

Gaudete
St. Matthew 11:2-10
December 13th, 2020
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Are You the Coming One?

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, Who didst suffer Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to become man, and to come into the world, that He might destroy the works of the devil, deliver us poor offenders from sin and death, and give us everlasting life: We beseech Thee so to rule and govern our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may seek no other refuge than His Word, and thus avoid all offense to which, by nature, we are inclined, in order that we may always be found among the faithful followers of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, and by faith in Him obtain eternal salvation, through the same, Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

St. John the Baptist when he had been in the womb of his mother Elizabeth for six months leaped for joy when the Blessed Virgin Mary showed up carrying the Lord and Savior of the world in her womb. We will hear more about this on this coming Wednesday, but this shows that St. John the Baptist knew Who the Lord + Jesus was while he was in the womb of his mother—that He was the Messiah come into the world to redeem mankind from his sins.

Also, when he stood on the banks of the Jordan River and was preaching repentance toward the forgiveness of sins to all those who came to him, he pointed with his finger to the Son of God—our Lord + Jesus—when He also came to hear the preaching of St. John the Baptist. He pointed with his finger at the Lord + Jesus and proclaimed the words which we sing in the *Gloria in Excelsis* and *Agnus Dei*, “Behold, the Lamb of God that takest away the sin of the world.” Next Sunday we will hear of the events leading up to that proclamation in the Gospel reading from St. John the Apostle and Evangelist. It would seem on that day that St. John the Baptist knew that the man + Jesus was in fact the Son of God sent from Heaven to redeem mankind from sin, death and the power of the devil.

And when our Lord + Jesus came to St. John the Baptist to be baptized by him, he objected and declared that the Lord + Jesus should be the One baptizing him, for the Lord + Jesus was perfect and without sin unlike he was. On that day he also witnessed the remarkable scene after our Lord’s baptism when the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon the Lord + Jesus, and a voice from Heaven declaring, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” These events are shared in more detail on the octave of the Festival of the Epiphany of our Lord—the Festival known as the Baptism of our Lord and of which we have an icon of above the font—on January 13th. It would seem on this day, too, that St. John the Baptist knew Who the Lord + Jesus was.

So then, why does it appear that St. John the Baptist, now in prison for preaching against King

Herod for stealing his brother's wife, does not know Who the Lord + Jesus is? That he sends two of his disciples to inquire of the Lord if He is indeed the Coming One, or if they should be expecting another, is clearly for the benefit of his disciples. If it was otherwise St. John the Baptist would be very inconsistent; knowing Who the Lord + Jesus is throughout all the other narratives that describe him and his actions, but now not knowing Who the Lord + Jesus is. This is clearly for the benefit of his disciples. The Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew even begins by stating that St. John the Baptist had heard in prison the works of the Lord + Jesus.

Is this not what our Lord + Jesus uses as an answer to the two disciples? He tells them about the works that He is doing; the works that show that He is the Messiah, the Christ come into the world to redeem mankind from his sins. The blind men see, the lame walk about, the lepers are cleansed from their leprosy, the deaf are hearing again, the dead are being raised up, and the poor in spirit have the Gospel preached into their ears. This is what Isaiah the prophet prophesied the Messiah would do. This what our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, has come into the world to do. He has come to wage war against the devil, the world and sinful flesh. He attacks the stronghold of Satan by destroying his bulwarks—the consequences of sin in this world; the means that drive men into despair and shame and away from the loving care of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ.

Our Lord + Jesus has come into the world to heal that which is diseased; to bind up that which is broken. He has come into the world and taken upon Himself our flesh so that He might fulfill the Law of God perfectly on our behalf, and that He might suffer our punishment on the tree of the holy cross. Our Lord + Jesus is the One coming into the world to destroy sin and the powers of darkness by offering up His life as a ransom for us. He has destroyed the power of death by His own death on the tree of the holy cross.

The cross is an offense to the world. It scandalizes the world. The instrument of our salvation is the instrument of our Lord God's death. The world cannot comprehend. They are offended by a God that offers up His life for those who do not deserve it. Truly blessed are those who are not offended by the cross of our Lord + Jesus, for in it we have our life and well-being. In our Lord's death we have life and life eternal. Not only do we have life, but we have forgiveness for our sins. Our sins have been paid in full by the cross of our Lord + Jesus. He has fully atoned for our sins and the sins of the whole world. We are truly blessed when we are not offended by the cross, but in faith cling to our Lord's crucifixion and death for our salvation.

Our salvation is why our Lord + Jesus came down from Heaven and was conceived of the Holy Ghost and was made man. It is why He became incarnate in our flesh. His works that the Evangelist and Apostle St. Matthew describe from our Lord's lips show that He has come into the world to defeat the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh. These works show that He has come to us to free us from sin, death and the power of the devil. Our Lord's works and merits so fulfill the Law of God and reveal Him to be the Coming One, that it was prophesied of old that there would be a forerunner to the Christ. A voice crying in the wilderness would come to make straight the path of the Lord God in our flesh.

That voice was St. John the Baptist. Our Lord + Jesus gives us a description of what type of prophet he was in our Gospel reading. He was not reed shaken by the wind. He was not inconsistent in his belief that the Lord + Jesus was the Messiah. He was not dressed in soft garments. He was not dressed like those in king's palaces. St. John the Baptist did not preach because he desired the best foods and the best clothes. He preached because he believed that the Lord + Jesus was the Coming One. He prepared the way of the Lord, so that all of Israel would be prepared to receive their Lord and Savior. This description of St. John the Baptist by the Lord + Jesus is why historically this Sunday, *Gaudete* Sunday, the Sunday of rejoicing, was the day in which new ministers of the Christ were ordained and installed in their first parishes.

St. John the Baptist serves as an example of all good preachers. They point to the Christ. They send people to the Lord + Jesus to hear from Him about His works and merits. Faithful ministers today point to the works and merits of the Christ by sending their listeners to the Word of God—to the holy Scriptures. For in the holy Scriptures the works and the merits of the Christ, the Coming One, are proclaimed and recorded. The whole of holy Scripture is about our Lord's redemption of mankind. Everything in holy Scripture points to the works and merits of the Christ, and ultimately it takes us to the cross of our Lord and brings us to His grave, from which He rises from the dead, assuring us that we too will rise from the dead on the Last Day.

Our Lord + Jesus came to His people by being born of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He comes to us today, too. He comes to heal us of our spiritual maladies of being blind, deaf, lame, spiritual lepers, spiritually dead, and poor in spirit from the weight of sin and this world. Through His called and ordained ministers, He preaches into our ears that He is the Coming One. Indeed, He has come into this world, and continues to come to us through His means of grace, and He will come again on the Last Day to take us to our eternal home in Heaven.

Like the Forerunner to our Lord—St. John the Baptist—prepared the way of the Lord by preaching the Christ, the ministers of today prepare all those who come into the wilderness of the Church for the coming of our Lord + Jesus on the Last Day. The pure preachers of the Word of God administer the Blessed Sacraments to us so that we may learn to see and know the works of the Christ; that He has come into the world to suffer and die for us poor, miserable sinners. Our Lord + Jesus comes to us to bring us forgiveness for our sins. In contrition and faith, we receive our Lord + Jesus and in receiving Him we are preparing for that Day when we will meet Him in Heaven.

Therefore, my dear friends, may we continue to be sent to the Lord + Jesus to hear about His works and merits on our behalf; the works and merits that show that He is the Coming One, and we need not wait for or expect another. Let us therefore, rejoice in the Lord always, for our Lord + Jesus has stirred up His strength and has come to save us from sin, death and the power of the devil. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

O Gracious and Merciful Lord Jesus Christ, Who by countless signs and wonders hast shown Thyself to be the true Messiah that was to come, in whom alone We should trust and not look for another, we give Thee thanks for the true knowledge of Thee from Thy comforting Gospel, and beseech Thee, keep us steadfast in Thy Word, lest, being offended in Thee, we be led by worldly pleasure or the malice of men to depart from Thee, Who art our only Savior and Redeemer, blessed forever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!