

Admittedly Guilty, Graciously Accepted

Scripture Reading — Malachi 3:3-4

Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord. — Malachi 3:3-4

Throughout Malachi's message, the people's lack of commitment has been a telltale sign of the distance between them and God. These verses predict that when the refiner comes, the people's hearts will return to God and their sacrifices will again please him.

It is one of the great paradoxes of Christianity that we turn to God at the same moment that we realize how much we've offended him. This is a sign of the Holy Spirit's work. Rather than responding to God's chastisement with pride, defensiveness, or rebellion, we instead respond with humility, remorse, and repentance. We humbly ask for God's forgiveness and gratefully look forward to the beginning of a relationship with Christ.

In all this we again see the Lord's amazing love for us. We stand before him admittedly guilty, without any defense or excuse, and deserving of whatever punishment God should choose. And God chooses not to punish us at all! We have learned our lesson—that we need to be close to him who loves us most. And that's all he wants of us. No retribution, no paying back what we lost, stole, or broke, no making amends for all the grief we have caused. He simply forgives us. We find at that point that our "sacrifices" are transformed into offerings of gratitude from the heart.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, I have sinned in thought, word, and deed. Please forgive and cleanse me, Lord and Savior. Help me live a life of gratitude and service to you. In your name, Amen.

Devotion topics: [Christianity](#), [Sin](#), [Salvation](#), [God](#)

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