

E-Votion for Wednesday December 11, 2013

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel
To ransom captive Israel...*

Dear Friends,

Today I am reading Matthew 11:2-11 (I am using the New Century version which I have recently discovered and really like)



John the Baptist was in prison, but he heard about what Christ was doing. So John sent some of his followers to Jesus. They asked him, "Are you the One who is to come, or should we wait for someone else?" Jesus answered them, "Go tell John what you hear and see. The blind can see, the crippled can walk, and people with skin diseases are healed. The deaf can hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is preached to the poor. Those who do not stumble in their faith because of me are blessed." As John's followers were leaving, Jesus began talking to the people about John. Jesus said, "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed blown by the wind? What did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes live in kings' palaces. So why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, and I tell you, John is more than a prophet. This was written about him: 'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare the way for you.' I tell you the truth, John the Baptist is greater than any other person ever born, but even the least important person in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John."

Devotional:



WOW. This is a pretty simple story--John the Baptist sends his friends to talk to Jesus, to find out if Jesus is really the Messiah, or if they should keep looking. And instead of a systematic theology discussion using a whole lot of big words no one can spell or understand, Jesus invites them to look around and see for themselves. And they are amazed-- blind people can see, people who previously couldn't walk are running around, previously untouchable lepers are hugging and kissing their children, deaf people are telling stories, and the cemetery is filled with empty caskets. LIFE.

I would really like to know why John sent followers to see who Jesus was. I thought that John had already identified Jesus in a prior passage as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." Why this now? I pondered this a little bit. I read some possible explanations : 1) its a mystery (that is a great explanation when you don't know the answer) 2) maybe the writing came from 2 different traditions, one at the river and one here. 3) creative expression on the part of differing authors.

Here is my take--and remember I am not a Bible scholar, just a disciple. I wonder if John forgot who Jesus was. Maybe he recognized Jesus at his baptism, but in all the stress and strain of life, in prison, maybe he forgot.

Do we ever forget who Jesus is? Or don't recognize him when he is right in front of us? I would like to tell you about my friend Tracy. Tracy was a new Christian. She experienced a religious transformation and wanted to be part of the church. She was going to save the world for Jesus. And everything she did was all about that--and it made people terribly uncomfortable, unbeknownst to her. She said Jesus name with 7 or more syllables and just the right intonation, she said "Blessed" at least once in every sentence. And she wanted everyone to know! She came to a church council meeting. She listened to the reports. And her bubble was burst--and she forgot who Jesus was. My hope is that she lost sight of Jesus and didn't forget who he was forever.

During this time of year, we focus on Jesus, the Messiah. And we hope that we will catch a glimpse of him and that will keep us going. Just like John, life goes on. John ended up in prison and sent people to see if Jesus was the Messiah. We end up in the messes we find ourselves in, and my hope is that we still have Jesus in our sight and in our minds. May our church be a place that points us all toward Jesus, the Messiah, the Savior, our Lord.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

the family of Hunt Archer

Jane Cradic, (not a member of this church, requested through ELC)

the ministries of our church, particularly our youth and John Rowe and his family during transition.

those who are "walking bread" throughout our community.

those who aren't here yet, may we welcome newcomers into our fellowship.

CALENDAR:

We are **BUSY!**

Saturday 12/14 UMW luncheon

Outreach Sponsored ToyShop at the Neighborhood Center

Sunday 12/15 10:30 Christmas Cantata

3:00 Reindeer Run

Resurrection registrations due (youth)

Monday 12/16 Newsletter deadline for January newsletter

7 pm SouthSide Neighborhood Organization (Neighborhood Center)

Tuesday 12/17 6 pm Staff Christmas Party Longhorn

Thursday 12/19 5:30 ELC Christmas program

Sunday 12/22 Reception honoring John Rowe following the 10:30 am service.

Tuesday 12/24 Christmas eve services 4 pm and 6:30 pm. CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

Wednesday 12/25 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED.

"Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words." St Francis of Assisi

Blessings,

Jane Taylor

First United Methodist Church

Johnson City TN