

# CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

3rd Sunday of Advent | For Sunday, December 11, 2022

## Are You the One Who Is to Come?

*Written by Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.*

**Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10**

**James 5:7-10**

**Matthew 11:2-11**



SEEK THE  
LORD IN THE  
PLACES YOU  
FEAR TO GO

*What Messiah are we making a way for this Advent Season? Is it one who only fits our limited expectations or the Savior of the World who fulfills the hopes of all peoples?*

The question that John's disciples pose to Jesus in [today's gospel](#) is curious. How can he be unsure whether Jesus is the "One Who is to Come"? Didn't he see the heavens parted and the Spirit of God come down upon Jesus at his baptism? Didn't he point out Jesus as the "Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world"? What has changed that he now seems to doubt who Jesus is?

Though we cannot know for sure, many speculate that John, like many Israelites, was expecting a Messiah who would conquer all of Israel's enemies. In particular, it seems that John the Baptist was expecting that the One to come after him would exact punishment on all evil doers. As we heard in last week's gospel, he warned the Pharisees about "the wrath to come." He prophesied that, "Every tree that is not fruitful will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

It could be that John, from his prison cell, heard that, instead of punishing sinners, Jesus was welcoming them and eating with them. Maybe Jesus was not the type of Messiah John was expecting, and so he wondered whether he should wait for someone else.

In his usual way, Jesus didn't answer John directly. Instead, He quoted from the prophet Isaiah that the blind were regaining their sight, the deaf their hearing, and the lame were walking. In effect, He was telling John that he had come not to condemn the world but to save it. Like the rest of the

people, John now had to make a decision. Could he believe in a Messiah who offered forgiveness to sinners and treated them mercifully? Or was he so attached to his ideas of what a Messiah should be that he could not accept Jesus?

God is always greater than our puny ideas about Him. If we are to find Him it is not going to be in the places where we feel most comfortable. Rather we will have to reach out to people we normally would not associate with in neighborhoods we would not normally visit. When he walked the earth, Jesus was found among the blind, the poor, the lame, and other outcasts. Today, He can be found among prisoners, drug users, migrants, and others who are at the bottom of the social ladder. Unless we are willing to go out of our comfort zones and to reach out to those we would otherwise ignore, we will miss out on all the graces that God is offering us.

This Advent season we celebrate a God who is close to us. Too often we lose sight of Him because of our rigid ideas and narrow expectations. Today we are being called to broaden our vision and raise our eyes to a God who is always greater than we can hope for or imagine. Though He is the One we have been waiting for, He has too often passed us by because we were looking the wrong way. Like John the Baptist we are being challenged to look for our Heavenly Father in the people, places, and situations we would otherwise run from. If through His grace we can find the courage to do so, then His coming among us will not be a nice thought or fanciful wish but a reality in our hearts, in our homes and in our world.

— Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.

## Prayer

Lord Jesus, Master of both light and darkness,  
Send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.  
We who have so much to do and seek quiet spaces  
To hear your voice each day.  
We who are anxious over many things  
Look forward to your coming among us.  
We who are blessed in so many ways  
Long for the complete joy of your kingdom.  
We whose hearts are heavy  
Seek the joy of your presence.  
We are your people,  
Walking in darkness yet seeking light.  
To you we say,  
"Come Lord Jesus!"  
Amen

(Henri J.M. Nouwen)