

**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 10, 2017**

**"PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD"**

**"EVERY VALLEY SHALL BE EXALTED"**

**WHICH LINE STICKS WITH YOU?**

**THAT MIGHT BE A TEST OF WHETHER YOU ARE MORE A FAN OF  
"GODSPELL" OR HANDEL'S "MESSIAH"**

**THOSE TWO SHOW US HOW POPULAR CULTURE PICKS UP ON SCRIPTURE  
AND BRINGS IT INTO MAINSTREAM CONSCIOUSNESS....**

**AND IN MANY WAYS THOSE TWO PHRASES SUMMARIZE THE MESSAGE OF  
THIS SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT...**

**AND IN THEIR OWN WAY THEY BOTH CONTINUE THE MESSAGE OF LAST  
SUNDAY I TALKED ABOUT -**

**THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING IN THE PRESENT MOMENT AS A WAY OF  
PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS...**

**AS A WAY OF PREPARING THE WAY OF THE LORD**

**OUR LEADING FIGURE TODAY - JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS SOMETHING OF  
A REBEL, I WOULD SAY....**

**HE WAS THE SON OF THE PRIESTLY TEMPLE CLASS, ZECHARIAH....  
BUT HE DID HIS OWN THING IN THE WILDERNESS DOWN BY THE  
RIVERSIDE....**

**HE WAS BORN INTO THE PRIVILEGE CLASS BUT DRESSED MORE LIKE A  
HIPPIE....**

**HE CREATED HIS OWN BAPTISM BUT THEN SAID THAT WHAT REALLY  
MATTERS IS THE BAPTISM OF "SPIRIT AND FIRE"**

**HE CLEARLY LIVED IN THE PRESENT MOMENT AND CHALLENGED HIS  
FOLLOWERS TO LIVE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT -**

**THUS PREPARING THE WAY OF THE LORD, AND  
FILLING IN THE VALLEYS OF THEIR LIVES**

*JOHN THE BAPTIST TODAY CHALLENGES US TO LET GO OF OUR PAST,  
ACKNOWLEDGE OUR PRESENT SITUATION, TAKE THE RISK AND PLUNGE  
OURSELVES NOW INTO THE PRESENT MOMENT OF OUR LIVES AND IN  
THE WATERS OF NEW POSSIBILITIES .....*

*NOW, THE PRESENT MOMENT, IS ALWAYS A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR US....*

*JOHN IS AN ESPECIALLY APPROPRIATE PERSON FOR ADVENT - BECAUSE  
LIKE ADVENT, HE TOO WAS AN "IN BETWEEN PERSON" - A SANDWICH  
PERSON - REMEMBER WE SAID LAST WEEK THAT DURING ADVENT WE  
BOTH LOOK BACKWARD AND RECALL THE BIRTH OF JESUS*

*AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO HIS SECOND COMING AS THE RISEN CHRIST  
WE ARE SANDWICHED IN BETWEEN THE BIRTH OF JESUS IN THE PAST  
AND THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE FUTURE*

*BUT PARADOXICALLY, THE CHALLENGE IS TO LIVE IN THE PRESENT  
IN THE MEATY SECTION OF THE SANDWICH - OR IF YOU PREFER,  
PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY PART OF THE SANDWICH - THE BEST PART  
JOHN THE BAPTIST COULD LOOK BACK ALSO TO THE HEBREW  
SCRIPTURES - ALL THE PROPHETS -*

*AND HE COULD LOOK FORWARD TO THE ONE WHO WAS MIGHTIER THAN  
HE, THE ONE WHOSE SANDALS HE WAS NOT WORTHY TO STOOP AND  
LOOSEN*

*BUT MOST OF ALL, JOHN, THE BAPTIST, WAS DEFINITELY ABLE TO LIVE  
FULLY IN HIS PRESENT MOMENT IN HISTORY*

*OUR CHALLENGE IS ALSO TO LIVE FULLY IN THE PRESENT MOMENT ---  
ESPECIALLY DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON*

*AS WE APPROACH CHRISTMAS, REALLY ONLY TWO WEEKS AWAY, AND WE  
BEGIN TO SEE MORE AND MORE COMMERCIALS AND ADS, AS WELL AS  
MUSIC, ENCOURAGING US TO MAKE THE SEASON "MERRY AND BRIGHT"  
WE MIGHT BECOME OVERWHELMED WITH DREAD AS WE ANTICIPATE AN  
EXTRA DRAIN ON OUR ENERGY, OUR EMOTIONS AND ALL THE THINGS WE  
HAVE TO DO....WE HAVEN'T DONE*

*HENCE, WE GROW MORE AND MORE ANXIOUS THE MORE WE LOOK  
IN THE FUTURE - ANTICIPATING DECEMBER 25TH.....*

*ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS NOT UNCOMMON TO BEGIN FEELING A SENSE  
OF LOSS, OF SADNESS FOR THE WAY THINGS USED TO BE IN THE PAST -  
AS WE LOOK BACK AND RECALL FORMER CHRISTMASSES....*

*HENCE, AT A TIME WHEN WE SHOULD BE HAPPY AND MERRY WE MIGHT  
BE FEELING MORE STRESS, MORE ANXIOUS, MORE SAD, MORE GLOOMY....  
BUT THEN, FORTUNATELY, WE REMEMBER WHAT WILL HELP US..*

*WE REMEMBER FROM LAST WEEK AND WE REALIZE THE ANSWER IS TO  
LIVE IN THE PRESENT - WHERE THERE IS NO STRESS...NO STRESS*

*WE BEGIN TO LET GO OF FOCUSING ON WHAT CHRISTMAS USED TO BE  
LIKE....*

*AND WE BEGIN TO LET GO OF FOCUSING ON WHAT WE "SHOULD BE  
DOING" AND WHAT WE NEED TO GET DONE IN THE NEXT COUPLE WEEKS  
AND FOCUS ON THE BEAUTY, THE SIGNIFICANCE AND THE POWER, THE  
GIFT OF THE PRESENT MOMENT - RIGHT NOW*

*SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 10, 2017, THE SECOND SUNDAY OF  
ADVENT...*

*AND THERE IS NO STRESS IN THE PRESENT MOMENT....IN THE NOW  
IT'S A LITTLE BIT LIKE LIVING ONE DAY AT A TIME....*

*BUT IT'S EVEN LIVING ONE MOMENT AT A TIME....*

*AND WE ARE GETTING BETTER AT LIVING IN THE PRESENT MOMENT  
BECAUSE WE DID IT SEVERAL TIMES THIS PAST WEEK...*

*PERHAPS IT WAS ONLY 5 OR 10 MINUTES A DAY -*

*TIME THAT WAS JUST FOR OURSELVES*

*TIME TO LIVE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT AND ENJOY IT AS A GIFT*

*PERHAPS IT WAS ONLY A FEW SECONDS.....THAT'S A START*

*E.G. WHEN WE WERE IN OUR CAR RUSHING, SPEEDING TO AN APPT....*

*AND, OF COURSE, CAME UPON A RED LIGHT...*

*WHAT A GIFT! THAT HAPPENED TO ME THIS PAST WEEK//*

*I WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE GIFT OF THAT RED LIGHT, EVEN THOUGH*

*I WAS LATE, THOSE FEW MOMENTS IN THE MIDST OF RUSHING...*

*I WAS ABLE TO STOP, CLOSE MY EYES, TAKE A DEEP BREATH, AND*

*BREATHE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT, GIVING THANKS FOR THE WONDER  
OF THAT MOMENT IN ALL ITS WONDER....*

*IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN A RED LIGHT, IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE*

*OPPORTUNITY TO WAIT FOR AN ELEVATOR, WAIT IN A LONG LINE AT A*

*STORE, OR WAIT ON THE PHONE FOR A FEW MINUTES FOR SOMEBODY AT*

*THE OTHER END TO DO SOMETHING FOR YOU...*

***YOU GET THE IDEA....***

***AND THE OPPORTUNITY IN SUCH A SITUATION IS TO STOP, AND TAKE A***

***DEEP BREATH AND SAY YES TO THAT PRESENT MOMENT***

***IT CAN TRANSFORM THAT MOMENT, YOUR DAY, AND YOU.....***

***YOU RELAX, SETTLE DOWN AND APPRECIATE MORE DEEPLY THE GIFT***

***OF YOUR LIFE ..***

***AND WE ARE MORE PRESENT TO OUR LIFE AND TO OUR SURROUNDINGS,***

***TO OTHERS IN OUR LIFE***

***WHAT A WAY TO PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD!***

***WHAT A WAY TO LEVEL THE VALLEYS OF YOUR LIFE!***

***SO, I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO BASICALLY DO WHAT WE DID***

***LAST WEEK TO HELP US LIVE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT....***

***I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO CLOSE YOUR EYES, IF YOU'RE OK WITH***

***THAT AND CLOSE YOUR MOUTH AND INHALE QUIETLY THROUGH NOSE***

***HOLDING YOUR BREATH FOR A MOMENT OR TWO***

***THEN EXHALE THROUGH YOUR MOUTH***

***AND REPEAT INHALING THROUGH YOUR NOSE AND HOLD YOUR BREATH***

***FOR A MOMENT OR TWO***

***THEN EXHALE THROUGH YOUR MOUTH***

***AND REPEAT - INHALE THROUGH YOUR NOSE***

***HOLDING YOUR BREATH FOR A MOMENT OR TWO***

***THEN EXHALE THROUGH YOUR MOUTH***

***GIVING THANKS FOR THE GIFT OF THE PRESENT MOMENT THAT IS***

***WITHOUT STRESS***

***AND PERHAPS ADDING A PRAYER WITH THE BREATH....***

***I LIKE TO USE - "COME HOLY SPIRIT, COME"***

***IN ANY CASE, ESSENTIAL IF WE WANT TO PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE***

***LORD AND EXALT THOSE VALLEYS***

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