

Third Sunday in Advent ~ ~ December 15, 2019

THEME: The coming of Christ in history and at the end of time is welcome deliverance..

HYMN 9: "Jesus, Your Church with Longing Eyes"

SERVICE OF THE WORD – Page 38

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Hear our prayers, Lord Jesus Christ, and come with the good news of your mighty deliverance. Drive the darkness from our hearts and fill us with your light; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 35:1-10 (EHV)

Isaiah reassures God's faithful people that the coming of the Lord will be marked by wondrous miracles of healing. The true joy for children of God will be found when the Lord leads his people from this earthly exile to our final home in the heavenly Zion.

35:1 The wilderness and the desert will be glad. The wasteland of the Arabah will rejoice and blossom like a crocus. It will bloom lavishly, and there will be great joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it. It will be excellent like Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make the shaky knees steady. Tell those who have a fearful heart:

"Be strong. Do not be afraid. Look! Your God will come with vengeance. With God's own retribution, he will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unplugged. The crippled will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will sing for joy. Waters will flow in the wilderness, and streams in the wasteland. The burning sand will become a pool, and in the thirsty ground there will be springs of water. There will be grass, reeds, and rushes where the haunts of jackals once lay. A highway will be there, a road that will be called the holy way. The impure will not walk there. It will be reserved for those who walk in that holy way. Wicked fools will not wander onto it. No lion will be there, nor will any ferocious animal go up on it. They will not be found there, but only the redeemed will walk there. Then those ransomed by the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with a joyful shout, and everlasting joy will crown their heads. Happiness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

PSALM OF THE DAY: Psalm 146 (p.120) (sung in unison)

The Lord's gracious deliverance is the basis of our joy and praise.

SECOND LESSON: James 5:7-11 (EHV) (sermon text)

Contrasting the joy that Isaiah pointed to when the Lord returns, James encourages us to patiently wait and with firm resolution face the daily troubles to which we are accustomed. Our lives are no different than those of the prophets. Endure your trials, stand firm in the Lord and you will be blessed.

5:7 Therefore, brothers, be patient until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the valuable harvest from the ground, patiently waiting for it, until it receives the early and late rain. 8 You be patient too. Strengthen your hearts because the coming of the Lord is near.

9 Do not complain about one another, brothers, so that you will not be judged. Look! The Judge is standing at the doors! 10 Brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord as an example of suffering with patient endurance. 11 See, we consider those who endured to be blessed. You have heard of the patient endurance of Job and have seen what the Lord did in the end, because the Lord is especially compassionate and merciful.

CHOIR: "When Christmas Morn is Dawning"

THE HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11 (EHV)

John sends his disciples to Jesus to ask if he is the Christ. The Lord responds by pointing to his miracles which fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah. Jesus then informs the crowd that despite John being the forerunner of the Messiah, by God's grace even the "least" of the kingdom surpass John's greatness.

11:2 While John was in prison, he heard about the things Christ was doing. He sent two of his disciples to ask him, "Are you the Coming One or should we wait for someone else?"

Jesus answered them, "Go, report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the gospel is preached to the poor. Blessed is the one who does not take offense at me."

As these two were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the crowds about John. "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? No, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. So what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you! And he is much more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, 'Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' Amen I tell you: Among those born of women there has not appeared anyone greater than John the Baptist. Yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

HYMN 8: "Come, O Precious Ransom, Come"

SERMON THEME: Advent - A Season for Patience

1. Because the Lord's coming is near
2. Because the Lord is compassionate and merciful

APOSTLES' CREED – Page 41

OFFERING HYMN 485 Verses 1 & 2: "We Give Thee but Thine Own" (Please Stand)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH & LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN 17: "God's Own Son Most Holy"

BENEDICTION

HYMN 12: "Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes"

SILENT PRAYER & ANNOUNCEMENTS



