

THE ANSWER
Matthew 11:2-11

I. THE WAY GOD WORKS

- A. *Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Matthew 11:2-3)*
- B. Expect the Unexpected.
1. Create a new nation? Use a 90+ childless couple.
 2. Free people from the most powerful nation on earth? Pick a stammering shepherd.
 3. Establish a royal household to change Israel's history? Choose a skinny teenaged dreamer/poet/musician/shepherd.
- C. False Expectations.
1. Fast forward to the first century. John couldn't believe it!
 - a. Where was the fire and fury?
 - b. Where was the judgment and justice?
 2. Instead of the fire of indignation, Jesus was telling stories and playing with children.
 3. Instead of condemning the sins of the world, he was eating with tax collectors and prostitutes.
 4. Instead of tossing people into the fires of hell, he was forgiving them.
- D. The Biggest Surprise of All.
1. During Advent we prepare for the most unbelievable act of all.
 2. God became one of us, not in power and might, but in poverty and powerlessness.
 3. God came to us as a "no-account baby from a no-account town, with no-account parents, and a no-account ancestry." (L. Sweet)
 4. He came teaching, healing, caring, forgiving, soothing. His only weapon was love.

II. WHAT GOD WANTS.

- A. *And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear ... and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me." (Mt. 11:4-6)*
- B. Huggable and Buggable.
1. That's the way Jesus was.
 2. That's the way Christmas is.
- C. This Is a Place of Dreams.
1. Do you want peace on earth, no more war, no hunger or poverty, peace in families?
 2. Jesus is *the answer* and he gives us *the answer!*
 3. Let's light a candle instead of cursing the darkness. Let us plant the seeds of the kingdom of God!

Prayer Concerns: Members – Burney Biesel, Dorothy Miles, Jerry Shauf ... **Friends** – Meryl Broussard, Jr., Pat Bryan, Willis Chapman, Emily Davis, Reggie Deloach, Tyla Fowlkes, Brandon Funderburk, Margaret Hayes, **Bernice Hill**, Teresa Hilliard, Ed Hinson, Gary Hinson, Debra Holt, Gene Hrcir, Matt Jennings, Jeff Joyner, **Sheena Moore**, Jimmy Patterson, Allen Voss, Todd Warren ...

Christian Sympathy is extended to **Annetta Camp and family** in the death of her mother, **Wanda O'Dell**, on Sunday, December 9.

PASTORAL PRAYER

O loving God, as your people we come in worship now, remembering evidences of your love for us. Thank you for moments of laughter and joy that have been ours, those times when we have shared so much with our friends, when our homes have echoed with happiness, and our hearts with your love felt. Thank you for these seasons that radiate gladness in a special way.

Forgive us for making our faith too somber, for looking to your presence only when shadows lengthen and darkness comes. Forgive us for being so hard to please, so easy to offend, so quick to find fault.

We confess that we often play life is such a minor key, and that our coming to others brings them more grief than joy.

Then help us, Father, as we try to make this Advent season not only glad, but good. Help us find the will to give generously of ourselves. Help us find discipline to lead our families to worship. Help us find time to give to those whose lives are limited to little rooms, and hard times. All this we pray in the name of the one who came that we might find hope, peace and love, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who taught us to pray ...

THE LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

MATTHEW 11:2-11

Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? Why then did you go out? To see a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, those who wear soft raiment are in kings' houses. Why then did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way before thee.'

Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

SAERMON SCHEDULE

In the Sanctuary:

December 23	<i>The Announcement</i>	Matthew 1:18-25
December 24	<i>Christmas Eve Communion</i>	6:00 & 9:00 p.m.
December 30	<i>Post-Christmas Blues</i>	10:40 a.m. Worship Only Matthew 2:1-11

On the Radio (1450 AM & 102 FM):

December 23	<i>Don't Forget to Remember Me</i>	Luke 2:1-20
December 30	<i>Choosing Another Way</i>	Matthew 2:1-12