



## Sermon, Sunday, December 17, 2023 “What we hear and see about Jesus”

**SCRIPTURE: Matthew 11:2-11** <sup>2</sup>When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup>and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” <sup>4</sup>Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup>the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup>And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.” <sup>7</sup>As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup>What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup>What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup>This is the one about whom it is written, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ <sup>11</sup>“Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

### Introduction: Jesus, are you the Messiah?

Today is the third Sunday of Advent. Among the characters who appear in Jesus' public life, the one who has a very special relationship with Jesus is John the Baptist. In today's text, Matthew 11:2-11, we can see one aspect of the relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus. John was a spiritually outstanding person who could be said to be the last prophet of Judah. His heart was filled with passion for God and the salvation of the people of Israel.

However, when John was imprisoned, Jesus began to be active. John sent his disciples to Jesus and asked, “**Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?**” This is John’s question, ‘**Jesus, are you the Messiah?**’

In our religious life, we must think deeply about the meaning of the question, “**Jesus, are you the Messiah?**” Because through thinking about this question, we can grow spiritually. However, if we are not convinced that Jesus is the Messiah, the foundation of our religious life falls apart. I hope that through today’s text, we will have confidence in the fact that Jesus is the Messiah.

Please remember my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ: In the history of Christianity, all people who transformed the world were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah and enjoyed the greatest fulfillment through Jesus. If we become these people, the world will become a more beautiful place through us.

### Body: Signs of Salvation

According to today’s text, Jesus did not directly answer the question asked by John the Baptist’s disciples, “**Are you the Messiah?**” He simply told the disciples of John to tell John what you hear and see. Verse 5 of today’s text says, “**the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.**” This same content appears in a



parallel passage, Luke 7:22. Also, passages with similar content appear in Isaiah 61:1 and in Luke 4:18, which quotes it. What we can know from the above passages is that the early Christians believed and were confident that the signs of salvation based on the Messianic idea of the Old Testament were revealed in the life and personality of Jesus. We must be able to find signs of Jesus as our Savior through his life and personality.

If you look at verse 5 of today's text, you will find signs that Jesus is the Messiah. This verse speaks of the blind, the lame, the leper, the deaf, the dead, and the poor being saved through Jesus from their desperate situations.

First, Jesus told John's disciples that the blind and the deaf would see and hear respectively. In fact, the healing of the blind and the deaf is a miracle that appears in both the Old and New Testaments. However, the Gospel writers did not mention this event to reveal a miracle. **They mentioned these events to tell us who Jesus is through miraculous events.** Therefore, we must focus on the fact that the sign of salvation that could happen to the Messiah was revealed through Jesus and be able to see the life and personality of Jesus through this passage.

However, many people focus on the miraculous event itself or whether it could still happen today. **Again, we must see through the miracles of Jesus, why He can be our Savior and how people gain new strength through Jesus during despair, fear, and pain.**

I am nearsighted, so I have been wearing glasses since I was in 6th grade. However, as I get older, I developed presbyopia, and now I have symptoms of both myopia and farsightedness in my eyes. So these days, even when I wear glasses, reading text is more difficult than before. My experience with eye aging gave me the opportunity to think more deeply about the aging body. I am grateful that I can still see and hear. And through what I see and hear, I confidently experience the fact that I am alive in God. I like being able to see the red sunrise and sunset in the morning and evening and see the four seasons change with my own eyes. Also, I am happy to be able to hear my 14-year-old son Woojin play the acoustic guitar. I believe that everything I experience in my daily life is proof that I am alive in God. I am so thankful that I can experience the amazing grace that the Lord has granted me through my eyes and ears. The grace we enjoy through the Lord is not something we take for granted.

However, if we take seeing and hearing for granted, we will not experience salvation through seeing and hearing. Instead, we can experience salvation when we feel unfamiliar and amazed by everything, as if we are seeing or hearing it for the first time in our lives. Today, the writer of Matthew testifies to the fact that such things happened through Jesus. So what is another sign of Jesus's Messiahship?

In verse 5 of today's text, it is said that as signs of Jesus' salvation, the lame can walk, and the leper is healed. Parents raising babies know this very well. How many times have our children tried and failed repeatedly to go from crawling on hands and knees to walking on two legs. Additionally, a person who has lost the ability to walk due to a serious accident must undergo tremendous rehabilitation efforts to be able to walk again. If a person feels the ultimate joy in walking, he or she will lack nothing, even if he or she lives in poverty. Can we say that today, like a person who was unable to walk and then was able to walk, we are so overwhelmed with joy that other things seem trivial?

Second, Jesus said that the dead would be raised, and the gospel would be preached to the poor. In this verse, the fact that the dead were raised means that our lives, which were like those of the dead, have changed into a person full of life through Jesus. There are people around us who are alive but live like the dead. Their insides are full of hurt, so they rely on drugs and alcohol to survive. We must be able to think about how great a joy it will be for those who are now alive after having just existed. The new life given to them will be a special daily life that is different from before, but not ordinary at all.

So what does it mean for the gospel to be preached to the poor? In fact, both in the past and now, poverty is the biggest cause that makes our lives difficult. So people do not gather around the poor. That's why most



people fear and hate poverty. However, through Jesus, good news is delivered to the poor. It is the Lord's promise that people's lives will never be destroyed by poverty because the Lord is with the poor. But if the poor do not know that the Lord is with them, poverty becomes the fundamental cause of their suffering, but if they know that the Lord is with the poor, they enjoy freedom.

However, there are still many people in the world who think that they can live without Jesus, but they cannot live without money. However, having money does not allow us to experience the riches of the kingdom of God. If we do not pay attention to Jesus himself and only focus on the miracles he performed, we cannot accept the Lord's miserable death on the cross. Because Jesus' death is not glorious but shameful from the world's perspective, even if today's text talks about signs of salvation handed down from the tradition of the prophet Isaiah, we will have trouble in accepting Jesus as the Messiah.

But if we know that the Lord's death on the cross was part of God's plan of salvation for the world, and that it was the Lord's complete obedience to God's will, we can accept the Lord's death on the cross. God raised Jesus from the dead. So now those who believe in Jesus no longer fear death.

However, if we see the cross and resurrection of Jesus by projecting our greed rather than the person and life of Jesus who obeyed God's will, we cannot know His person and life. Such people will not be able to see the person and life of Jesus through the signs of salvation He performed and will still only see the miracle itself. There is no true rest, peace, or liberation in this kind of life.

### **Conclusion: A country ruled by God**

Now let's summarize today's sermon. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! The second half of verse 11 of today's text says, **“among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist.”** This verse means that when God's rule over the world arises, and the creatures of the world enter God's rule, everyone will be greater than John the Baptist.

In fact, in the world we live in, importance is who is more power or who is more famous, but in the kingdom of God, such rankings are meaningless. We experience the kingdom ruled by God in this world through the sign of Jesus' salvation in today's text. The country ruled by God is a country where the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, and the gospel is preached to the poor.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Today we celebrate the third Sunday of Advent. There are times in our lives when we miss something important. What is truly important in our lives is to focus and live on the signs of salvation revealed through the life and character of Jesus. When we live that kind of life, the Lord will recognize our lives.

