

NEXT STEP: STUDY & SHARE

READINGS

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Isaiah 12:2-6

In your midst is the Holy One of Israel. (v6)

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 7:18-28

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, & open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior & Lord, who lives & reigns with you & the Holy Spirit, one God, now & forever. Amen.

SERMON TEXT- Luke 7:18-28

¹⁸The disciples of John reported all these things to him. So John summoned two of his disciples ¹⁹and sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ²⁰When the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?'" ²¹Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, & evil spirits, & had given sight to many who were blind. ²²And he answered them, "Go & tell John what you have seen & heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. ²³And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." ²⁴When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ²⁵What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing & live in luxury are in royal palaces. ²⁶What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, & more than a prophet. ²⁷This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' ²⁸I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

LISTENING TO . . .

GOD- *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

1. Compare St. Luke's telling of this episode with St. Matthew's (11:2-11). What similarities & differences do you notice? What do you make of them?
2. Compare St. John the Baptizer's preaching (3:1-20) to Jesus' initial preaching (4:16-21). How is the question in v19 earnest? How is Jesus' answer honest, even as it redirects attention? Review *Mark 6:17-29*; how is it evidence for Jesus' claims in vv24-27? *Hint: use your Bible's study notes to help understand Jesus' figures of speech.*

EACH OTHER- *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

3. In an anxious world St. Paul tells us to "Rejoice!" What 3 reasons (*Philippians 4:5-7*) does he list for rejoicing? Find 3 examples of each reason in your everyday life.
4. Read *Philippians 4:8-9*. What do they add to vv4-7? How can you keep these things "front & center" in your everyday life each day?

NEIGHBORS- *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

5. Notice how Jesus answers the question with action (v21). That's the neuroscience of perception: we see what something *does* before we see what it *is*. How would you answer that same question to a guest in your congregation?
6. Who among your circle of family & friends are pre-Christians, folks who don't have any real, regular, frequent connection to faith in a local congregation? How can the seasons of Advent & Christmas, with their rich stories & symbolism, give you an opportunity to speak to them while the Holy Spirit opens their mind to the Scriptures (*cf. Luke 24:45*) & you proclaim the Gospel (*cf. Acts 8:26-39*). Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the names of at least 3 of these people & to give you simple opportunities. *See Luke 12:8-12, 1 Peter 3:15*

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Third Sunday of Advent

12.15.24

Series: Proclamation

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

How do I talk to people about Jesus?

Pre-Christians

Honest & earnest questions deserve honest & earnest responses

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: [John] sent [two of his disciples] to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" (v19)

-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

. I am sending my messenger before you, who will prepare your way before you. (*Matthew 11:10*)

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