

**Pastor's Corner:** 4-6-2019 – What did you come to see?

In Mt 11 two of the disciples of John the Baptizer (who at that time is in prison) are sent to Jesus to find out if he is the promised one. Jesus responds to their question by pointing to the evidence. “Look for yourselves,” he encourages. “The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear. The dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.”

In other words, “duh! What do you think?”

It was pretty obvious to anybody who was paying attention that something remarkable was happening in the world. Lives were being changed in powerful ways. Jesus was ushering in a new kingdom, one founded on God's love and mercy. His teaching was accompanied by a power great enough to break the hold of the devil on men's hearts.

As the passage continues, Jesus shifts his focus to the crowd. Vss 7-10 say, “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what *did* you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But *what did you go out to see?* A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.”

I find Jesus' questions to be poignant and relevant. He knows that all the people had gone out to listen to John preach. But *why* did they go? Did they go out to hear some wishy-washy preacher who only told people what they wanted to hear? Hardly! John had a reputation for making people mad and creating powerful enemies. Did they go out to hear some smooth-tongued professional in a high dollar suit and slick designer shoes? No way! The dude wore clothes made from camel's hair, ate locusts and wild honey and never cut his hair. He looked (and probably sounded) like a raving homeless person.

But the people still went out, in droves, to hear him preach. Why?

Jesus identifies why the multitudes went to the Jordan to listen to John. It was because he was delivering the most important message ever to come to the earth, that the messiah had arrived. That the promised one was here and it was time to get right with God. The time for goofing off and going your own way was over. “Repent and be baptized,” he said - for the kingdom of heaven is now!

Recently I have been wondering if Jesus is trying to have the same conversation with us that he had with the multitude that day. I imagine him standing in front of our church and asking us, “Why are you here? Why have you come to this place? Why are you affiliated with this church?”

I imagine the questions continue, “Are you here because of the comfortable pews? Your recliner at home is far more comfortable. Are you here for the great potluck? There's better food in restaurants. Are you here for the fellowship? You can make friends anywhere and probably find more acceptance in bar. So, *why are you here?*”

Indeed, why *are* you here?

I am here because at a young age I felt God calling me to be a part of the Great Commission. I remember reading Mt 28:18-20 as a senior in academy and having the distinct impression that God had included me in that final command. I am here because I believe God has chosen the church to be his ambassadors in the world and I am a part of that church. I am here to work for God.

But why are you here? Are you here to feed or to be fed? Are you here to serve or be served? Are you here to make a difference in the lives of others or are you sitting around waiting for someone to make a difference in you?

Why are you here?

When Jesus asked these questions of the multitude there was an implied follow up question, “If you came out to hear a prophet who was delivering a message from God, why aren't you doing what he said you should do?”

I think the same implied question could be asked today. If you are here because you want to follow Jesus and be his disciple, then why aren't you doing the things he said his disciples should do? Why are only a handful of members actively supporting the missional pathway? Why do only a handful of members accept ministry positions? Why do we think it's ok to just take care of our own when there's an entire world dying for lack of knowledge of God's love?

My point in all this is that if we truly believe that we are living in the last days and that God has called his church to prepare the world for his coming, then we should be banding together to do just that. We can't just play church. We have to start doing the things Jesus has commanded us to do. And not just few of us. Everyone.

On April 27 we take the last step in the Missional Pathway with the Advance workshop. This is the most important part of the whole process and we need more than the paltry handful we have had in the past to be in attendance. This is the time where we focus in on where God is calling us to make a difference in our community. It's where we pull all our ideas together and decide where we are going to serve.

Please make it a priority to attend. Clear your calendar, make the sacrifice, and be there. The pathfinders rescheduled their campout so they could attend. I've cleared my calendar. What are you willing to put on hold to be a part of what God is doing in our church?

See you then! Pastor Tyler