

SERMON NOTES: PREPARING FOR THE WORD THAT WALKS 3: THE ANTIDOTE TO ANXIETY
(8 November 2015)

SCRIPTURE

Malachi 2:15

Didn't the one God make us with a remnant of His life-breath? And what does the One seek? A godly offspring. So watch yourselves carefully, and do not act treacherously against the wife of your youth.

Malachi 3:7-12

"Since the days of your fathers, you have turned from My statutes; you have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the Lord of Hosts.

But you ask: "How can we return?"

"Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me!"

You ask: "How do we rob You?"

"By not making the payments of the tenth and the contributions. You are suffering under a curse, yet you—the whole nation—are still robbing Me. Bring the full tenth into the storehouse so that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this way," says the Lord of Hosts. "See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure. I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not ruin the produce of your land and your vine in your field will not fail to produce fruit," says the Lord of Hosts. "Then all the nations will consider you fortunate, for you will be a delightful land," says the Lord of Hosts.

Malachi 3:16-17

At that time those who feared the Lord spoke to one another. The Lord took notice and listened. So a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared Yahweh and had high regard for His name. "They will be Mine," says the Lord of Hosts, "a special possession on the day I am

preparing. I will have compassion on them as a man has compassion on his son who serves him.

KEY POINTS

- + Israelites/we are a people made by God, belonging to Him in body and spirit, called to be people of peace, proactivity, purpose and praise.
- + The majority of people today describe themselves as lonely, anxious, overwhelmed, exhausted.
- + We tend to fall into the 'Great Disappointment' and thus protect ourselves against what is hard, creating a fearful faith. Anxiety closes us in on ourselves.
- + God calls us to a faith that is characterised by joy, choosing joy over the false life story. This is a process and not a once-off event.
- + As priests (see last week's notes), we are called to create an atmosphere of worship, to bless God, bless others and enjoy God ourselves.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- + What has most stood out to you from the Malachi series so far? Can you identify any common things God might be bringing up for you to pay attention to?
- + Consider the characteristics in these two lists: peace, proactivity, purpose, praise; lonely, anxious, overwhelmed, exhausted. Which do you identify with most? What are you hungry for? What do you want most to be freed from?
- + How have you experienced the Great Disappointment in your life? How does God's Word/promise/call/joy speak into that?