

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

--MATTHEW 11:2-11--

INTRODUCTION:

This morning, we lit the Shepherd's candle, it reminds us that the shepherds were the first in a long line of people who joyfully shared the Good News. Our Scripture looked again at John the Baptist who had fearlessly and courageously shared the Good News of the coming Messiah, the Savior of the world, and warned people to prepare for His arrival. John was not afraid to rebuke the religious leaders for their hypocrisy and self-righteousness, neither was he afraid to confront Herod Antipas and condemn his adulterous marriage to his brother's wife. This confrontation got him thrown in prison where he could no longer share the Good News of the Savior with the people. Because of the turn of events, John the Baptist begins to battle some doubts concerning the Messiah.

I. JOHN'S QUESTIONS (Matthew 11:2-3)

- a. Our passage begins by telling us that John the Baptist is in _____.
- b. The fact that John the Baptist was perplexed and confused should be an _____ to us when we face our own doubts.
- c. John's disciples must have had some access to him while he was in prison because we read that John sent his disciples to Jesus to ask his _____.
- d. The Jewish people expected the Messiah to first free Israel from her _____, which at the time was under Rome.
- e. John knew that Jesus had not proclaimed Himself the _____.

II. JESUS' ANSWER (Matthew 11:4-6)

- a. Jesus did not answer John with a simple _____ or _____, Jesus knew that would not be enough to satisfy John.
- b. John was a great man of God and _____ by Jesus. (Luke 7:20-21)
- c. Although Jesus did nothing to relieve John of his physical confinement and suffering, He did send back to him special _____ that He was indeed the Messiah.

- d. John's circumstances did not improve, in fact, he was soon _____ at the request of Herodias.
- e. The word translated offence or _____ is from a Greek word that referred to trapping or snaring an animal.
- f. Matthew does not tell us the end of John's _____ until later. (Matthew 14:12)
- g. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:13, "*If we are faithless, He remains _____, for He cannot deny Himself.*" (2 Timothy 2:13, NASB95)

III. JESUS' TESTIMONY CONCERNING JOHN (Matt. 11:7-11)

- a. As John's disciples were going away, Jesus turned and began to speak to the crowd concerning _____.
- b. "*What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A _____ shaken by the wind?*" (Matthew 11:7b, NASB95)
- c. The _____ Jesus referred to was common and grew along the riverbanks, including the Jordan where John baptized.
- d. Jesus asked, "*But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in _____ clothing?*" (Matthew 11:8a, NASB95)
- e. Jesus went onto say, "*Those who wear soft clothing are in kings' _____!*" (Matthew 11:8b, NASB95)
- f. Jesus' third question: "*But what did you go out to see? A _____?*" (Matthew 11:9a, NASB95)
- g. "*Yes, I tell you, and one who is _____ than a prophet.*" (Matthew 11:9b, NASB95) (Malachi 3:1)
- h. Continuing His praise of John, Jesus said, "*Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone _____ than John the Baptist!*" (Matthew 11:11a, NASB95)
- i. Jesus closed our passage with these words, "*Yet the one who is _____ in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*" (Matthew 11:11b, NASB95)
- j. Even if a man has outstanding character and an outstanding calling, he must also have the _____ in order to reach the potential of his greatness.

CONCLUSION:

What does this passage of Scripture have to do with Advent? Especially the Shepherds' candle, the candle that remembers the long line of people who joyfully shared the good news of the Savior. When we think of shepherds we think of sheep. Sheep were important in Israel; they were the sacrifices in the temple. John came announcing the good news of the Savior. John pointed Jesus out to the people and declared, "*Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*" (John 1:29, NASB95) John announced the coming of the final and perfect Lamb of God, no other would be needed. He announced the end of the Old Covenant and the beginning of the New Covenant. He prepared the people for the coming of the Lamb of God through the baptism of repentance and confession of sins. John's ministry is over, but ours is not. As we look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ we must ask the Savior what He wants us to do for Him. Just as John the Baptist had a calling, we too have been called to share with joy the birth of the Savior, but not only His birth but His death and resurrection. We have been called to be witnesses in our world. That witness begins by praying for the salvation of unbelievers. Several weeks ago, I gave you a challenge to begin praying for the salvation of five unbelievers and for opportunities to be a witness to them. Are you still praying for them or is their salvation not important to you? I have been praying for my five, would you join me in praying for the unsaved in our community that you know. Who knows what the Lord might do in the new year He may give you the opportunity to reach the full potential of your greatness for Him!