



December 16, 2018 Third Sunday of Advent Lectionary: 9 Gospel LK 3:10-18

The crowds asked John the Baptist, "What should we do?" He said to them in reply, "Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He answered them, "Stop collecting more than what is prescribed." Soldiers also asked him, "And what is it that we should do?" He told them, "Do not practice extortion, do not falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages." Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize 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 with unquenchable fire." Exhorting them in many other ways, he preached good news to the people.

Spiritual Reflection: *What did you go out to the desert to see? What are you looking for?* Jesus' question takes on particular urgency in the Advent of our lives: As we struggle to make ends meet, have the means become an end in themselves? Has the love and support of family and friends become just another asset? Are we satisfied merely with learning and achievement that we can list on our resumes or do we want to learn and become truly educated human beings? John's call to transform our lives in the things of God and Jesus' Gospel of humble compassion certainly resonate in our broken hearts and despairing spirits - but are we willing to take on the hard work of conversion and re-creation? May we rediscover in this holy season what we want are lives to be for and, with the Messiah's grace, continue that work of re-creation in every season of our lives.

Spiritual Question:

1. Why do you commit your favorite sin?
2. How do you see yourself in relationship to God?
3. What do your actions reveal to others about your relationship with Jesus.
4. What do you want Jesus to do in your life today?
5. What prevents you from truly believing?