace, the love, and the mercy,

and that what he offers as this gift. Don't wait. You're not promised tomorrow. I cannot say that enough. If someone inside my voice doesn't know Jesus,

you do not leave this room without surrendering your life to him. Do not. His word is clear. For us that are following Jesus, this truth,

again, has to bring a person. to mind, because he's the kind of all. And his plan is for redemption, not destruction. For those that think that revelation is about destruction and crushing everything,

you're missing the point. God has been in the process of redeeming our busted selves since the beginning. beginning When we just wouldn't listen to him wouldn't follow him wanted to do our own thing and he has continuously been in the process of redemption for us And we learned back and we we too remember that it's for his glory and we get salvation from that so back to our big idea Jesus confronts us with his

guidance gospel gift in the form of a choice. So, one more time, I know I'm beating a dead horse here, but let's really recap this. God had a real talk with his people. He led with love.

He showed them kindness. He talked them through all the ways that they were missing the mark. Then he gave them a plan on how he was actually going to get them back on track. And then at the end of the conversation,

he said to them, "Here's the two paths. "Follow the plan that I set, or do your own thing, "but understand where that goes." Because he will call that wicked.



Take his righteousness on and take your own wickedness off. If you're following Jesus, talk to that person he put in your mind earlier. That's collaboration. He has prepared that good work for you to follow.

We got a couple of questions for you to think about this week. Number one, does Jesus see his righteousness in your own life or a worthless wickedness that won't withstand the fire?

Number two, who is Jesus to you to reach? Will you be willing to share that person with someone else in the church body? Because the moment you say it out loud, now someone's gonna talk to you about that. Three, is the joy of Jesus evident in your life to those around you? If no, why not?

Number four, are you excited or concerned? concerned about the coming day of Jesus? Why? Let's pray together.

Father in heaven, you are clear. We thank you so much for that. You explain what you are going to do before you do it,

and then we're still in awe of when it happens. Why would we think that salvation would be any different? Lord,

I just plead with you, if there's someone again in the sound of my voice that doesn't know you, that Lord, you could break their heart for you, that you would reveal to them that not only are their choices wicked,

but you still love them, and have died for them. them and want them to follow you. You gave up your life for them. Call them to you,

Lord. Use your Holy Spirit in only the way that you can. Thank you for the way that you allow us to worship together and the blessing that we have of this.

And thank you for the book of Malachi and what you did in the lives of those people and how it affects people in Ocala today. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

[Music]