

Advent Three
Year of the Lord 2019

**“Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine;
Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day!”
“Let me see my Savior’s face; let me all HIS beauties trace!
Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to
Thee!”**

Matthew 11:2–15 Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” ⁴And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the 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. ⁶And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is he of whom it is written, “‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’” **¹¹Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹²From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. ¹³For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, ¹⁴and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. ¹⁵He who has ears to hear, let him hear.**

In the Name of Jesus:

“Let...him...hear!” This is the way the Creator speaks: ‘Let there be light! Let there be lights in the heavens! Let the waters teem with life! Let US make man in our own image!’

You, my dear ones, are the BAPTIZED! Washed with water, yes—by the authority of the One Who was to come. And...so...that water brought not only Jesus, son of Mary, but also His Spirit to live in you; and a dear Father in heaven.

So! Drop all FEAR that can spring up from the words, ‘He who has ears, let him hear!’

(DO I have good ears, the right ears, religious-type ears to—oh, how do we say, ‘GET...IT?!’) The answer to that worry now—my beloved, is ‘P—Yoo!’

We have the Father’s ear now—Jesus made THAT clear way back in chapter six of Matthew: ‘When y’all pray, say these words...FATHER! Father in heaven but Father Who is OURS!’ That means Jesus’ Father and my Father and, of course, y’all’s Father too! We’re made in His image and we have ears so He has ears.

Oh! And if WE need proof closer to home—in us, about us, FROM...US...TO... ‘UP-THERE-NESS!’---

Jesus gives that too! Just check what WE have done with our FIRST ears: VIOLENCE! *12From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.*

MY LOVELIES---Just like John—who, of ANY men, should KNOW BETTER-----FROM...WHAT...HE...HAS...HEARD!!!!!!!!!!

Just like John, you and I—FROM INSIDE HERE, GOING OUT, GOING UP, ALL RELIGIOUS-Y---

You and I are MOST satisfied when WE can find something about WE...about US! Rather than just a word that just any man can say about Jesus, from Jesus. Frinstance: ‘In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I PARDON you, I PLACE YOU in heaven, I GIVE YOU NEW EARS!’

How many, beloved, have ears for that? We could look around and count. LET’S NOT!

Instead, if WE INSIST on doing sumpin’, let us do what the King and His prophet both call out to all men:

3 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”¹

¹² Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. ¹³ And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴ so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵ “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—
¹⁶ the people dwelling in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death,
on them a light has dawned.”

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” ²

My dear ones: we mangle REPENTANCE just like any other heaven-oriented activity. The Lord gets us back on track with words like ‘violence’ and ‘force,’ ‘taking!’

Young and foolish, my buddy and I were finishing a day of hunting by running the back roads. The speed limit, as best I can recall from the ride, must have been about 90 miles per hour. No school that day; so my buddy, John, just tapped the breaks passing the country school, but blowing right through the stop sign. Little religious Paul had to shout out, ‘You just ran that stop sign!’ And my John replied, ‘Well, I SLOWED DOWN to EIGHTY-FIVE!’

And that somehow made it all better in my buddy’s calculations.

He was a Lutheran too; different synod; but violent enough to earn the name.

The prophets, ‘til John, used words like ‘violence’ to describe A...N...Y thing, movement, re-orientation FROM...US...TOWARD Mount Sinai, God’s Will, His Presence, His Good Favor!

And THAT...IS...PRECISELY the Good News of the New Contract made between Heaven and Earth, Holiness and ‘US-ness’....

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mt 3:1–2). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mt 4:12–17). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

My dear ones: the Good Lord has a LIMIT on how much VIOLENCE and FORCE He will suffer at your hands and mine; and the rest of the world: But use them image-of-God ears y'all got now: God has a limit on how much 'sinning' He'll put up with from any man—

AND...THAT...LIMIT...IS...NOTTTTTTTTTT....UPPPPP...TOOOOOO.....US!

Praise the Lord!

The Gospel is B-EAU-TIFUL, in the eyes of heaven. What you and I do is a mess! NOT that we may be CARELESS, SLIPSHOD about turning our ears from vacuuming up evil, our eyes, our hearts, our souls—you want REPENTANCE! CLOSE THE HOLES!

But ANY sweeping out the barn is just slowing down to 85 as we blow through stop-signs. WE cannot stop sinning, ESPECIALLY when we think we're doin' great at sin-stopping. The prophet Isaiah called the religious deeds of old Israel 'filthy rags.' So much so, ISAIAH presaged the destruction of the temple! 'Shut 'er down, boyz!' he basically said!

For there was coming a new meeting place between God and men in which no man has a part—other than the Man born of Mary. The man Who comes in such a way, that every man—even John!—can take offense at him.

Whoever is LEAST in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John; and no one born of women is greater than he.

What a relief! So, here's OUR t-do list, if you want one:

1. Stay violent.
2. Rejoice in your Baptism, all day, every day.
3. Repeat.

In other words: go ahead and repent, my dear ones;
AS...IF...YOUR...SOUL...DEPENDS...ON...IT

B...E...C....A....U...S...E your soul does NOT depend on what YOU bring to God!

God has come to you!

So remember: if you and I ever learn to shut our ears to the force and violence of this world, the news, poor sinners living in fear, keep that image in your mind. ‘Yes! I finally gave the next poor sinner a break! I’m so good, I’m like that guy who slows all the way down to 30 miles per hour ABOVE the speed limit, as he breaks a host of other laws!’

Can God above be pleased with such repentance?

In fact, our FATHER in heaven CAN ONLY be pleased by such repentance in the Name of Jesus. Amen.