

St. James' Episcopal Church Cindy Baskin  
Advent 3-A – December 12, 2010 – **9:15 am Family Service**  
Texts: Is 35:1-10; Ps 146:4-9; James 5:7-10; Matt 11:2-11

**Scripture Reference:** *Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.*

### **The Gospel Story<sup>1</sup>**

*Gather the children up front and designate older children to enact the roles as the story is re-told.*

Today's Bible story, on this the third Sunday in Advent, is about Jesus' cousin, John, a man who is usually called John the Baptist. John knew God had promised to send a great person to help the people of God. John had thought Jesus was this "great person", but now John has been put in prison. That must have been difficult and it made him wonder if Jesus really was the Messiah.

So what did John do? *(Wait for responses from the children)*

He sent his followers to ask Jesus if he was the one whom God had promised to send: "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"

How did Jesus answer John's question? *(Wait for responses from the children)*. Jesus didn't answer John's question directly did he? Instead Jesus said: "*Go tell John what you hear and see*": the blind to see, the lame to walk, people with skin disease are healed, the deaf hear, the dead are brought back to life, and the poor hear the good news of God and can have hope. Hearing this, John could decide for himself if Jesus was sent by God.

Jesus didn't answer John with more promises, or with explanations or debates about who he was. No, he answered John with **evidence**.

### **The Lesson for Us**

This is a good lesson for all of us to hear. Most of us here claim to be Christians – to be followers of Jesus. But if we were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict us? If we just talk about being a Christian and don't act like loving persons, we are not going to do much good. It is in the doing that love is passed on to others. We may not be able to touch a person as Jesus did and help them see, hear, or walk, but there are things we can do to help heal people.

Can you think of ways that you could heal or help a particular person. I'll tell you what is wrong with the person and you tell me how you think that person might be helped.

- A person who doesn't have enough to eat? *(Bring food to the food shelf collection,; help serve people at a homeless shelter or meals-on-wheels.)*
- A person who is new in school and feeling lonely or bashful? *(Talk with them; invite them to sit with you at lunch or play after school, show them where things are.)*
- A person who is sick at home or a homebound neighbor? *(Visit them; bring them a picture you drew; send a card, ask what you can do to help them.)*
- A tired person? *(Ask if you can help them; offer to bring them a cool drink or a pillow so they can rest; play quietly so they can sleep.)*

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<sup>1</sup>Much of this sermonette is based on "Healing Others," December 12, 2004, [losogproductions.com/view\\_subscr\\_det...](http://losogproductions.com/view_subscr_det...), Copyright 2010 Join hands.

**Conclusion**

During this third week of Advent, let's find ways to be a friend to someone who needs to be cheered up, comforted, fed, befriended, or helped in some way. This will be our way of preparing for Christmas, the birthday of the one who did all those things while he was here on earth. Ask God each morning to help you be alert to ways to help people in need that day.