

Vicar Ian Kinney  
Sermon for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent



**2 John heard in prison about the works of the Christ, he sent his disciples 3 and said to him, “Are you the Coming One, or shall we look for another?”**

This is often heard as though John found Himself in doubt of Jesus and wanted reassurance. That could not be any further from the truth.

Remember that this is the same John who **prepared the way of the Lord to make his path straight.**

This is the same John who came preaching “**Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand**”.

This is the same John who **baptized with water for repentance, but** spoke of the Coming One who is to **baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.**

This is the same John who announced Jesus as **the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.**

Let us not think so little about God’s saints.

Rather, when John is in prison, like any good pastor, he sends his disciples to Jesus so that they can see that Jesus is the Christ.

When he does this, it is no different than what he had been doing all along.

In doing this, he sends them on the way that he has prepared that they might walk with Jesus

In doing this he teaches his disciples repentance by sending them to the One who has come to forgive their sins.

In doing this, he sends them to the one who has come to baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire

When John does this, he says the same thing as when he said “**Behold the Lamb of God**”. He sends his disciples to the Lamb of God who will take away their sin.

It is for the benefit of his disciples that he sends them so that the disciples may ask **Are you the Coming One, or shall we look for another?”**

Are you the one foretold by ancient seers or should we look for another?

Are you the one we have hoped for since we fell in the Garden or should we look for another?

Are you the Coming One who has come to lead us out of death and into the way of peace or should we look for another?

John has heard about these *works of the Christ* and this is what compels him to send his envoys to Jesus—so that they can see Him as the Christ.

John is your pastor and you are these disciples of John.

That is why you receive John every Advent. That he can point to you the Christ, the Coming One who has come to die for you that in this place you may receive His very sacrifice.

So now you, having heard of the works of the Christ, you come to this place and ask...*is this the Church of Christ or should we look for another?*

**4 And Jesus answers you, “Go and announce what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.**

How does Jesus answer this question? Jesus doesn't answer by feelings or niceties but with concrete Scriptural proof.

He doesn't answer you by asking you how you feel about who He is or if you like His methods or if you approve of His doctrine.

The answer that he has for you is biblical proof of who He is and what He does.

He points you to His work and to the Scriptures. John had heard about the *works of the Christ* and these are those works. These are the works promised by the prophets that are emblematic of who Jesus is and what He does.

Having been sent to Jesus, you ask *Is this the Church or Christ or should we look for another?*

Jesus points you again to His work and to the Scriptures.

He says to you, **go and announce what you see** in this place...

Those who were blind to holiness now live in the light of Christ.

Those who were lame and sat in darkness now walk in the light of Christ.

Those who were stricken by the leprosy of sin are now cleansed like Namaan in the waters of baptism.

Those deafened by a culture that is simultaneously so chaotic but so silent to answer their problems now hear the very words of the God who created them.

Those who were dead in their sins have been raised to new life in Christ

And the poor have the Gospel preached to them and the sacraments administered to them.

So yes, this is the Church of Christ where Jesus comes to dwell with His people. Not at the Chiefs game, not in the woods, not on the soccer field, and not on the lake. Heaven meets earth here.

*Jesus goes on...and begins*

**7 to speak to you: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What then did you go out to see?**

What did you come here to see? Did you come to see a Church shaken like a reed in the winds of culture and tossed to and fro by every passing generation? every new fad and gimmick?

A church that says there are many Coming Ones and that all religions are the same as long as you're nice?

A Church that votes on doctrine every time we get uncomfortable with the Bible.

Did you come to see a Church to be entertained?

A church that models itself after the entertainment culture to descend to our world transcending us into the heavenly things?

Did you come to get approval on your sinful life or to repent of your sins and conform your will to God and participate in His divine life.

But what did you come to see?

**9 ... A prophet? Jesus says. Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.**

You have come to see more than a prophet.

You have come to see the One who built an immovable, eternal Church, not shaken in the winds of change or the transiency of culture. A Church that, like John the Baptist, takes you to the Coming One.

You have come to see the One of whom all the prophets spoke and who spoke to all the prophets.

You have come to see the one to come for you.

You have come to see the One who humbled Himself into the lowest place that He might exalt you.

You have come to see the One who through your pastor forgives you all of your sins

You have come to see the one who has taken our flesh so that He might give us His.

In this place you have come to the One whose ways John prepared. And this is the way that John prepares for Christ to come to you. You have come to see the Coming One who comes to you this day. He is the Coming One, do not go look for another.

**13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, 14 and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come.**

There are times in life in which we know what is going to happen by what has happened. The Advent of John is one of those times. We know that with the Advent of John comes the Advent of Jesus. And we know that with the Advent of Jesus comes the Advent of the Church. It is in this Church where you receive Jesus, where you receive the One who comes to you.

In John, the end of all things is to take place. The whole point of John is to send you to Jesus. Just like he did with his disciples. Like any good pastor, he sends you not to himself but to Jesus. He sends you to Jesus where you find out that this is the Coming One, so don't go look for another.

The last verse of the Old Testament says **Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.** The great and awesome day of the Lord is His Crucifixion, so John the Baptist is Elijah. The fact that Jesus confesses that John has come in the office of Elijah means that the pivotal moment in the history of your salvation has begun.

The end of time had begun and the Coming One has entered into the world. And it has all been for you.

He once came for you in humble birth. He is coming for you on the last day. And He comes to you in this place in His body and blood. Jesus is the Coming One. Do not go look for another.

To Him be all ✝ Glory forever and ever.