

# THE BURDEN OF THE MESSENGER



## Week Four - 4:1-6

### A Note to the Parents/Teachers

As we wrap up Malachi, may we hear God's final warning to Israel as He is also speaking it to us today. May we sit in the tension of falling short of God's glory, just as Israel had, and feeling our need for a Rescuer to come. May that tension lead us into the glorious good news of Advent - Jesus is coming!

- **Big Idea:** God's righteousness is delight for those who trust Him and destruction for those who do not

### Starter

- **Object Lesson:** 'Brush Away'  
Bring a **toothbrush**, **hairbrush**, and **toilet bowl brush**. Ask the kids which you should use to brush your teeth - the toilet brush? What about for your hair - the toothbrush? There are certain tools set apart for certain jobs. But what if you used the toothbrush to clean a toilet - would you ever use that again to brush your teeth? God created us to be set apart to show what He is like but the filth of our sin has ruined that. Only Jesus can cleanse us to make us holy (set apart) again.
- **Video:** You can also watch this video as an introduction to the book of Malachi: <https://youtu.be/LLVzHcZVmAA>

### Sing Together

Love the Lord Your God - <https://youtu.be/vdMIXCdIY-c>

## Story

Have you ever been burned by a fire or stove? What about a sun burn? The sun is something that brings us life, light, and warmth, but it can also be dangerous - especially if you were to get too close. If you got close enough, it would burn you up! This is kind of what God's holiness is like.

At the end of the message God sent Malachi to give to Israel, He said, "The day is coming, when I will draw near, and it will be like a burning furnace. All the arrogant who think they don't need Me, everyone who rebels against Me, and all who are wicked to other people will be burnt to nothing. The day I come will consume them."

"But," said the Lord, who commands armies of angels, "for all of you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings, and you will go out and playfully jump like calves released from the stall."

God didn't want people to fear Him the same way people are afraid of the dark or scary movies. He wants His people to fear Him like you would fear getting too close to the sun. To recognize how powerful He is. That He is good and He is the source of life, but when we fight against Him it is like taking all the good and powerful things about Him and turning them against ourselves. So, God wanted His people to be like Him and follow His ways, so that when He would come close they would be safe, not destroyed.

He said, "Remember the instructions I gave you through Moses, when he was on that mountain, for how you should live. Because I love you so much, I will send you even another messenger before I come, to help you live right. Listen to him. Otherwise, when I come it will be like a curse for the earth. But for those who listen, it will be healing."

About 400 years later, that messenger God promised came. His name was John, and he baptized people in water and taught them to be cleansed from their sins so they would be pure when God came. But God knew the people could never clean their own sins themselves. That's why His messenger John told them there was an even better one coming than him. It was Jesus. And Jesus took the curse upon himself, so that healing would come to all who trust in him. His perfect righteousness makes us clean and able to stand close to the holy, powerful, righteousness of God.

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- How do you think God's holiness can be good, but also dangerous for some?
- Can you think of other times in the Bible where God did something that was salvation for some while it was destruction for others? (*Think of Exodus across the sea*)
- How can you know that you will experience God's holiness as good life, rather than it burning you up? Trusting in Jesus!

### Breakout Time

- **Prayer:**

God, You are holy and great and powerful! Help us to trust in You more and more each day, so that we will be safe in Your holiness. In the power of Jesus we pray, amen.

- **Video:**

To help students understand more of today's lesson, you may choose to show this video from Bible Project on 'Holiness':

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=I9vn5UvsHvM>

- **Craft:**

- For older kids: See the object lesson on page one the younger kids did, then watch the Bible Project video on Holiness: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=I9vn5UvsHvM>.

Afterward, have the kids draw a line dividing a sheet of paper in half. On one side, have them draw a sun and list the things it provides (warmth, light, etc.). On the other side, have them draw how dangerous it is to get too close. Continue down the sheet of paper doing this with other things (fire, large animals, canyon, etc.)

- For younger kids: Use the coloring sheet attached and talk about how God's holiness is like the warmth of the sun. Ask the kids what they enjoy doing on a nice sunny day. Talk about the things we will get to do when Jesus returns and he is our light always.

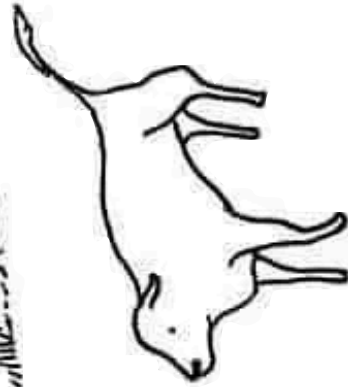
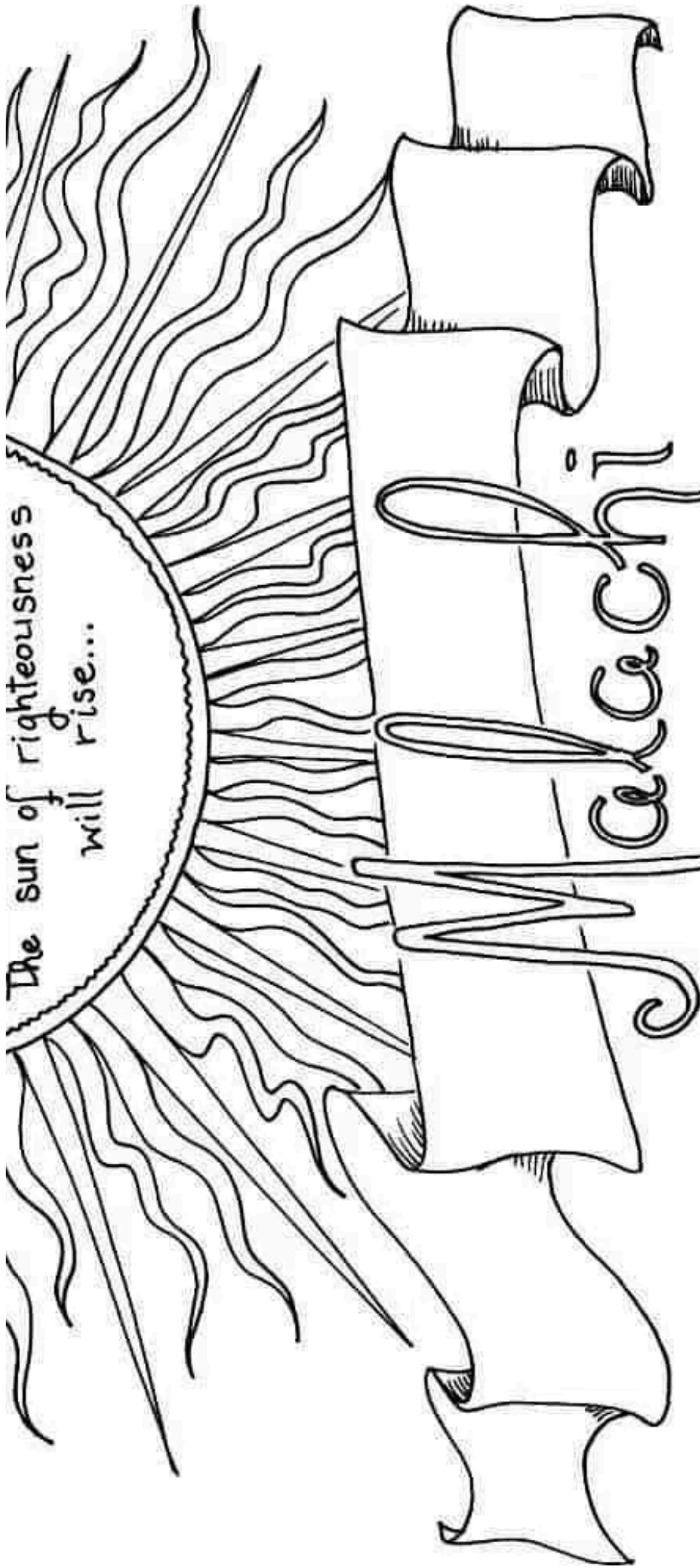
- **BLESS Activity:**

*\*For kids to do during the week\**

Because this Story is true, we want to be faithful to live in it. We ask the Spirit to help us to *Bless, Listen, Eat, Speak, and Sabbath* (rest & celebrate) in ways that tell the good news of God's Story.

This week, focus on the **Sabbath** rhythm. Next Sunday is a Scattered Sunday, so we won't gather together. Talk with your family about how you can take this week to rest in the goodness and holiness of the LORD.

The sun of righteousness  
will rise...



And you will go out and frolic like well fed calves

