

Malachi 1:2-3

*"I have loved you," says the LORD. "But you ask, 'How have you loved us?'
"Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" the LORD says. "Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I
have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to
the desert jackals."*

Every one of us asks the question in our heart at some point. It is not necessarily a statement of anger or resentment; usually it is a heart question so deep inside we are afraid to admit even to ourselves: God, how have you loved me? I believe there is more than a little of that in all of us. You may be here this morning and your life is in such disarray that you stand with the Israelites and ask: "How have you loved me God?"

God has loved you with an unconditional love. God's love for Israel is the same as His love for us — an act of pure grace. *"The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers."* (Deut 7:7-8). We, too, are a rebellious and a hard people, yet He loves them because He chose to love them and He loves us because He chose to love us. Jacob had done nothing to prove he was more worthy of the love God when God elected to love him over Esau. With no one to twist God's arm, God decided of His own sovereign will to love the people He made his covenant.

And God has loved you with an everlasting love. *"The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.'" (Jer 31:3)* In Isaiah 49:16 God tells the people of Israel, *"See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me."* God tells Israel that only when the sun ceases to rise and the moon and stars cease to shine by night will He forget His covenant of love with Israel. God made a covenant of love with Abraham, and confirmed that covenant with Isaac and with Jacob out of grace — and purposed it for eternity.

But Israel asked how had God loved them? If you love us God, prove it! Where is the evidence? How easy is it for us to fall into the same trap? Malachi's oracle speaks to our easy going, nominal Christianity just as it spoke to Israel in his day. You may be here this morning thinking God has neglected you, forgotten you in your turmoil and depression. Maybe the enemy is whispering in your ear about the disaster your life has become and raising the issue of where are the promises of God now? Today God is calling to you for renewal, to reset your heart and refresh your relationship with Him. Immerse yourself in the eternal, never-changing love of God for you. God chose you by grace, and shed the precious blood of His own Son to redeem you. The ball is in your court. So how will you respond to the question of God's love?