

Refrigerator Notes 13 December 2015

'What Must We Do?'

Luke 3:7-18

1. The sermon title of the sermon asks an old age question, that dates as far back as ancient philosophers, circa 2000 years plus – 'What must we do?'
2. It is a question that is asked in times of despair, calamity, chaos, and in search of answers that are not available
3. It is a question that is still relevant today as it was 2000 plus years ago
4. Our text opens with the appearance of John the Baptist breathing fire and calling the Jews out of their names – "A brood of Vipers" (a bunch of baby snakes) to the point of insulting those who are listening to him
5. John's speaking style is pointed, confrontational, aggressive, gruff and blunt – just as the gospel he proclaims
6. John is issuing a call for baptism, a baptism of repentance, yet the crowds continue to come out to be baptized thinking – 'could he be the Messiah?'
7. John immediately clears the air, by letting the crowd know that he is not the one
8. But scripture points out, John's callings have clearly ignited a response to those who hear his voice – 'What must we do?'
9. Three different groups, ask the same questions, but each group gets a separate answer
10. To one group – "Anyone who has two coats should give one to the one who has none and likewise who has food should do the same"
11. The second group he tells, "Don't collect any more tax than you are required to do"
12. The last group, John says, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely"
13. John reminds his listeners that the one to come will separate the chaff from the wheat, but the chaff will be consumed by the unquenchable fire (much like the sheep will be separated from the goats – Matthews text)
14. John's radical (negative) style has two inclusive sides. 1) it brings everyone before the challenge of submission to God's grace and it demands total submission and 2) John was teaching those who came it was the fruit of your labors that matter most
15. The nexus of the tree and fruit plays an important part of Jesus' ministry in the book of Matthew
16. So how is this text relevant to Listeners today and what must we do? – It's about right attitude and right behavior, if you are to have a right relationship with our Lord and Savior
17. The problem is not one that is new, but date as far back as the OT, when God's people were being stiff neck as they are today, but even more so
18. Our attitudes is a reflection of those who lived in Noah's time – attitudes and behaviors which are in disobedience to God
19. During this advent season, as we lit the candle of joy, we are called to do away with the cynicism found in the church as well as our lives
20. In this season of advent, it is about repentance – a change of mind-set, a reflection of the man or woman in the mirror, recognizing the brokenness in our lives and how we have caused others to fall and stumble, it's about reconciliation and making peace in this season of advent, it's about using our sphere of influence wisely and admitting that we all are a part of the problem, but it takes each of us individually to make the necessary correction with forgiveness

21. Finally, we have been blessed with an abundance — in our closets, in our refrigerators, in our check books, stock portfolios and the other treasures that we hoard
22. If we are in possession of abundance its time that we learn to share our blessings, celebrating the coming of our Lord, learning to love one another — not half-heartedly
23. My personal prayer for DPC was that we set aside our differences and bless one another with joy during this advent season