

Sermon Third Sunday of Advent 12/11

Matthew 11: 2-15

Messengers from John the Baptist

Are you the one? Are you the one that will save us from all our problems and be our king?

Matthew 11: 2-15

“Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”

At this point, John the Baptist had been in jail for almost a full year. However, he was able to hear of the miracles and teachings of Jesus and he wanted to confirm what he had heard.

John used images of judgment to describe the ministries of the one that was coming in prophecy.

Matthew 3: 10-12

“Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

John the Baptist did not expect what he would hear in the reports about Jesus. So, are you the one?

John was paving the way for Jesus whom he expected to rule and reign in judgment and gain control of the current government.

John could not understand what he was hearing and again asked, "are you the one?"

Luke 3:9

"Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." Judgment/separation!

Both John and Jesus were part of the mission to bring justice to all that believed in Christ as the Messiah, but the methods were different in how Christ would show complete compassion and healing to prove his love for us. The Law/The Gospel of Christ!

This message in the middle of Advent should bring us hope as we come closer to celebrating the birth of our true Savior Jesus Christ.

With all of our Christmas traditions of lights, Christmas trees, and gifts to each other, Jesus assured John, as he assures us this Christmas season, that the true gift is our great news - He is still with us, and he dwells inside our hearts.

Luke 2: 10- 14

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"^[a]

So, we have heard this passage from Luke in most of our Christmas messages over the years. This was part of the will of

the Father to prepare for the great offering for us to be saved from our very sins for all eternity.

Isaiah tells of one who would pave the way to repent to be baptized in the waters of a new day.

Matthew 3:3

“For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare^[a] the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’”

Jesus loved all including his Prophet John and went on to praise him even if John was asking him, “are you the One?”

Matthew 11: 4-6

“And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers^[a] are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

Jesus implied that he was about to die and such a death was as might have been to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness.

Who is offended by the cross of Christ? Who are the ones that Jesus is talking about here? It is not that hard to see as the current culture is offended by the holy scriptures and what Christ tells us to fully know the real truth of what God has for us if we follow him. We too are blessed by Christ to follow and make Him our life, a life of following him and to pass on the story of his grace and mercy.

“And Blessed is the one who is not offended by me.” We need to believe and come to the lifesaving faith as to who Jesus is and

why he came to us. This was going to be a work of love, not vengeance, and Jesus knew that the pure act of healing and compassion would be proof of his love, not the proof that would come with violence as an avenging army or in a quenching fire, but with compassion, humility, forgiveness, physical healing.

This is our God, our Savior. This is our Messiah, but also a Savior that is holy in every way and will pass judgment on all who will follow evil and turn away from his love.

Yet, even as John needed proof and confirmation, Jesus held John up as even more than a prophet!

Matthew 11 7- 9

“As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What then did you go out to see? A man^[a] dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. ⁹ What then did you go out to see? A prophet?^[b] Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.”

Jesus shows in his compassion for John for he knew that John would be executed at the hand of evil people for the sake of the mission to tell it like it is!

Repent and be saved. For the very nature of John was pure in word and a man of one who would not mix words or worry about his own head. Repent!

Matthew 11: 10-15

“This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’ ¹¹ Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” From the days of John

the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence,^[a] and the violent take it by force. ¹³ For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, ¹⁴ and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. ¹⁵ He who has ears to hear,^[b] let him hear.

Jesus is showing that the rule of Christ is humility! Yet the least, the poor, the lowly, the downtrodden, the meek, are greater than even John the Baptist even as Jesus is uplifting John as a martyr!

We all must look to continue to learn and show humility, to humble ourselves to each other, to offer our love to all as Jesus shows here! For in our humility, we also show our need when we too see we are helplessly lost without Jesus!

We, as the body of Christ, have suffered the same as the unbelievers for all have sinned and fallen short. However, we are not like the lost for we know what we have in our faith and through the gift of Immanuel we have eternal life with him!

During this advent season of lights and decorations, lets remember that the lights are a sign of his love that breaks the darkness of man. Like just one candle in a dark place, it pierces the dark and darkness disappears .

So too, the Light of Christ pierces the darkness of this culture and shines through us here this morning. Even as this world continues to get darker, we can shine brighter with hope for next year for we have the Love of Jesus in us.

For no great words have been spoken as in John 3:16

For God so loved the world,^[a] that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

So this Christmas as we look to a new hope for our church and our lives, invite a family member, a friend, or neighbor to our

services this Christmas Eve and start a new tradition of spreading his love, for the one you can bring to Christ is also you!

Amen!