

“The Wonder of Our God” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Advent 3

December 14, 2025

- I. **Matthew 11:2-3** – ²When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to Him, “Are You the One who is to come, or shall we look for another?”
- II. **Have you ever second-guessed yourself?**
 - a. I can remember in school when teachers would tell you that you should never change a test answer... especially on multiple choice questions, when you aren't totally sure what the right answer is.
 - i. Sometimes, we read the question again... and again... and pretty soon, we erase the first answer and change it to something else.
 - ii. Almost always, my first answer was the right one, and I would get so frustrated that I changed my answer!
 - b. Another example is when you are driving out in the country and you lose GPS service... like I did in the mountains of Colorado.
 - i. I knew the route, but the more I thought about it, the more I started second-guessing myself... and I took a wrong turn that led me on a 45-minute detour.
 - c. Here's the thing... waiting and second-guessing usually work together... give it enough time or wait long enough, and we can undo any good decision.
 - i. Sometimes we set boundaries with our kids, and time passes and we start to wonder if it was too extreme or harsh... and we allow them to go back to their old behaviors again.
 - 1. The consequence is more relational struggle down the road... and they might push the boundaries all the more, knowing that you might give in.
 - ii. When a major career decision comes up, we might feel pretty sure it's the right job... but if we sit on the decision too long, any number of doubts or fears start creeping in...
 - 1. In the end, we may talk ourselves out of a great opportunity that ends up changing our future in all kinds of negative ways.
 - iii. Sometimes we know the best answer in our faith life and walk with Christ... but in time, we start questioning things... kind of like the devil asked Eve, “Did God really say...?” (Genesis 3:1)
 - 1. We may have heard these truths from childhood... that Jesus is the only way to be saved, and what God clearly teaches about marriage, chastity, honesty, and love... but over time we start to wonder, “Is that really what God meant?”
 - 2. False teachers and influencers are constantly trying to cast doubt on the Bible and God's will... and in time, we may second-guess ourselves and go in the wrong direction... and

the consequence for walking away from God is an eternal consequence.

III. **John the Baptist was sitting in Herod's prison.**

- a. Of course he is the great prophet we spoke of last week, calling people to repent... and announcing the coming of Jesus Christ... and as Jesus reminds us today, John is the greatest prophet of all.
 - i. Now, you may remember the story that John's parents were Zechariah and Elizabeth (and Elizabeth was a relative of Mary, Jesus' mother, Luke 1:36) – and John was in his mother's womb when he leaped for joy as Mary came to visit with Jesus still in Mary's womb!
 - 1. John the Baptist rejoiced that Jesus had come into the world even when they were still in their mothers' wombs! (Luke 1:41)
 - ii. Not only that, but he had already baptized Jesus and had seen the Holy Spirit descend on Him like a dove – hearing the voice of the Father – “this is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:16-17)
- b. And yet, this same John now finds himself questioning.
- c. John sits in jail because he was criticizing Herod, the ruler of that area, for taking his brother's wife in marriage... it seems John begins to wonder... or second-guess whether Jesus is the Messiah.
 - i. As John has nothing but time on his hands in prison, his confidence in Jesus required a little extra reassurance.
 - ii. So, he sends his disciples to Jesus to ask Him if He is the Savior, or if they should look for someone else.
 - 1. Just think for a moment, if John is indeed wondering if Jesus is the promised Messiah, how waiting for extended periods can cause doubt.
 - 2. Perhaps John was miserable in prison with constant suffering... and he's just questioning why or how this could be if Jesus really is supposed to usher in a new kingdom.
 - 3. In essence, John is asking Jesus if it's time to go back to the Old Testament posture of waiting... waiting for the Messiah.
- d. In response, Jesus gives John's followers all the evidence they needed... as they can look around and see the healings and restoration going on... which goes back to the prophecies from Isaiah.
 - i. Yet, Jesus also goes a little further and says, “Blessed is the one who is not offended by Me.” (v. 6)
 - 1. This word, offended, can mean to fall away, or be led into sin... so Jesus is telling everyone that they are blessed when they don't wonder about Him as the true Savior.

IV. **We are more like John than we care to admit.**

- a. All of us have spent time in prison – no, it may not be hard time in a penitentiary... but we have been in the prison of anger, loneliness, addiction, guilt, suffering, or loss.
 - i. We may ask God, “Why me?”
 - ii. We may look for another Savior, as we put all our trust in medicine, therapists, or friendships.
 - iii. We might second-guess God’s Word and His love for us... because we just don’t understand what’s going on.
 - iv. But we can be sure of what Jesus has said to us and done for us.
 - 1. Going back to taking multiple choice tests... We should never trust our second thoughts or our best guesses more than the certain answer that has been given by Jesus.
- b. The proof is right in front of John’s disciples, as God was showing them the restoration that we can all expect because the Messiah, God with us, had come to fulfill the prophecies of old.

V. **We may wonder about God sometimes**, but it’s better to think about the awesome wonder of our God.

- a. He sent Jesus to carry out the world’s most important rescue mission.
- b. All around John the Baptist, Jesus was showing forth the power of God:
 - i. A man born blind, who had never seen anything meets Jesus, and he is given the gift of sight.
 - 1. “Once I was blind, but now I can see.”
 - 2. He now worships Jesus... rejoicing and giving thanks! (John 9)
 - ii. A woman was caught in adultery, and another was a sinful woman.
 - 1. Jesus came into their lives, and everything changed.
 - 2. The prostitute washes His feet with her tears and the one caught in adultery is forgiven. (John 8, Luke 7)
 - iii. A man was paralyzed and couldn’t walk. (Mark 2)
 - 1. His friends lower him through the roof on a stretcher and Jesus not only heals him so he can walk again, but Jesus forgives his sins too!
 - iv. Another man was deaf and mute, and Jesus looked into heaven and said, “Be opened!” and the man could hear and speak.
 - 1. The people who saw it were utterly astonished, and in awe and wonder they said, “He does everything well, He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.” (Mark 7:37)
- b. Yes, Jesus is God with us, as He showed everyone that He is definitely the Messiah... and we never have to wonder or second-guess while we wait.
 - i. These great signs and miracles were just a taste of what the perfection of heaven and life everlasting will be, and they were not the most important part of Jesus’ work.
 - ii. The wonder of God’s plan was that Jesus would suffer more than we can imagine, even Himself crying out in anguish to the Father.

- iii. The sin that we fall for... the doubts and second-guessing that come with our own suffering... all of that was taken upon the cross and buried in the tomb.
- c. You are a forgiven child of God... To Him, you were worth dying for... and by Him you will live forever.
- d. When second-guessing or doubts arise, you don't have to wonder... but simply consider the wonder of our God. Amen.