**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**

**Watertown, WI**

 **“Are You the One?”**

Pastor Aaron Reseburg

Third Sunday in Advent, December 15, 2024

*Luke 7:18-35*

“Did you find everything okay?” I know that retail employees probably have to say that when you check out, but every time it happens, I wonder in my head if anyone ever says no. I can’t think of a scenario in my head where I get up to the checkout and I don’t have everything that I was going there to get. Or, if I’m struggling to find something, I will always go and find someone walking around who can help me. I’ve never just given up and went to the checkout without finding what I am looking for.

Our reading for this week is centered around looking for something. John has been looking—has been waiting— for something. He has been looking for the Savior. Not only has John been looking for the Savior, but in the wilderness, he has been gathering people to himself who are also looking for the Savior.

John has gathered a following of people to himself. The people were starving for the truth; they were starving for the Messiah, so they came to John, the Son of Zechariah. He didn’t feed them a diet of pleasantries and affirmations; he gave them God’s Word. He pointed them to the coming Messiah and told them to repent. He fed them with a diet of locusts and honey.

John knew that he was not their final destination; he knew that he was waiting for another to come. John met Jesus as a baby in his mother’s womb. He baptized Christ. He saw the Spirit descend and heard the Father’s voice. Jesus was the Messiah, the promised one, the one John was looking for.

So, John sends his disciples to Christ so that they might see for themselves who He is. John had taught them; they knew what to look for, they understood the Old Testament, and they knew the words of the prophets. They come to Jesus and see what He is doing; “the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them.”

They knew what to look for, and their hopes were confirmed. Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. So, they return to John to care for him in prison. John’s days were numbered. Like the prophets before him, soon John will die because of the message he was given.

Everybody is looking for something. We all realize that the world isn’t exactly the way that we want it to be; we all realize that there is something about our lives that we don’t like. We are all looking for the solution to our problems. The problem is that we aren’t quite sure what we are looking for.

Some people think money will fix all their problems, so they spend their life trying to make more money. Some people think happiness will fix all their problems, so they spend their whole life chasing whatever makes them happy. Some people spend their lives living from vacation to vacation, spending all their money and time on those things.

Other people think their family will fix their problems. They think that maybe their kids will fulfill their lost sports dreams, that maybe if their kids have a better life than they did, it will all be worth it. People think that if they just find the right spouse, they will be happy, even if it means leaving the one God has already joined them to. Some people put all their hopes in the government and think that if we just pass the right laws, everything will be fine.

The truth is, though, that most people have no idea what they are looking for. Something isn’t right, something isn’t the way that they expected it to be, something isn’t good enough. Most people just sort of wander around going from one thing to the next, just trying to survive.

Dear Christians, none of these should be us. We should not be lost; we have been taught the Word of God. We know the Bible. We know what God wants us to do. We should know what we are looking for, and yet, too many times this is us. Too many times we act like we don’t know what we are looking for. Too many forget that everything we need is right here. Right here, in this building, is the answer to all your problems. Jesus is right here.

Jesus is here, and He is here to give you everything you need and more for this life and for the next. It is here and here alone in his Word and Sacrament that you receive forgiveness of your sins and life everlasting. But even more than that, it is here that He gives your life meaning. I think that a search for meaning in life is really what most people are looking for.

We want to feel like we matter, we want to feel important, we want to feel like someone notices us and cares. Here in church, you matter, you are important, you are seen and cared for. You don’t matter here because of what you’ve done, how much money you have given, or how many people you have helped. Here in the Divine Service, you matter because Christ died for you.

Christ looked at you and decided that you mattered. He decided that you were worth dying on the cross for. God has brought you into His own family; you are a child of God. If you are looking for meaning and purpose in your life, then look no further. Here before His altar, you have found it. God has brought you into Himself, and Christ’s mission to seek and save the lost is now your mission.

There isn’t a checkout line waiting for us, but there is a time when our searching will be over. One day, the time to look for Jesus will be over. There won’t be anyone at the end giving you another chance. On that day, it will be too late for those who have looked for all the wrong things. But those who have looked for Jesus, those who have rested in Him and put their trust in Him, those who have who have set aside the things of this world, those who have laid their whole life at His feet will find more life and joy than can be imagined.

In the name of Jesus, Amen.