

John the Baptist, Week Three. 1/17/2021

**“Confronting the Pandemic of Sin”** FBCLA

Luke 3:7-18 Dr. Scott T. Arnold. (building on Matt 3:5-12)

<sup>7</sup> John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup> Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. <sup>9</sup> The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” <sup>10</sup> “What should we do then?” the crowd asked. <sup>11</sup> John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.” <sup>12</sup> Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?” <sup>13</sup> “Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them. <sup>14</sup> Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?” He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely —be content with your pay.” <sup>15</sup> The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. <sup>16</sup> John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. 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 barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” <sup>18</sup> And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.

**Introduction: “The Pandemic of sin.”**

The corrupting fruit of evil – entitlement and pride, racism, nationalism, greed, oppression, abuse of power, loss of compassion, lack of sharing, dishonesty, lying, cheating, bearing false witness, inciting insurrection, greed, lust for power...inequity, injustice, discrimination, hatred..... There are pandemics that attach our bodies and livelihoods, and then there are pandemics that attack our souls and the very fiber of society, family, community, our very God-given humanity. The attack on the Capital on January 6<sup>th</sup> was a terror attack, fueled by the evil fruit of Donald Trump and his supporters. The herd immunity principle can not be applied to COVID 19 or to sin, and we witnessed the effect of sin in a deadly herd mentality that was treasonous.

I. **John the Baptist warned the crowds (3:7-8a)** <sup>7</sup> *John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who*

*warned you to flee from the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup> Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.*

II. **John confronted their denial of sin (3:8b-9)** *And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. <sup>9</sup> The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

III. **How are we to repent? (3:10-14).**

A. **Crowds - Share clothing and food.** (care in deed) (10-11) <sup>10</sup> *“What should we do then?” the crowd asked. <sup>11</sup> John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”*

B. **Tax Collectors - Be honest, fair, gracious, and not greedy (12-13)** <sup>12</sup> *Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?” <sup>13</sup> “Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them.*

C. **Soldiers – Do not abuse power for money or accuse falsely. (14)** <sup>14</sup> *Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?” He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely —be content with your pay.”*

IV. **John did not let popularity blind him (3:15)** <sup>15</sup> *The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah.*

V. **John foretold the coming Messiah (3:16a)** <sup>16</sup> *John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.*

VI. **John spoke of three baptisms (3:16b)** *He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

VII. **John warned of judgment & preached salvation. (17-18)** <sup>17</sup> *His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” <sup>18</sup> And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.*

**Conclusion:** John the Baptist came warning people. In the times we live in, we must heed the warnings of injustice, a fragile earth ecology, a raging deadly pandemic, the delusions of deceptive political leaders who would advance their cult over democracy and freedom. We must prepare for the work of God in the second coming of Jesus. Today is the day to heed the warnings and turn to God for healing, reconciliation, and new life.