



An exposition on Sunday's Gospel Reading: Matthew 11:2-11

presents a crucial moment of transition and clarification regarding the roles of John the Baptist and Jesus, challenging the expectations of the time.

In verses 2-6, imprisoned for his preaching, John the Baptist sends his disciples to Jesus with a direct, poignant question: "Are you the one who is to come or are we to wait for another?". John was likely doubting. John's vision of the Messiah involved swift, fiery judgment, but Jesus' ministry appeared much different, focused on service and healing rather than wrath or political upheaval.

Jesus' response does not offer a theological declaration but points to his actions as fulfilment of prophetic scripture, particularly Isaiah. He tells the disciples: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them". Jesus concludes with a subtle caution: "And blessed is anyone who does not fall away on account of me".

In vs 7-11, after John's disciples leave, Jesus speaks to the crowds about John, dispelling any notion that John was a fickle or weak figure. He emphasizes John's steadfastness and his vital identity as "much more than a prophet". Jesus identifies John as the specific messenger foretold in the Old Testament, the one sent to prepare the way for the Messiah.

In a profound statement, Jesus declares: "Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist". John bridges the Old and New Testaments, marking the end of the age of prophetic anticipation and the beginning of the Kingdom era.

Yet, Jesus adds a paradox: "Yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he". This highlights that those who have the full revelation of Christ through his death and resurrection, and who participate in his restorative ministry, possess a greater understanding and a more complete experience of God's Kingdom than John did in his time of preparation.

The whole passage is about the nature of the Kingdom of God and the challenge of aligning human expectations with divine reality. True faith involves "seeing and hearing" God at work in unexpected ways, especially among the marginalized, and participating in that redemptive work. The Kingdom is present in Jesus' acts of healing and proclamation, even if its ultimate completion is yet to come.

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Thursday 11th 10.30am Gentle Exercise Group meet in the parish centre

Thursday 11th 12pm Private Booking in the parish centre

Friday 12th 8am—11.30am Christmas Tree Festival set up in the parish centre

Friday 12th 12pm Private Booking in the parish centre

Saturday 13th 11am Christmas Tree Festival in church and parish centre

Sunday 14th 10am Holy Communion in church and on Zoom; ID 820 0369 6332 (password from Qyan)

Sunday 14th 12pm Christmas Tree Festival in church and parish centre

Monday 15th 10am Private Booking in the parish centre

Monday 15th 10.45am Oaklands School Visit to the church

Monday 15th 2pm Monday Meet meet in the parish centre

Tuesday 16th 9am Private Booking in the parish centre

Tuesday 16th 10.45am Oaklands School Visit in church

Tuesday 16th 1.30pm Oaklands School Visit in church

Tuesday 16th 7.30pm Lily House Bereavement Group church & parish centre

Wednesday 17th 1pm Lunch Club Christmas Meal in the parish centre

Thursday 18th 10.30am Gentle Exercise Group in the parish centre

Thursday 18th 12pm Private Booking in the parish centre.

Thursday 11th & 18th 10am—12 noon Open Church

Thursday 11th & 18th 10am Holy Communion (BCP, said)



Revd Canon Matthew Bradbury will preside and preach at Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion on Thursdays 11th & 18th December at 10am. Refreshments will be served following the service. All are welcome.



Revd (Fr) Canon Dr Stephen Foster will preside and preach at our service of Holy Communion this Sunday 14th December at 10am. We are delighted to welcome him back. Refreshments will be served after the service in the parish centre.

ST. DENYS CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL THIS WEEKEND! A vital fundraiser for St. Denys and LOROS. This Saturday 11am—5pm and Sunday 12—4pm. Festive refreshments, hamper for the 'best' tree judged by the Mayor and separately, a 'People's' best tree! Do bring your family and friends along to admire the hard work and creativity put in by so many people to enhance your Christmas season! A short time of informal carol singing will take place in St. Denys, on Sunday at 4pm, to conclude the festival.



Readings for Sunday 14th December: Isaiah 35 vs 1-10; Matthew 11 vs 2-11

A Dementia Friendly Carol Service will take place at Leicester Cathedral on Monday 15th December, 2pm-3.30pm. This will be an informal service for anyone, including those living with dementia, their carers and families. Refreshments will be served at the end of the service. All welcome.

Compline via Zoom will take place on Tuesday 16th December, 8pm, led by Revd Mark Batchelor, our former Curate. Zoom ID: 820 0369 6332. Contact Qyan for the Pin number required (same as Sunday worship) All welcome.

The Late Suzanne Watson All who knew Suzanne are welcome to attend her funeral service taking place on Wednesday 17th December, 10.30am at Great Glen Crematorium. It will be led by Revd Nigel Rostock, a Curate at St. Denys in the past. **Please wear a splash of colour, black is not required!** Afterwards, all are invited to the wake being held at:

Café Ventoux, Rugby Orchards, Wood Lane, Rugby LE7 9WE



Friends of Evington and Best Community Charity are holding a Christmas lunch on Wednesday 17th December, 1pm in the parish centre. This is a free, inclusive event open to everyone. Join them for this friendly, festive celebration. All welcome! Please note that:

Booking is essential to ensure that enough Christmas dinners are provided. Tel: 07910 431044/0116 2204 525 or e-mail: friendsofevington1@gmail.com

Carol Singing will take place on Wednesday 17th December in the Cow and Plough pub at 7pm, led by Chris Hossack. We are hoping as many people as possible from St. Denys will join him on this festive occasion.

Unwanted Ramakin Jars Needed! If you have any clean, small ramakins that you don't want, Kimberley can make good use of them to make candles. Please bring them to church on a Sunday morning. With many thanks.

Invitation to Sing If you would like to take part in the Christmas Choir being formed for the Candlelit 9 Lessons and Carols service on 21st December, please contact Qyan. More singers of all voice parts would be lovely.





Christmas Services

Christmas Tree Festival - Saturday 13th December 11am-5pm and Sunday 14th December 12pm-4pm

Night Prayer (Compline) - Tuesday 16th December on Zoom 8pm Zoom ID: 820 0369 6332, Pin from Qyan (same as weekly Sunday worship)

Carol Singing - Wednesday 17th December at Cow and Plough, 7pm

Blue Christmas - Saturday 20th December 10am-12pm

Candlelit 9 Lessons and Carol Service - Sunday 21st December 6pm

Crib & Christingle Service - Wednesday 24th December at 4pm

Midnight Holy Communion Service - Wednesday 24th December at 11.15pm

Christmas Day Family Service/Holy Communion - Thurs 25th Dec at 10am

Collect for the Third Sunday in Advent God for whom we watch and wait, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son: give us courage to speak the truth, to hunger for justice, and to suffer the cause of right, with Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Pray for those known to us personally, who are suffering from long term health conditions.

Also pray for the sick: Joan Ackland, Karen Dawes, Ann Dixon, Morag and Ron Maund, Isobel Thorpe, Richard Williams.

Pray for those who mourn including the family and friends of Sandra Morris, Suzanne Watson



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St. Denys website, including the Giving Links for Church and

Youth Work: www.stdens.org.uk

