

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Week of Advent – December 14, 2025

*Matthew 11:2-11*

Many of you probably know that John Lennon Christmas song, “Happy Christmas” “So this is Christmas. And what have you done? Another year over. And a new one just begun.” It was written as a protest song against the Vietnam War. Lennon said he was tired of hearing White Christmas during such a trying time in the world, so he wrote this. And it’s a hopeful song, kind of. We’re hoping for a good year. A good year for everyone, rich and poor, black and white, young and old.

But it’s also one of those songs that’s like, “welp, this is it. Here we are. Maybe next year will be better. But this is what we got.” And I think we can relate to that today. Welp, it’s Christmas again. The snow helps the feeling a little, but the time certainly snuck up. And with everything going on in the world, sometimes it can be hard to find that Christmas spirit. Sometimes it can be hard to find the good news amongst all of the bad.

I imagine this is how John the Baptist is feeling in our gospel today. Last week in our gospel, we heard about John out in the wilderness prophesying about the one who is to come. “The one who is greater than I. I’m not even worthy to tie the thong of his sandals.” He was Jesus’ hype man. And now, he’s in jail. And things are not looking so great for him.

Meanwhile, Jesus is out there doing ministry. This part of our gospel takes place shortly after the sermon on the mount, and so we’ve heard about Jesus vision for the kingdom of God. We’ve heard about all of the Good news that is to come.

And yet John’s still in jail. It’s no wonder we hear him questioning what’s going on with Jesus. This isn’t how it was supposed to be. Jesus was supposed to come and solve everything. Is Jesus really the one, or is there yet another one coming?

Even today we expect Jesus to return and rule with a mighty fist. But that's not the Jesus we get in scripture. Jesus' response to John's questioning is to tell his disciples to report back what they are hearing and seeing. All of the miracles. The feedings, the healings, the raising of the dead. The hope in the midst of the darkness

It's not what we might think a savior will come and do. But that's exactly what Jesus did. Jesus never promised he would solve all of the world's issues.

Because the world's issues are caused by our own failings as humanity. But what he did do was show what power he had. And that his priorities were in restoring wholeness. Not ruling over people and telling them what they must think and do at all times. Not taking over the government and setting more laws for us. No, instead he came among us to bring about hope. To show the restoration he is able to provide. And then in the end, bring about the ultimate redemption for us in his death for our salvation.

No, it's not how John imagined it going. It's not how his disciples imagined it going. And yet, that's how Jesus ministered to us. This is how our God comes to us. Walks among us in love and grace, meeting us where we are rather than sitting on a throne and giving commands. He even calls back to John – you didn't go out to see John in soft, clean robes. You went out to see him in the wilderness. Rough and dirty – wearing camel hair and eating honey and locusts. John was anything but normal, so why expect something normal now. No instead we get a God whose love and grace are so strong that Jesus came to us. A God who has come near to us.

So this advent and Christmas season, maybe the times don't feel normal. Maybe the magic we felt as a child has long passed. Maybe the world feels overwhelming. I'm sure John wasn't feeling the spirit either in jail. But we're reminded this season that even when things look grim, God is still present. God is still doing marvelous things around us. John was in jail and unable to see what Jesus was doing, so he relied on his disciples to tell him what was

happening. Because Jesus was the one. There was no other coming. The ministry that Jesus did was to bring about hope in the midst of trying times.

So, where do you see hope today? If we are like John, feeling the desolation of life all too well as of late, we have to find the ways in which God is active and at work in the world bringing about good news. Because that is most certainly the case. We remember that when we are created, God looks at us and says, this is good. We are all created good. There is so much goodness around us, we just get overwhelmed by the bad. Find that goodness this week. Whether it's in the stillness of the snow The generosity of strangers. A hug from a friend. And remember in that goodness, that is where God is at work. There were never any promises that the perils of the world would cease. But there are promises of God's everlasting presence. There are ways that God's kingdom is here and now and we have the opportunity to live into that hope. And to be the example of God's love and grace in the world today.