

Come to Us to Change Our Behavior

It is vital to be familiar with our lost condition and God's saving work; then the joy will inspire us to change our behavior!

Wednesday, 12/18 at 11:00 & 7:00

Third Wednesday in Advent – 2019

Christmas Eve D. Service at 6:00 | Christmas Day D. Service at 10

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: This is the final part our three-week Advent series called **Come, Lord Jesus**.

- ★ First, we emphasized **HOW** He comes – *through the Word*, and **WHAT** He does – ✦making us spiritually alive, ✦setting us free from the condemnation of our sins, ✦building us up, and ✦giving us eternal blessings!
- ★ Second, we emphasized ✦**TO WHOM** He comes – *to those who know of their need for God's forgiveness*, ✦**THAT HEARING IS NOT ENOUGH** – *since many hear but do not benefit*, and ✦**A METHOD** – of ✓hear, ✓read, ✓mark, ✓learn, and ✓inwardly digest, *by which the Holy Spirit will work through the Word of God to transform our lives from the inside out!*
- ★ Third, today, we will emphasize **THE RESULTS THAT GOD WORKS** *both in our hearts AND in our daily lives when we do inwardly digest His Word!*

1. **God's Work in our Hearts:**

- a. Love: We can better understand our need for God's work in our hearts as we think about love – *BEFORE and AFTER the fall into sin:*

- i. Before the fall: God loved Adam and Eve, they loved God, and they loved each other! *Sounds like paradise :*)
 - ii. After the fall: God still loved Adam and Eve, but they no longer loved God or each other.
- b. Change of behavior: It comes from God working on the inside – *in the heart*; then, when God has done His work, *it shows in how we take action for others*. Let's look back at some key parts of today's Scripture reading:
- i. What is needed for a person to show true love? ¹ **...everyone who loves is born of God and knows God** (NAU).
 - ii. How did God show true love for us? ⁹ **...God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him**.
 - iii. How did God's love save us? ¹⁰ **...God... sent His Son to be the propitiation** [*atoning sacrifice*] **for our sins**. // That means Jesus received OUR sins and OUR punishment.
 - iv. Why should we love each other? ¹¹ **if God so loved us [*to save us through Jesus*], we also ought to love one another.**
 - v. What does it mean to love each other?
We love when we take *sacrificial action* to *fulfill the need* of another person.
 - vi. In summary, why do we love others?
¹⁹ **We love, because [God] first loved us.**

2. **God's Powerful Example of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10):**

These are the key parts of the story:

- a. Why was Zacchaeus not liked by the people?
² **...he was a chief tax collector and he was rich (NAU).**
- b. How did Jesus show His love for Zacchaeus?
⁵ **When Jesus came to the place [where Zacchaeus had climbed up into a tree to get a glimpse of Jesus], [Jesus] looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house."**
- c. Why were others in the town upset? ⁷ **...they all began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."**
- d. How did Zacchaeus show that his heart had been changed? ⁸ **Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much."** // Words are easy, actions are harder, and giving away much money can be the hardest. *That giving pointed to his genuine change!* In an opposite way, some people know
♦ what tithing means and ♦ what the Bible says about tithing, *but they keep refusing to do it.*

3. **God's Instructions to those who Know Him:** Even though the devil, the world, and our flesh keep trying to pull us in the wrong directions, *God is calling and*

empowering us → remember His love and → do His will.

Let's note some key things in these key passages:

- a. Regarding the Bible, **when** and **why**? “...**you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; [then God encourages us to do such things, because the rest of the verse says:] **for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success**” (Joshua 1:8 NAS).**
- b. Regarding the Bible, **what order**? “...**Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel**” (Ezra 7:10 NAS). // Set > study > practice > teach. That applies to Bible teachers AND all believers – *since all believers are teaching others with their words and actions*.
- c. Since God is not needy, how do we love Him? Jesus said, “**If you love Me, you will keep My commandments**” (John 14:15 NAS).
- d. Since many are only actors or hypocrites, how do we show the reality of God's work in our hearts? “...**putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness... prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves**” (James 1:21-22 NAU).

Let Us Pray: Dear Father, we have all sinned, *so we TY again for working in our hearts and giving us Jesus!* Guide us and empower us *so that our behavior reflects the light of Jesus!*

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