

Christ Calms all Doubts

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Third Sunday in Advent) is Matthew 11:2-15. This text is the account of John in prison wondering if Jesus was really the promised Savior.

In last Sunday's reading we see John confidently and powerfully proclaiming that the Kingdom of Heaven was near. He clearly and vigorously points to Jesus as one who will save the world from its sins.

In this reading we find John in prison because he stood up to King Herod about his adulterous relationship with his brother's wife. What's more, what he is hearing about Jesus' actions is that Jesus is not meting out thunderous law proclamations but forgiving and saving people. John may have felt a bit betrayed because he was in prison because he had robustly preached the Law to Herod. So he sends of disciples to Jesus with this question: "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

Jesus could have easily and rightfully rebuked John's doubt since both he and John had known their roles in life right from conception on. But Jesus does not chide John. Jesus quickly points the results of his ministry as proof that he (Jesus) was the true Messiah.

Before any critics in the crowd can pounce on John's doubts, Jesus delivers an intense message about John's status in the work of the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus calls John the greatest prophet born of a woman. He ends our text with these words: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Doubts come in all shapes, sizes and settings. Sometimes when things in our lives are going badly we may doubt our abilities. When relationships are turning sour, we may wonder about the fairness of it all. There are even times when we feel that God has forgotten us in our time of need.

Just as with John, Jesus does not leave us hanging. The Scriptures he has given us are filled to overflowing with messages of love and strength for our daily lives. There is a brief but mighty message of comfort in verse 11. It is so wondrous that even the least person who by faith now comes under that reign of blessing can be regarded as greater than John! This coming

Lord Jesus, when I struggle with doubts and unfulfilled hopes, remind me of Your words and works that assure me of Your saving love. Amen. (TLSB)