

## *Why Waiting Matters*

Luke 3:7-18 (December 12, 2021)

### *Luke 3: 7-18*

<sup>7</sup>John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>9</sup>Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” <sup>10</sup>And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” <sup>11</sup>In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” <sup>12</sup>Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” <sup>13</sup>He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” <sup>14</sup>Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

<sup>15</sup>As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup>John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” <sup>18</sup>So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

### *Historical Context*

John the Baptist was a man of austere ways possessed of a single-minded devotion to the cause of proclaiming the kingdom of God from the hinterlands.

### *Theme: Why Waiting Matters*

An Advent message that calls out privilege and abuse of power will likely not be a popular proclamation. Especially in the season that celebrates consumerism. While we would like to imagine ourselves as altruistic and inherently generous, the truth is we might have a higher opinion of ourselves than what John the Baptist appears to see.

John’s proclamation is not just a reminder to take the focus outside of ourselves and our immediate circles, but is an urgent plea to do so. John reminds us of just how easy it is to lose site of the event for which Advent waits. So, John calls us to attention in this Advent season. Will we acquiesce to accompanying society, to going along with the status quo? Or will we manifest a way of being in the world that truly bears the fruit of repentance, a way that is a recognizably distinctive way of anticipating the birth of Christ?

Exactly what are those fruits we are called to bear — not for all of eternity, but for here and now — in this season, Advent 2021? No Advent is the same. Each Advent calls us to a different demonstration of why it matters to anticipate Jesus’ birth. Each Advent invites a different manifestation of why waiting matters. Each Advent brings hope for a different expression of why it matters that Christmas is near.