

Waiting to Turn the Page

*See, I am sending my messenger
to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek
will suddenly come to his temple. —Malachi 3:1*

READ: Malachi 3:1-5

REFLECT: My three-year-old granddaughter recently brought me one of her books and climbed into my lap to have it read to her. She knew the book well, and she would say some words with me or look up into my face to share a laugh at the funny parts.

Then we reached the scary, troubling part of the book, the part where the heroine is lost and frightened and the illustration is dark and ominous. What happened next was a moment that took me back to years when I would read books to her mother. Her hand suddenly reached out to turn the page. Instinctively, I also reached out. I needed to gently slow the turning of the page in order to read what was on this one. On the next page was homecoming and sunshine, but it would be meaningless in the story without understanding the dark page we were reading just then.

Reading Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, we Christians are often eager to turn the page. We know that on the next page the good news begins with a gentle birth announcement (Matthew 1:18). But just as in our lives, so should it also be in our reading: We should take the time to read the page we are on. There is darkness in it, there is pain, and we must know these, for without them there cannot be hope. Who knows when the pain itself is part of God's "refiner's fire" in our lives?

—Leonard Beechy

RESPOND: *Give me the patience to read whatever is on the page of my life today—with all of its pain and promise—knowing that the turning of the page is the work of your hand.*