

Outline:

1. Intro into the 3rd week of Advent – time of looking to when and where Christ comes to us
 - a. 1st Christmas,
 - b. His glorious return on the Last Day at the Resurrection
 - c. His continued presence and coming in His Word and Sacrament

2. John the Baptist
 - a. John’s previous situation
 - i. John had pointed out the Lamb of God who would take the sins of the world. The Baptist pointed out the Christ to all around him, including his disciples
 - ii. The Baptist clearly told them Who this Jesus is and what He came to do
 - b. John’s current situation
 - i. Time has passed and the Baptist is no longer in the Jordan river, but in prison
 - ii. John is in prison for his preaching God’s Word
 1. He knows his time could be short so he wants to prepare his disciples before his execution
 - iii. **What is John’s real question and his purpose for sending his disciples to Jesus?**
 1. It could be one, or a couple of things:
 - a. Was it simply curiosity
 - b. Was it to point his disciples to Christ
 - c. Was there some doubt
 2. Speculations aside regarding John and his motives,
 - a. Scripture tells us John simply asks, **Who are you really?**

3. But it is not just John the Baptist who has question. We too need to deal with our own doubts when they rise
 - a. These doubts have many sources:
 - i. The devil’s attacks
 - ii. The world’s attacks
 - iii. Our own sinful nature

4. Jesus and John’s disciples – how does Jesus answer them – Who are You really?
 - a. John’s disciples come to Jesus and ask Him John’s question
 - i. Jesus is understanding, not condescending
 - ii. He intimately knows our weaknesses and shortcomings
 - b. Jesus doesn’t preach them a sermon about unbelief, nor does He chide them for their asking, instead He clearly points out what He has done points, clearly revealing Who He is and answering John’s question
 - i. Jesus points John’s disciples to God’s Word and Jesus’ own actions:
 1. **“They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. ³Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.” ⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.”**(Isaiah 35:2-7,9c-10)

- ii. John’s disciples knew what the Messiah, the Saviour, was going to do
 - 1. They knew what Scripture had said, and what God had promised
 - 2. Jesus simply pointed out exactly what He was doing as His actions clearly were God’s work on earth
 - iii. As such, John’s disciples left strengthened and prepared to give an answer
5. How does Jesus answer you?
- a. We also ask the question, “Are you the One who is to come, or should we look for another?”
 - i. We share in John’s, and his disciples doubts
 - ii. There are times, sometimes moments, or hours, or even days when we have some serious questions
 - 1. We are attacked on many different sides, in different ways, by Satan, that roaring lion looking for someone to devour.
 - a. He comes and, asking the same question he asked Eve, “**Did God really say...**”(Genesis 3:1) put doubt and questions into our heads
 - b. Doubts arise, since life is never as perfect as we would like
 - iii. So we do ask questions
 - 1. This is not wrong, nor does it show an absence of faith
 - a. There are many Psalms where the psalmist asks this question
 - i. In fact it can be really good to ask questions
 - ii. Sometimes people accuse us Christians of checking our brains at the door and not asking the ‘hard’ questions
 - b. Yet, asking the questions is usually not the greatest problem, the greater problem is not looking to God and His Word for the answers, or not listening to the answer because we don’t like what God has to say
 - i. It is extremely important to LISTEN TO GOD’S ANSWER
 - ii. If we ignore God and His Word, then there is a problem
 - c. John the Baptist is a great example of what to do when we do have a question or doubt
 - i. He asks this question and then goes to the source to find the answer
 - ii. John asks and Jesus points to Himself and all He has done to prove who He is
 - iii. John dies in the peace of knowing that the Saviour of the world, the One he pointed out and proclaimed about “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” is really the Messiah sent by God for this very purpose
 - iv. And what if our faith is weak, or we have questions
 - 1. Say with the father of the demon possessed boy:
 - a. Mark 9:24: “**I believe; help my unbelief**”
6. And so we also ask this same question
 - a. To get the answer we need to go to the source of all knowledge of God: the Bible
 - b. *Look at passages: John 3:16, 1 John 2:2, 1 Timothy 1:15*

- c. John 3:16-17: **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.**
 - d. 1 John 2:2: **He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.**
 - e. 1 Timothy 1:15: **The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.**
 - f. Look at the power of God’s Word:
 - g. Romans 1:16-17; **For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.**
 - h. 1 Corinthians 1:18; **For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**
 - i. Reflect on where God’s Word Works: His Word and Sacrament
7. God at work:
- a. God’s Word - Isaiah 55:11;
 - b. Baptism - 1 Peter 3:21;
 - c. Lord’s Supper - Matt 26:26-28:
 - i. All are God’s promises ‘For You’
 - ii. In these God promises: Faith, forgiveness, deliverance from sin, death and Satan, and eternal life
 - iii. Through God’s Word and Sacrament we clearly see Who Jesus is and all He has done, will do, and continues to do for us each and every day.
8. As we leave God’s house fed by His Word and Sacrament with our faith strengthened by God’s continued presence with us we join the witness of the saints and can go out into this world around us equipped and prepared to proclaim the hope that is within is; Christ Jesus our Lord, our Saviour, our Advent King!
9. Amen.

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Matthew 11:2-15
Advent 3 A

Trinity Lutheran Church, Churchbridge, SK
“Who are You really?”

Rev. Jeff Dul
December 15, 2013

decide to contact me, I would be very interested in knowing where you are. Please include the name of your city, province or state, and country when contacting me.