

**Third Sunday of Advent -2020-2021**  
**Is.61.1-2,10-11///1 Thes. 5.16-24///John 1.6-8, 19-28**

→there's a story about a 9 year old girl....who spotted a new RED bike in the window of the hardware store on her way home from school one day.

→she pressed her nose against the glass and stared at the shiny new bike...with Christmas only a month away...she decided that is what she wanted.....

→for years she had to ride her brother's rusty old bike...so a new bike for Christmas would be like a dream come true.

→she ran all the way home and that evening told her father about the shiny new **RED** bike.

→and she promised to forego all other gifts for an entire year...if she could just have that **RED** bike for Christmas....her father listened carefully and said...*we'll see*

→and...every day she began to stop at the hardware store window to look at the new bike she hoped to get for Christmas

→on one particular day...when she stopped....much to her surprise...the **RED** bike was gone!!

→she was now confident that her father had bought it for her for Christmas...until the next day when her best friend called her over to see her birthday present....it was the very same **RED** bike from the hardware store window!

→the little girl ended up running home crying...God was supposed to give *HER* that bike for Christmas...so she thought.....

→a week later when Christmas arrived, she was still very sad and upset about the **RED** bike...after dinner, her father insisted she follow him into the garage...and there in the evening shadows was a BLUE bike.

→that her father had ordered another one...exactly like the one she hoped for **except** it was BLUE.

→surprised and disappointed....relieved and excited...she got her bike... it's just that it wasn't what she expected....

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→now that is a simple meaningless story....that I believe fits nicely with today's readings...  
→it is also a story that causes us to ask...if we have ever wondered why

.....sometimes we **get** what we **don't expect**

...and sometimes what we **expect...we don't get.**

→that's what happens in today's first reading, where Isaiah the prophet says:

---"the spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me...he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor...to heal the brokenhearted...proclaim liberty to the captives, release to prisoners and a year of favor from the Lord."

→it's a message and challenge that Isaiah probably never expected to get.....

→[and] in with today's 2nd reading, Paul tells us not to "stifle or quench the Spirit...rejoice always...pray without ceasing...and in all circumstances give thanks."

→again a message and charge Paul never expected to get or to give...

→and finally, in today's gospel [it's just the opposite]....that which the people **expected...they don't get...**

→we find them asking who are you...expecting John to be the Messiah....but they don't get what they expect because John tells them that he is not Elijah or the Prophet or even the Messiah...

Instead he tells the people...

*"I am the voice of one crying out in the desert...Make straight the way of the Lord."*

PAUSE

→it is probably pretty accurate to say we didn't **expect** to get...what we have been going through the past few months...

→and in some respects what we have expected....a quick end to this pandemic....has yet to come about....

→so here we are...in the midst of what's been going on... tired, fatigued and worn-down from the daily news reports...

→frustrated by how this has affected life...impacted all of us...and uncertain about what the future holds....

→in many ways...faced with the very real question...and dilemma...

→ **"are we going let our lives to be controlled by the virus or are we going to control virus in our lives...."**

→i.o.w....just like the people in today's gospel...are we wondering if this is what is to come or can we expect something else.

→and the answer is a resounding yes....we **should** expect something more because...

→the spirit of the Lord is upon us...and we have been anointed to bring forth the glad tidings of Jesus Christ

and so today's readings are invitations for you and me

→an invitation to do and become just like John the Baptist and Isaiah and Paul

→an invitation to become an Advent people.

PAUSE

→in just under two short weeks it will be Christmas....

→two short weeks are left for us to find the strength and trust of Christ and our faith to live

→two short weeks to become **a light** in the darkness of our world

→two weeks left in the desert until the time comes to proclaim glad tidings

PAUSE

→the invitation, the challenge, the task is before us

→now is the time for each of us...to do something about it!

→to become just like John the Baptist

→and the people we were meant to be...

→this season of Advent tells us that a great light is coming into our world...in a few weeks we will once again rejoice that the Lord has come....that he continues to be with us....and that he is with us now as we face these challenging times and circumstances.

→**now is the time** for us to remain strong...confident and courageous in who we are....and resilient in our faith and belief that God will always care for us.

→in these coming days as we prepare to celebrate Christmas...may we remain focused on what we hope to gain....

→not a red bike or a blue one...but the power and everlasting hope that soon all this will end...healing will triumph....and our **expected** desires will come to us...