

Sermon Advent 1 11-29-17 Be Present John 1:35-42

Dear Present with God:

John the Baptist is known as the “voice of the wilderness”

- He prepared people for the 1st Coming of Jesus to our world
- He was God’s messenger outside of the established religious leadership of Israel
- Isaiah called John the “voice of the wilderness” Isaiah 40
- Malachi called John the “messenger” Malachi 3
- John was God’s voice to prepare people for Jesus coming into our world as our Savior.

The heart of the promise God made to His people in the Old Testament was that He would send a Savior to save us.

John the Baptist’s appearance is the beginning of the fulfillment of that promise and the beginning of the New Testament.

Think of what God did after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. Think of what God did after the Children of Israel time after time went after other gods.

God did not keep His distance from us. He came to be present among us as the Savior.

When John the Baptist came baptizing and preparing people for the coming Messiah John saw Jesus one day and said: “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!”

In the Gospel of John chapter 1 a unique, significant name is used for Jesus by John the Baptist twice.

“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!”

This title and reference got the attention of the people of John the Baptist’s day.

What was John the Baptist’s job?

- It was not to lead the shepherds to the manger in Bethlehem.
- It was to point people to the power of Christ and the beginning of His public ministry.
- John’s job was to speak of the Messiah who would come among His people in the power of His presence.

John realized that his mission was to point others to the coming of Christ, but not just for the masses of people, but also for his very own disciples. Yes, John the Baptist had disciples, too. V35

When John uses the title “Lamb of God” to welcome and identify Jesus, two of John’s disciples are drawn to follow Jesus.

But instead of engaging Jesus in conversation, they draw back and follow Jesus at a distance.

Jesus turns and asks: “What do you want?”

- Jesus doesn’t give them a list of facts to memorize
- Jesus doesn’t give them a list of doctrines to study
- Jesus invites them to “come and see”

“Come and See”

With this invitation the journey of a lifetime begins.

Jesus is “being present” with them.

“Being Present” isn’t simply about geography or proximity.

Have you ever been in the same room with someone and yet sensed that you were a million miles away from them?

“Come and See”

What so often gets in our way of “being present” with Jesus?

- Our busyness this time of year?
- Our worries this time of year over all our activities?
- Our modern technology devices which we use each day?

As we prepare for Christmas once again this year we will involve ourselves with many Christmas customs and traditions which in their own way are good and fine.

But may we not be so overwhelmed by these customs and traditions that we forget that the best part of Christmas is right here before us.

- To be present with God this Christmas season
- To “come and see” what John the Baptist’s two disciples saw and heard when they stayed with Jesus. V39

John the Baptizer was popular.

- He was drawing crowds into the desert
- But he knew this wasn’t about him
- He was there to prepare others for the One to whom he was pointing - the Lamb of God.

John did not let his own ego get in the way of his mission or let it become a distraction. Everything he was doing was ultimately leading others toward Christ.

As we become involved in our Christmas traditions and customs may everything we do point us and others to the One who came to us both as the Gift and the Present.

Note that here in our Gospel one of John the Baptist's disciples, Andrew, told his brother about Jesus. Vv40-42

- He told his brother Peter about Jesus
- He brought his brother Peter to Jesus

Jesus' presence as our Savior is ultimately at the heart of Christmas, as the name **Emmanuel** so clearly tells us --- God is with us in Christ Jesus.