Malachi 2:13: “And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth [it] with good will at your hand.”

Malachi prophesied during the Persian Period after the reconstruction and dedication of the temple in 513 BC. Malachi means messenger and the general consensus is that he was a priest. There is some thought that Malachi is not meant to be a proper name but simply to identify the writer as a messenger of God which is what the name really means. The book seems to be directed at the priest and their laxity but it is also directed to the spiritual laxity of all the Jews at this time. Basically Malachi points out the substandard sacrifices, the shallow repentance and all around disrespect for God. It is not that God is such a perfectionist that he
demands strict adherence it is just that to offer such shallow gifts to God is showing a lack of respect and love.

I mean if man brings roses to his wife one evening and says, “Here, the receptionist in our office had them in a vase for a week and was getting ready to throw them away and so I pulled them out of the garbage to give to you. Here these are for you. Now can I spend the weekend fishing with boys?” I tell you that old boy deserves to have those flowers stuck where she is going to stick them.

Yet, that is almost exactly what we do with God. We show up to church on Sunday grudgingly, throw something in the offering plate that we put in an offering envelop so the usher doesn’t think we are a Baptist cheapskate and then say: “Well, God I went to church you should be pleased with me.”

Anyways, we come to this thirteenth verse in the second chapter right after the prophet blasts these men who abandon their God fearing wives for pagan women or to engage in pagan sexual practices. Some commentators say this is a reference to the women who come to the altar weeping over their broken hearts over what their husband had done and some say it is the husbands who come weeping over the way they sinned against their wives and then pack up and go right back to their sins. Some commentators, and I agree with them, say it is both.

They are weeping because God does not accept their offerings. The women did not give an offering the husbands did it for them. God could not answer their prayers because God took no pleasure in their offerings.
Why would not God be moved by their tears, their weeping and crying. They cover the altar with dimah or tears. This is in a feminine form which is shedding tears on behalf of someone else. Wives shedding tears dimah for their husbands and husbands shedding tears dimah for their wives. They bakah or weep. Bakah is a weeping that comes from the heart. It is another word for a broken heart. So they come to the altar shedding tears for the one’s whose heart they have broken. Then they anaqah or cry. This word comes from a Semitic root word used for the cry of a wounded animal. So they come to the altar shedding tears over the betrayal of a loved ones whose heart they have broken and they crying out like a wounded animal in pain over what they have done. But their sacrifice is unacceptable and God will not do anything to help them. That sounds awful cruel of God. Here these women come to God with a broken heart over the infidelity of their husbands and the abuse they laid upon them, the husband come to the altar crying out in pain over the abuse they put on their wives and God turns a deaf ear because they did not offer the proper sacrifice.

The woman who pointed this passage out to me shared with me her situation. She was married to a man who was unfaithful, a drug addict, alcoholic and into pornography which his young son found lying around the house one day. This woman would go to the altar at church week after week dimah, shedding tears for her husband, bakah weeping over a broken heart and anaqah sometimes crying out alike a wounded animal. She pled with God to change her husband. Odd thing is her husband also came to church and he dimah shed tears at the altar for his wife, he bakah wept over the broken heart of his wife that he caused and he also anaqah, cried out like a wounded animal. Only it was a poor me, I am so misunderstood type of tears, weeping and crying. Then after the service it was business as usual.
He never changed and they finally divorced and she is at peace now. She admits she doesn’t really pray for her husband much anymore.

Now why did God not change this man with all this *dimah, bakah and anaqah*? The answer lies in the words: *he regardeth not the offering*. The word for *regard* is *laqach* which means *to seize or take hold of*. The offering was an expression of the giving of your will to God. If God could have *laqach* this husband’s will he could have changed him, but the husband refused to let go of his will. He wanted to be able to continue in his sin without offending his wife, without his wife’s heart breaking. There are just some prayers God cannot answer without violating human will. But God did hear the wife’s prayers and he sent *malachi after malachi’s messengers of God after messengers of God* to this man but he would not let go of his will. God rescued him for death many times thanks to the prayer of his wife but still he would not let go of his will. The offering must be perfect, that is it must be out of a heart of love and respect for God and the giving of one’s will entirely to God. The husband, well he is off on some binge and the wife, she is devoted to God, I see her pray, and I feel the presence of God around her when she prays. Why she had to suffer, I don’t know, I just know God did everything He could without violating the human will.