

A Prayerful Reflection - (3rd Sunday in Advent)

Take time to sit quietly and ask Jesus to be present with you in a new way this week. As we prepare to pray, let's remember to praise God for all his goodness in and through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hymn – CMP 393

Joy to the world,
the Lord has come!
let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare Him room
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing!

A WORD FROM SCRIPTURE – Matthew 11:2-11

² When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples ³ to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" ⁴ Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ⁶ Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me." ⁷ As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ⁸ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. ⁹ Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you."

¹¹ Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Verse 3 'to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" Why did John doubt? Even people with strong faith ask tough questions during stressful times. John was suffering unjustly, so it's perhaps not surprising that John sought answers from Jesus. However, since Jesus' actions as Messiah differed from what many of the Jews expected, reports of Jesus' activities must have puzzled John. The miracles Jesus performed provided convincing evidence that Jesus indeed was the one whom was to come.

Verse 11 'Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he'. 'The least in the kingdom' refers to those who will be living in the coming kingdom. The least person in the kingdom of heaven will have seen and understood the finished work of Christ on the cross and through His resurrection.

Prayer – Heavenly Father, when we consider the many pointers that the religious leaders were given, it seems astonishing that they missed the truth of Christ's coming. Through this Advent season keep us from missing the truths that are contained within Your Word, may the Holy Spirit bring revelation and truth, in Jesus' name we pray. **AMEN.**

Prayer of Intercession

Let us pray.

Good and gracious God, grant us a glimpse of your glory, that we may rejoice in your presence and abide in your peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. **AMEN**

Loving Lord, help us to know that we dwell in you and you are in us. It is you Lord, that seek out the straying and the lost; you desire to deliver all who are in trouble, you set out to rescue all who are oppressed, you come to us now and seek to bring us home. We rejoice in your presence and your almighty power.

- May your church share in your healing and saving power.
- We pray for the church working in areas of violence and rejection.
- We pray for all Christians who are persecuted for their faith.

Lord you are our deliverer – **you are our refuge and our strength.**

We pray for areas of our world where people are devalued and discarded, for all who are outcasts and all who suffer from ethnic violence and prejudice. We pray that the rich and those in authority may bring relief and hope to the poor. We pray for all who are in the armed forces, and for all who maintain peace and order.

Lord you are our deliverer – **you are our refuge and our strength.**

Lord God, we rejoice that you are with us in our homes. Make us sensitive in our dealings with each other, attentive to the needs and desires of our loved ones. We pray for all homes where there is fear and abuse.

Lord you are our deliverer – **you are our refuge and our strength.**

We pray for our emergency services who help people in need and give thanks for their service and dedication. We pray for doctor's, dentists, chemists who serve those in need. Thank you for the gifts in helping people to be well.

Finally,....take time out to pray for those on your hearts, for those close to us, for families, friends or neighbours, for those who are known to us who are going through a difficult time. For those who have lost a loved one. We ask you're blessing upon all who are ill at home or in hospital. Lord, comfort and help those in need we pray.

Pray the LORD'S Prayer

Peace

*Let God's presence and peace in Christ Jesus keep a watch over your heart and mind and free you from being anxious.
The peace of the Lord be always with you.*

A prayer of blessing

*Rejoice in the presence and power of God.
Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.
Know the Lord is at hand. **AMEN***