

Sermon for December 14, 2025
"Are You the One?"

Matthew 11:2-11

John was in prison and he sent messengers to Jesus to ask a question. He sent them to ask Jesus if he was the one to come or should they look for another. It seems strange that John should ask this question. A careful reading of the four Gospels shows us that John should already know the answer to this question. After all, only about a year before this John baptized Jesus and acknowledged Jesus as Messiah, and the Spirit in the form of a dove landed on Jesus and a voice from heaven declared that Jesus was God's beloved Son. Could John have forgotten all that so quickly?

Apparently, he had. You know human memory is often faulty. We tend to forget past events rather quickly. It is not just older people who forget. Sometimes younger ones do too. The events of the intervening time get in the way of remembering.

Apparently the intervening events clouded John's memory so that he was unsure of the past. Had it really happened the way he thought it had or was that really his imagination. John was in a prison and the months of bad food, rats, lice, and dampness of the dungeon had affected his memory. If Jesus was really the Messiah come to free the prisoners, why was God's prophet stuck in a pit. If the Son of God had arrived to pour out the Holy Spirit on the faithful and fire on the wicked, why hadn't he done it? Maybe he remembered it wrong. Maybe God hadn't said, "This is my beloved Son." Maybe God had said, "This is just another prophet and my Son is coming later."

Months in King Herod's dungeon had dulled John's memory. They had also dimmed his eyes. He could no longer see that Jesus was the Messiah as clearly, he had that day when he was honored enough to baptize God's Son. So Jesus decided to help his old friend see more clearly. So he sent a message and he said, "Look, what do you see? The blind see again, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the sick are strengthened, lepers are cleansed, and the dead are raised. Brother John, even the poor and oppressed hear Good News."

The answer to John's question was right there in front of him, but he failed to see it. The answer was in the works that Christ was performing all around. It was in the healings, the proclamation of Good News, the resurrections. Jesus the Messiah the Son of God was at work in the world. The evidence was all around to be seen.

Yet, John the Baptist couldn't see it. John's own situation kept him from seeing that reality clearly. The dilemmas of the present clouded his memory of the past.

I like John. In many ways he is you and I writ large. Often times we see Christ in a moment of glory as John did. The heavens open and we hear God's voice, and it is clear to us that God is at work in the world. God has sent the Messiah to bring life and light and all those wonderful blessings we read about in Isaiah.

Then the years pass, and like John, we find ourselves in a pit. Our memory of the time when we saw Christ so clearly is clouded. We wonder, "Is that how it really happened, or was I imagining that heavenly light." As we look around, we fail to see the evidence that Christ is in the world bringing comfort and salvation.

Like John we need someone to open our eyes again. We need someone to uncloud our memories and remind us of what Christ has done in our lives. Someone to open our eyes to see the works of Christ in our world today. Maybe that is what this season is all about. Reminding us that Christ came, is coming, and will come again.

Like John many people ask, "Is he the one or should I look for another?" I am here today to tell you that he is the one. Jesus, the salvation and light of the world, is here. He is bringing light and life to human hearts. The sick are healed, the hungry are fed. Those who are spiritually dead are given new life, the blind see. The lost have Good News preached to them. Even prisoners and the oppressed are liberated

Do you want to see God's Son at work? Look into the faces the people of poverty-stricken parts of the world who have hope because people are committed to helping them rebuild. Go to Ann Hope or the Oconee United Ministries and see the poor fed. Go to the stores and see people giving Toys for Tots or change to the Salvation Army. Look at what your own church is doing this holiday season with Marvin's Kids.

If like John, you find yourself asking, "Has God's salvation come or should we keep looking for it," then look around, and ask Jesus, as John did, to show you God's salvation at work.

It may be hard to see that salvation at times, but look for it. The pits that we live in blur our eyesight and dull our vision. The commercialism of this season often clouds the true meaning of it. The hustle and bustle creates noise in our lives that makes it hard to hear angels singing to shepherds. The electric lights and electronic gadgets seem so far removed from that stall in Bethlehem. So, sometimes we forget. We forget a poor homeless baby, born the son of God and son of Mary.

Look for Christ in Christmas. He is here. The signs are all around us, and they are not red and green neon billboards. They are the same signs Jesus pointed out to John: the sick are healed, the enslaved are freed, the lifeless are given new life, and the Good News is preached to poor souls.

Ask God to help you see these signs. Ask God to restore that lost vision of Christ that you had in the past. Or perhaps ask God to give you a new vision of Christ in this season of light and hope, and ask God to show you that we need not look for another. The light of the world has come. His name is Jesus, Son of Mary, Son of God.