“You Too!” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Advent 2
December 7, 2025

I. **Matthew 3:1-12** – previously read

II. **Street preachers are almost always rejected or disliked**.

a. If you have ever been to a Blazers game or the Portland Saturday Market, many times a street preacher is standing on a platform and preaching God’s word through a megaphone or speakers.
   i. You might hear comments that the preacher is sharing Jesus the wrong way and that people will be turned off by that approach.
   ii. Others might say how annoying street preachers are, and they just want to incite people with their hate.
   iii. Sometimes an angry person will confront the preacher and try to stop him if they don’t like what they hear.

b. On occasion the preaching is not biblical, but when it is, they are proclaiming the sin that has taken over all humanity and the need to repent and believe in Jesus.
   i. The Bible says that all have sinned and fall short of God’s glory. (Romans 3:23)
      1. All people, whether they are just conceived or 100 years old… whether they seem really nice and volunteer at the local foodbank… whether they seem to have it all together with a nice family and home… they are sinners and enemies of God.
      2. You may know about this… but the people all around us have no idea that they are enemies of God without any hope for eternal life unless they repent and believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior.
      3. It sounds terrible and harsh in this season of good will and peace… this time of generosity and love.
      4. Yet, it’s the most loving thing someone can do when they truly want others to know that Jesus is not a fairy tale or just a good person... but He is the only One to bring forgiveness for our sins.

c. Getting people to realize that they are sinful can be a difficult challenge.
   i. You see, even Christians will walk around oblivious to the sins God has condemned in the Bible, or worse yet, make excuses for them.
      1. Some Christians will blatantly cheat on their taxes and blame the government for why they do it.
      2. I’ve seen other Christians fall for the saying, “love is love,” meaning that someone who wants to marry or have a relationship with someone of the same sex is ok, because God is love.

3. Or how about the Christian who is so kind and caring to their church friends, but screams obscenities at their employees or writes terrible things to people online?
4. Others will nod and shake their heads in agreement when the pastor condemns using pornography, or being a jerk to your wives, or rebelling against authority… and then they go straight home and do those things… assuming the pastor must have meant someone else.

d. Warning that sin leads to destruction and death is how many people realize they fall short of God's glory… both unbelievers and Christians alike.
    i. The trouble is getting people to see the sins that God condemns are about <u>you too</u>!

III. **John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way** for Jesus and His ministry.

a. As John went out to the Jordan River, he chose an important place in the history of the Israelite people.
    i. In the Book of Joshua, God finally allows His people to enter the Promised Land… and as they went forward with the Ark of the Covenant, the waters of the Jordan were cut off so that all could pass on dry ground.

b. 1400 years later, John the Baptist is now in this same area calling the people of Israel back to their entrance to the Promised Land <u>and</u> their faith in God… because they did not believe in God anymore… they trusted in good works and their heritage as Jews… or as the children in the line of Abraham.

c. Amazingly, John knew exactly where to preach… not on the sidewalks of Jerusalem as a street preacher… but in the one place the Israelites would go out to see *him*.
    i. Now, the Pharisees and other religious leaders went out to hear John's message and to be baptized like the others… but he immediately saw that they were trusting in their own works and heritage rather than in the God who sent their Savior Jesus Christ.
    ii. John warns them to turn away from their sins and turn to the Lord… and "bear fruit in keeping with repentance" (v 8) – or <u>listen to the Father and do what He says</u>.
    iii. Time and time again the Israelites walked away from their Father and His commands, and it cost them dearly over the centuries… from the foreign powers that conquered them and dragged them into exile… to the oppression from the Romans during Jesus' time.
    iv. All of this is to say that they needed to accept the truth about their sin and brokenness – because they were pretty sure they were fine as children of the promise of Abraham.
    v. Yet, John says the axe is at the foot of the tree and judgment is coming with the Mighty One – of whom John is preparing the way.

d. John the Baptist's call to repentance was actually a call to believe… as the people of Israel had once again lost their way and their faith.

IV. **As Christians, we already have faith**, so calling us to repent does not mean to turn from our unbelief… it means we should turn from our sins.

a. When John says to bear fruit in keeping with repentance, it is listening to the Father and the Son and doing what they say in the Scripture.
    i. God has called us into a relationship with Him that makes us the people of the Promised Land… His chosen people of old… only we are in the line of Abraham not by our family tree, but by faith.
    ii. This gift is ours… not by going to the Jordan and being re-admitted into the Promised Land, but through faith in Jesus Christ.
    iii. We recognize our sins because the Ten Commandments help us to see where we are failing… failing to love God and failing to love those around us.
    iv. We recognize our sins because we attend worship regularly and hear the Word of God proclaimed, and we study the Scriptures to know God's will… and perhaps we even hear a street preacher like John and his call to repentance…as he points our way and says, "You too!"
    v. Whenever sins become evident in our lives, we acknowledge them and agree that God is absolutely right and perfect in His hatred for that sin…
        1. We recognize that His will and understanding are bigger than us, and we humbly seek His forgiveness.

b. Our pride and disobedience often push the limits with God and what He calls sin in the Bible, but in the end, He makes known that the sins we excuse and carry out without thinking… required a terrible price.

V. **Jesus the Messiah is the only answer for the consequence of sin**.

a. In God's wisdom, not ours, He chose to send the Second Person of the Trinity to come into the world in the flesh.
    i. In the Gospel of John (not John the Baptist, but the Apostle John) it says that the Word was God and that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:1; 14)
    ii. Although sin makes us enemies of God… God the Son, 100% God, yet 100% human… was the answer to sin.
    iii. As that baby grew to be a man, He was given over to the cross as a perfect sacrifice – the perfect, sinless Son of God was offered up to atone or pay for our sins.

b. When we think of the cost of our sins, it shows the great length the Father and the Son would go to restore our relationship and offer us forgiveness, life, and salvation.
    i. No sin comes with excuses when we consider Jesus.
    ii. No sin is ignored when we have the Scriptures and right teaching.
    iii. And yet, no sin can condemn us when we have our Savior.

iv. No sin can take us away from our God by grace through faith in Christ.
v. No sin is too big to be forgiven.
vi. All of this is ours because our Savior Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners… and that means… you too. Amen