



## Gospel Lk 3:10-18

*What, then, must we do?*

When all the people asked John, 'What must we do?' he answered, 'If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same.' There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and these said to him, 'Master, what must we do?' He said to them, 'Exact no more than your rate.' Some soldiers asked him in their turn, 'What about us? What must we do?' He said to them, 'No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!'

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.' As well as this, there were many other things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them.

## Reflection by Greg Sunter

Is it any wonder that there was a growing sense among the people that John might be the Christ? His teaching in the first part of this week's gospel might just as easily have come from the mouth of Jesus. It demonstrates for us just how much John was preparing the way for Jesus: even his teaching was in line with what Jesus would later say. In this instance, the people gathered around John (presumably having been baptised by him) are asking how they should live out their new-found conversion of heart. John's response to the three groups is about the need for generosity and justice. It is about not taking more than your share when someone else does not have sufficient. To the crowd of people, he instructs them to give away a second tunic to someone who doesn't have one at all and to share their food with those who are hungry. To the tax collectors, he cautioned them to collect no more than what they were supposed to. Tax collectors made their profit by overcharging taxpayers. Together with the fact that they worked for the Roman occupiers, this made tax collectors one of the most despised groups in society. John's caution to them is to be just in their dealings. He also cautions the soldiers against intimidation and extorting money from the people to supplement their pay. The themes of justice and hospitality that will echo throughout the gospel of Luke are clearly evident in this episode with John. When the people start to talk about him being the Christ, John is quick to point them to the one who is still to come; the one who will share with them more fully the love of God and the fire of the Holy Spirit.

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# The Living Word

Third Sunday of Advent, Year C

12 December 2021

## First Reading Zep 3:14-18

*With gladness the Lord will rejoice over you.*

Shout for joy, daughter of Zion,  
Israel, shout aloud!  
Rejoice, exult with all your heart,  
daughter of Jerusalem!  
The Lord has repealed your sentence;  
he has driven your enemies away.  
The Lord, the king of Israel, is in your  
midst;  
you have no more evil to fear.  
When that day comes, word will come to  
Jerusalem:

Zion, have no fear,  
do not let your hands fall limp.  
The Lord your God is in your midst,  
a victorious warrior.  
He will exult with a joy over you,  
he will renew you by his love;  
he will dance with shouts of joy for you  
as on a day of festival.

## Responsorial Psalm

Is 12:2-6 R. v.6

*(R.) Cry out with joy and gladness:  
for among you is the great and  
Holy One of Israel.*

1. Truly, God is my salvation,  
I trust, I shall not fear.  
For the Lord is my strength, my song,  
he became my saviour.  
With joy you will draw water  
from the wells of salvation. (R.)

2. Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to  
his name!  
Make his mighty deeds known to the  
peoples!  
Declare the greatness of his name. (R.)
3. Sing a psalm to the Lord  
for he has done glorious deeds,  
make them known to all the earth!  
People of Zion, sing and shout for joy  
for great in your midst is the Holy One  
of Israel. (R.)

## Second Reading Phil 4:4-7

*The Lord is near.*

I want you to be happy, always happy in  
the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your  
happiness. Let your tolerance be evident  
to everyone: the Lord is very near. There is  
no need to worry; but if there is anything  
you need, pray for it, asking God for it with  
prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of  
God, which is so much greater than we can  
understand, will guard your hearts and your  
thoughts, in Christ Jesus.

## Gospel Acclamation Is 61:1 (Lk 4:18)

*Alleluia, alleluia!*

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;  
he sent me to bring Good News  
to the poor.*

*Alleluia!*