



SEASON OF
ADVENT
STUDY GUIDE
CANDLELIGHT EDITION!

Sermon Title: “#QTNA (Questions That Need Answers)”

1. READ

Dr. Yolanda Pierce’s Scripture: Luke 7 : 17 – 28 New Revised Standard Version (NKJV)

¹⁷ This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.

¹⁸ The disciples of John reported all these things to him. So John summoned two of his disciples ¹⁹ and sent them to the Lord to ask, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ²⁰ When the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?’” ²¹ Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind. ²² And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. ²³ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

²⁴ When John’s messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ²⁵ What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. ²⁶ What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ²⁷ This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

²⁸ I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

Further Reading: Matthew 3 : 13 – 17 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

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2. REFLECT

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As we gather this evening for our Candlelight Service, many of us are eagerly awaiting Christmas morning. In addition to the merriment of the holiday season, we as believers are given the opportunity to stop and celebrate the most important gift of all – *the birth of baby Jesus!* Although we find ourselves in unprecedented times and this Christmas may look completely different than we expected, we are encouraged to remember the true meaning of this time. God loved us so much, that He sent his son to Earth to intervene on our behalf. This is an important reminder as we bring a difficult year to a close. No matter where we find ourselves or what our circumstances may be, God will always intervene on our behalf.

Merry Christmas Kingdom Fellowship!

This evening, we had the privilege of hearing a dynamic and powerful word from Rev. Dr. Yolanda Pierce, the Dean of Howard University School of Divinity. In her message for today entitled “#QTNA (Questions That Need Answers),” we were encouraged to reflect on a vital question that is central to the story of Jesus. In our scripture for this week (Luke 7:17-28), John



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the Baptist sends his disciples to ask Jesus, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” This question is important because as we know, those in the ancient world were desperately awaiting a savior. They were very familiar with the many prophecies and scriptures that indicated His impending arrival, so where was He? However for us, this question is what makes the Christmas season so special, because we don’t have to wait for the answer. We already know that through the birth of Jesus, we were sent *the one* we have been looking for all along.

And yet, this scripture also reminds us that as Christians there are times that we may encounter doubt. John the Baptist spent his life faithfully proclaiming the messiah’s coming and even recognized Jesus from inside his mother’s womb. Not to mention, he heard the voice of God say: “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased,” when he baptized Jesus. After witnessing all of this, why would John still need more proof that Jesus was *the one*? Perhaps as he began to grow weary in prison, John’s situation caused him to question the very things that he already knew. As Dr. Pierce mentions, “what do you do when your expectation of who God is, meets the reality of your circumstance?” When your circumstance does not match your expectation, it is easy to let fear, doubt, and worry creep in.

However, the good news is that for every question there is an answer. Jesus sends a word back to John that verifies His identity. He tells them to, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.” Interestingly enough, instead of answering the question with “Yes, I’m the one” or “No, try someone else,” Jesus essentially says, “**I can show you better than I can tell you.**” He allows his actions to speak louder than his words. I am sure that when John heard this description of Jesus and when he heard about the miracles Jesus was performing, it was easier for him to trust that Jesus was the messiah. In addition, this most likely was a reminder to John of all of the things he has seen, heard, and witnessed that proved Jesus was *the one*.

In the same way, during this Advent season we are encouraged to confidently rely on what we have seen, heard, and witnessed in our own lives. We can remember the birth of Jesus as the miraculous event that transformed our relationship with our creator and forever set us free. And yet, Dr. Pierce leaves us with a question that is important for us to ask ourselves. What if Jesus was to turn the question around? Instead of us asking Him, what if He was to ask us, “**Are you the one?**” Are *you* the one I have created and called for this moment to meet the needs of my people? Are *you* the one that I have blessed and elevated to feed the hungry and care for the sick? Are *you* the one I have trusted to serve my people with justice, mercy, and compassion? Family, Advent isn’t just about the arrival of Baby Jesus, it is also the recognition that Jesus will return. And when He does, hopefully we can all say, “I can show you better than I can tell you!”

The header features a dark red background with a faint image of lit candles and pine branches. The text "SEASON OF ADVENT STUDY GUIDE" is centered in white, with "SEASON OF" in a smaller font above "ADVENT" and "STUDY GUIDE" below it.

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3. RESPOND

Introspective Questions

- “Are *you* the one?” Are you fully operating in the gifts God has given you?
- What have you seen, heard, or witnessed the Lord do in your life that reminds you of His love for you?

Discussion Questions

- How do you think John’s imprisonment affected his confidence that Jesus was coming?
- Why do you think Jesus responded to John the way He did? Why do you think He didn’t give John a direct *yes* or *no*?