

An rfour.org Children's Time Message

For more information visit rfour.org/childrenstime.html

Written for December 11, 2022

Third Sunday in Advent

Lectionary Year A

Scripture: [Matthew 11:2-11](#) [**Summary:** *John the Baptist Helped Jesus*]

Supplies Needed: One building block per child is needed. Jenga blocks work well.

ASK (a.k.a *The On-Ramp*)

- Good morning!
- I'm going to give each of you a block
- Here you go. Does everyone have a block?
- OK, I want you to make the tallest building that you possibly can with your one block.
- Ready? Set...Go!
- *[Wait 3 seconds for the kids to stand their block on its end]*
- Alright. So how did you do?
- I hate to say this, but a lot of your buildings look the same.
- How might you be able to make a larger or different-looking building?
- Maybe by working together – that sounds like an idea worth trying, don't you think?
- *[give them a few moments to construct their buildings]*
- Very good! Those are some fine looking buildings...
- Because you worked with someone else, you were able to make something bigger and more interesting than you made on your own.
- But, in doing so, you can no longer call this your very own building.
- You now have to share this building with your co-builders.
- Are you ok with that?

TELL (a.k.a. *The Freeway*)

- In today's story, we hear that John the Baptist is in prison. And things are not looking good for him.
- In fact, he will never get out of prison. He will die in prison.
- The reason he is in prison is because he was telling people, including the king, that they were not living God's better way. And, that there was someone coming (Jesus), who would show them how to live God's better way.
- This is one way that John helped Jesus. By preparing the people to listen to Jesus.
- But now that he is in prison, John is asking Jesus if he, John, did the right thing.
- Jesus responds to John's question with what we would call good news.
- Jesus says, "The blind can see, the lame can walk, the sick are healed!" In other words, the world is better because John helped Jesus share God's healing and better way with the world.
- But, although the world is better in general, the world is NOT better for John. In fact, it's WORSE for John.
- John helped Jesus share a better understanding of God with the people, but lost his own freedom because of it.
- If we think about our opening building activity, John helped Jesus build a bigger, better building, but in so doing, he lost his own building.

SHARE the Good News (a.k.a. *The Destination*)

- The Good News is always that God's love, grace, mercy, healing and abundance is available for us.
- And, after we receive the Good News, then we'll want to share it (because it is *sooooo* GOOD!).
- This, however, does not always mean that good things will happen to us, personally when we share the good news.
- What is true, though, and what we see with John in today's story, is that when we pay attention to God and share what we have received from God, then we are helping the world see and know how God's way is the better way to live for ALL of us.
- And that is the Good News for today – let's pray.
- This is a repeat-after-me prayer.

CLOSING Prayer

Dear God,

Dear God,

Thank you for John and Jesus.

Thank you for John and Jesus.

Because of them, we know more about you.

Because of them, we know more about you.

Help us to do the same thing...

Help us to do the same thing...

...for those who are around us.

...for those who are around us.

Thank you and Amen.