



Sermon for Sunday, December 11, 2022

“Are You the One Who Is to Come?”

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 11:2-6 ² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ⁴ Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

Introduction: John the Baptist's Expectations and Disappointments

Today is the third week of Advent. Advent is a time to prepare to welcome the Lord who brings change into our lives. Christians spend Advent reflecting on our lives, repenting, and waiting for the coming of the Lord.

Matthew chapter 3 describes John the Baptist proclaiming the baptism of repentance while waiting for the Messiah. John the Baptist proclaimed to the people in the Judean wilderness, “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.**” (Matthew 3:2) He also cried out to the Pharisees and Sadducees; “**You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?**” (Matthew 3:7).

In John’s Message there is an expectation that the Messiah will judge the corrupt world and establish a new world when He comes. However, even though Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah, appeared in the world, nothing changed. Also, as John the Baptist proclaimed to people, no disasters, or judgments against the wicked and the unrighteous in the world appeared. Rather, John the Baptist was imprisoned by an unjust King Herod. In this way, Jesus, who was expected to be the subject of change in the world, came to this earth but He did things that did not meet John’s expectations.

John must have felt much disappointment since he expected the Messiah to be a protagonist of world change. Such disappointment can also be found in our own lives. We have our own expectations of Christ. Please consider what your expectations of Christ are. And please be aware that our expectations for Him are most often based on our own desires, not the will of the Lord.

As Christians, we ask the following questions: What has changed in the world during the 2,000-year history of Christianity? Have countless wars in human history stopped? Are people freed from poverty, natural disasters, and disease? Has our world become more just? What are your answers to these questions?

What we must realize is that God's work does not come true as we expect. If we expect God's work to be based on our thoughts and desires, we will experience disappointment. But if we empty our thoughts and wait for the Lord's will to come true, we will experience amazing things. Therefore, in our life of faith, we must experience the grace of the Lord in our lives by emptying our hearts rather than expecting the Lord to fulfill our wishes.

Body: A Christian is one who denies oneself and takes up the cross

In today's text, John the Baptist, experiencing deep despair in prison, sends his disciples to ask Jesus with a question. **Today's text 11:3 says, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"**

John’s is very urgent. The following verse shows the heart of John the Baptist; “**Jesus, you are not the Messiah whom I proclaimed who wanted to do imminent wrath against the unrighteous. But I cannot deny that you are the Messiah. Then, what kind of Messiah are you trying to show us and to the world?**” John the Baptist was prepared to accept whatever answers Jesus gave to his question.



For us to meet Christ, there must be a time when our thoughts and stubbornness are broken. **In Psalm 32:5, David confesses; “Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD”-- and you forgave the guilt of my sin.”**

Who can confess their sins to the Lord with a sincere heart? It is the one who puts down his thoughts and stubbornness with a humble heart and looks at the Lord with a heart that mourns. The Lord forgives such people. However, those who are obsessed with their own thoughts and obstinacy and cannot look to the will of the Lord cannot be forgiven for their sins. David confesses how painful the time he spent before confessing his sins was. **Psalm 32:3 says: “When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.”**

It is difficult for any of us to correctly accept the will of the Lord without going through the pain of self-denial. That is why Advent should be regarded as a period of repentance.

According to today's text, when the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked Him a question, Jesus did not give a direct answer. Instead, Jesus replied, **“the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.” (Matthew 11:5).**

Jesus's answer, there is no imminent judgment and end that John the Baptist expected, but instead there is healing, life, and the gospel. We know that the world will not be transformed as drastically as John the Baptist had hoped. However, the world we live in is changing with the power of the Lord's gospel. Even if it is considered that it does not come true as we thought and expected, the gospel of the Lord is still healing the world and leading it to life. When we put down our thoughts and stubbornness and look to the Lord with humility, we can more abundantly experience the amazing work of the gospel that heals the world and leads to life. May all of us enjoy such blessings.

Conclusion: Christians who do not stumble because of our ideas and stubbornness

Now let's summarize today's sermon. Jesus warns us; **"Blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."** If when we understand Jesus as we think and expect, we will stumble because of Jesus. However, when we empty our hearts and join the ministry of the gospel with patience, God establishes His kingdom within us.

Dear brothers and sisters! There are many times when we seek Jesus for the solution to practical problems. However, when we wait and pray for Jesus only for the solution of the problems we are experiencing, we will rather experience despair.

On the contrary, the more we have problems, the more we look back on ourselves, empty our minds rather than obsess over our problems, deny ourselves, and try to take up our cross, the more we will experience the amazing blessings of the Lord.

Baptist John's question such as this; **"Are you the one who is to come?"**, can be asked by any humble person who only puts down their wrong thoughts and stubbornness. And those who can do this, are people who wait for the Lord to work anew. The Lord answers the prayers of these very people and allows us to experience God's works of healing and life.

As we spend the third week of Advent, I hope that all of us who sincerely repent and deny ourselves can carry our crosses.

