

# Advent III

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[ 0 : 00 ] Being a Christian today and trying to stay true to what scripture teaches and how the church has interpreted and applied the universal and Catholic faith is not for the faint of heart.

Social media and pop culture has more influence over people than clergy or sound scholarship with historical arguments.

We are the culture that promotes feelings over facts and sound logic. We are the culture that says opinion is more important than appealing to any universal truths because our culture believes that such a claim as absolute truth is utter fallacy rooted in primitive legend or myth.

Sophistry is the new norm for the Western world of the 21st century. And there are times as your priest where I will confess I am tempted to say what's the point?

And some of you probably feel the same way. What's the point? And that is why I love the third Sunday in Advent this Sunday.

[ 1 : 27 ] Because as soon as I'm about ready to lose my mind in this perpetual adolescent culture that defines so much of our world today, I read about good old St. John the Baptist.

St. John the Baptist was in prison. And he heard about our Lord's preaching and teaching. So he sent two of his disciples to ask our Lord, are you the coming one or do we look for another?

In other words, Jesus, are you the real promised Messiah? John was a little like us.

He looked around and he perceived that wickedness seemed as though it was winning the day. He saw the mighty using their clout to oppress the poor and the lowly and to keep them silent.

He saw people having a veneer of religious devotion. While only living for their own wants and their own desires.

[ 2 : 39 ] They saw, he saw, and we see where people have made themselves out to be God. And the God that we are supposed to serve is put on the shelf.

Our Lord answered John's question by saying the following. Go tell John the things which you hear and see. John believed, like we do, that when the Messiah comes, the wicked will be judged.

John, like all of us, believed that the world will be set right once again. And righteousness will ultimately prevail.

But again, where is John? John's in prison. And he's a bit confused by the lack of justice and a general lack for the fear of God all around him.

What John did not fully understand was that the cross, the cross, was the real turning point in human history.

[ 4 : 18 ] The Messiah had come. And John's preaching about the Lamb of God would be our Lord's ultimate journey and destination.

As that Lamb, Jesus, would offer his own life as a sacrifice on the cross. Before the world could rejoice that sin and death had been given its final blow, our Lord would take his place upon that throne, which was a torture chamber, a cross.

And he would extend his nail-pierced hand over the world, demonstrating the ultimate act of love. Giving his own life for our life. You see, there is no greater love than for one to lay down his life for another.

And that is the heart of our God. A God who came to redeem his wayward people by offering his own life for ours upon a cross.

[ 5 : 41 ] Now, you and I are not sitting in a jail cell, waiting a pronouncement of condemnation. But we do live in exile.

We are exiles. And we are exiles by the world. Because we put our trust in Jesus. We put our trust in the Messiah, the Christ.

And that's a lonely place to be. Especially these days. It's a lonely place to be in a world that scoffs and ridicules our faith as being out of date or too rigid.

It is a lonely place when those around us want to accommodate to the spirit of the age. And that is the majority of people today.

But John was a man that was called to be the forerunner to our Lord's destination in Jerusalem.

Where his throne, again, was a cross.

[ 6 : 49 ] And John was called to live a life of trusting God who would sort all things out in the end. And that's our calling as well.

And that's what Advent is all about. We live by faith, not by sight. Evil might appear as though it's winning the day. People might be following the wide path that eventually falls into the abyss.

But in the words of our collect this morning, we are called to look for the return of our Lord. So that we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight.

Friends, hell might be laughing now. Hell might be laughing now. But in the end, those jeers will turn to mourning. And the shout of the saints will shake the world's foundation.

And the faithful like St. John the Baptist will be exalted for their perseverance to the very end. And that's what should keep us going.

[ 8 : 04 ] Praying. Working. Serving our Lord in his church that he established. Until he comes back to reign and rule for all eternity.

Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.