

Sermon Starter – Preparation for Seeds to Grow

Malachi 3:1-4, Luke 1:68-79, Luke 3:1-6, Philippians 1:3-11

“By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us” (Luke 1:78). With his message of God’s tenderness, Zechariah softens the tone of Malachi’s warnings of a purifying fire. Yet no one is exempt from this cleansing process. To communicate the message of freedom in Christ, we need to be freed ourselves from the chains that bind us. God’s action in Advent, like the refiner’s fire that burns away impurities, reveals our true selves (Malachi 3:1). Even as we go through the necessary self-examination and repentance, we can trust that God will bring to completion the good work begun in us (Philippians 1).

Preparation for seeds to grow involves disturbing and agitating the soil, breaking up the places that have become hardened and compacted. Similarly, the prophets stir up our hearts and minds, preparing “a way for the Lord” (Luke 3:1-6). How are we getting ready for God’s coming? What needs to be stirred up and brought to light so God’s mercy can burst in and break out?

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