



Connection Group Participant Guide

October 3, 2021

Malachi 1:1-5

Teaching Point 1. I have loved you (v. 2) – God is declaring His love for the Jews. As a nation they had been through a lot of hard times. As individuals, their lives were not easy. Judah was not a prosperous region at that time in history. Life was hard and difficult. God wanted them to know that He did love them. He had not abandoned them. He had not forsaken them. He remembered all His promises to them. He remembered the covenant He had made with their ancestors. Though He did discipline them for a time, this didn't mean He had rejected them. God wants to reassure them that He does in fact love them.

Application: *Hebrews 13:5 - Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*

I will never leave you nor forsake you. God also loves us, His children. The world around us may fall to pieces. Everyone we know may turn against us. But just like a good parent would never reject his child, so God will never cast us aside.

Jeremiah 31:3 - The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness."

If you need a rock-solid truth to hang onto in the middle of trials, comfort yourself with this. God loves you with an everlasting love.

Teaching Point 2. You say, "How have You loved us?" – God declared His love for the Jews. But they doubted Him. They were skeptical. But most of the trials and problems they faced were of their own making. It was the consequences of their own sins. It didn't feel like they were experiencing God's love, but it was in fact God's love. Love drove God to discipline them because they needed to learn the importance of obedience. God disciplined them because He loved them. Discipline would remind them of the terrible consequences of sin so that the next time they faced temptation they would not fall into it.

Application: Next time you begin to doubt God's goodness ask the question, "how has He loved me?" But don't ask it rhetorically as a challenge. Instead, start listing out the ways you have experienced the love of God. Write them down. Soon you will find that He does indeed love you and has shown it consistently.