



Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

2nd Sunday of Advent

When the Lord Comes Near,
He Humbles His People

Malachi 3:1-7b

"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.

²But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. ³He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, ⁴and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years. ⁵"So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me," says the Lord Almighty. ⁶"I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. ⁷Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the Lord Almighty.

1. Often our idea of Advent preparation becomes a To-do list around the house: get the tree up, get the lights up, get the cookies made and the presents bought, and stuff all the clutter in the closet before the people come. What are the kinds of preparations the Lord is really interested in?

2. The name "Malachi" means "my messenger." Verse 1 of our text talks about the messengers that God is going to send. Which messenger is which? What details do we get about each of them?
3. Malachi asks some important and scary questions, "**Who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears?**" How do you answer these questions?
4. The two similes that Malachi uses are a "launderer's soap" and a refiner's fire". These similes have both a law aspect and a gospel aspect to them. What is God's law work of refining and laundering us? What is God's gospel work of refining and laundering us?
5. God's Old Testament people had fallen into the same old sins of their ancestors—blemished sacrifices, foreign ungodly wives, withholding tithes. The priests were doubly guilty because they were leading the way and letting the people think this was okay. For what reasons is it so important that God's ministers continue to lead a godly life, rebuke sin, and call people to repentance?
6. "**I the Lord do not change. So, you are not destroyed.**" We see God's longsuffering love as he continues to bear with his people though they have not kept his decrees. How does this truth comfort you when you sin? How might your sinful nature take advantage of this truth?
7. The Lord pleads to his people, "Return to me, and I will return to you." In what ways will you commit to being humbled and return to the Lord this Advent Season?