

Message Notes
Christmas amidst everyday life

Scripture Passages
(taken from the New International Version)

Financial update

Worship 3.0 update

SERMON SERIES

The Best Way to Spread
Christmas Cheer

Today's message:

Experiencing this season of
Christmas amidst everyday life

Luke 3:1-2
Everyday life in the 1st century

Luke 3:3-6
Isaiah and John's message

Luke 3:7-9
"Me?" "Yes, you!"

Luke 3:10-14
In everyday life, act in unexpected ways

Luke 3:15-17
There is a greater one coming

Luke 3:18-20
None greater than John. Really?

How are we to spread Christmas
cheer amidst everyday life?

Luke 3:1-20
1 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar – when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Tracónitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene – 2 during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 3 He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 4 As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.' 5 Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. 6 And all people will see God's salvation." 7 John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 9 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." 10 "What should we do then?" the crowd asked. 11 John answered, "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same." 12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?" 13 "Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them. 14 Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely – be content with your pay." 15 The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. 16 John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." 18 And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them. 19 But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, 20 Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison.

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LAST DAY!



The Best Way To Spread Christmas Cheer

Christmas
Sermon
Series







Experiencing this season of Christmas amidst everyday life



John the Baptist



Buddy the Elf

They were eccentric in their choice of clothes.



John the Baptist



Buddy the Elf

They were eccentric in their
choice of clothes.

They had unique circumstances
surrounding their births.



John the Baptist



Buddy the Elf



John the Baptist

They were eccentric in their
choice of clothes.

They had unique circumstances
surrounding their births.

They had unique diets.



Buddy the Elf



John the Baptist

They were eccentric in their
choice of clothes.

They had unique circumstances
surrounding their births.

They had unique diets.

They represented
someone else.



Buddy the Elf

Everyday life in the 1st century

Luke 3:1-2

¹ In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar – when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene – ² during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

Who is John the Baptist?

Luke 1:76-80

⁷⁶ “And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, ⁷⁷ to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, ⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven ⁷⁹ to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.” ⁸⁰ And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

Isaiah and John's message

Luke 3:3-6

³ He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

⁴ As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. ⁶ And all people will see God's salvation.' "

“Me?” “Yes, you!”

Luke 3:7-9

⁷ John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ⁹

The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

Like John the Baptist, Advent (i.e. the Christmas season) is out of phase with its time, with our time. It encroaches upon us in an uncomfortable way, making us feel somewhat uneasy with its stubborn resistance to Christmas cheer...In all four gospels, John the Baptist sets the tone for the proclamation of Jesus Christ. His language is apocalyptic (i.e. end of the world like); it signifies the arrival of God. Even if we thought we could fit the baby Jesus into our scheme of things at Christmastime, there is no way to get rid of the recalcitrant figure of John the Baptist announcing “the wrath to come.”

~ Fleming Rutledge, John the Baptist Points to the Real Hope of Advent,
https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2018/december/fleming-rutledge-john-baptist-points-real-hope-advent.html?utm_source=connection.html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=2490011&utm_content=622021271&utm_campaign=email



In everyday life, act in unexpected ways

Luke 3:10-14

¹⁰ “What should we do then?” the crowd asked. ¹¹ John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.” ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?” ¹³ “Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them. ¹⁴ Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?” He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely — be content with your pay.”

For Christian faith not to be idle in the world, the work of doctors and garbage collectors, business executives and artists, stay-at-home moms or dads and scientists needs to be inserted into God's story with the world. That story needs to provide the most basic rules by which the game in all these spheres is played.

Miroslav Volf

There is a greater one coming

Luke 3:15-17

¹⁵ The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. ¹⁶ John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

The extremely odd thing about Advent, in spite of its reputation as a season of preparation for Christmas, is that its emphasis really does not fall on the coming of Jesus as a baby in Bethlehem, but rather on the coming of Jesus as the Judge of all things at the end of time... Why do all four Evangelists introduce their gospels with John the Baptist? What is the purpose of making everyone's hair stand on end during Advent? It has occurred to me that the image of Jesus as the cosmic Judge who will ultimately come again to put an end to all sin and wickedness forever is not so frightening to the poor and oppressed of the earth as it is to those who have a lot to lose.

~ Fleming Rutledge, *John the Baptist Points to the Real Hope of Advent*



Even today, John the Baptist's lonely, austere style of life bears witness to a reality that is coming, a reality that will expose all worldly realities, all earthly conditions, all human promises as fraudulent and transitory. His appearance on the scene at this time of year exposes our pretensions for what they really are. Never have we needed him more!

~ Fleming Rutledge, John the Baptist Points to the Real Hope of Advent



None greater than John. Really?

Luke 3:18-20

¹⁸ And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them. ¹⁹ But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, ²⁰ Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison.

How are we to spread Christmas cheer
amidst everyday life?

This means that we are being changed. It means we are going to be weaned away from our possessions and oriented toward being everlastingly possessed by the love of God. It means that we will become less interested in receiving personal blessings for ourselves and more interested in making Christian hope known to those “dwelling in darkness” (Matt. 4:16). It means that we will become more and more thankful as we become less and less self-righteous. It means that we will gradually become less preoccupied with our own privileges and prerogatives and gradually see ourselves more and more in solidarity with other human beings who, like us, can receive mercy only from the hand of God and not because of any human superiority.

