

*Nurturing Faith...
Every Day in Every Way*

December 13, 2015

Third Sunday of Advent

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Isaiah 12:2-6

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18



The Real Thing Object: Canned goods

Have you ever gone to the grocery store with your mom? Sure you have. As you walk up and down the aisles, there are hundreds of cans with food in them. How do you know what is on the inside? On the outside of the can, there is a label with a picture that shows you what is on the inside. If you pick up a can that has a picture of apples on the label, you would surely expect to find apples inside the can, wouldn't you? Of course you would. If you pick up a can with a picture of peaches on the outside, you have every reason to expect that there are peaches in the can. If you were making an apple pie and opened a can with a picture of apples on the outside, but had tomatoes inside, it wouldn't make a very good apple pie, would it?

We sometimes wear labels that tell the world that we are followers of Jesus. Some people wear a cross around their neck or a t-shirt that says, "Jesus, He's the Real Thing" Some people may have a "Honk if you love Jesus" bumper sticker on their car. When people see us displaying these Christian labels, they have every reason to expect us to be "followers of Christ." They expect us to live in such a way that it is plain to see that we really do have the love of Jesus in our heart.

When John was preaching and baptizing, many people were coming to be baptized because it was the popular thing to do. That made John very unhappy. "You are a bunch of snakes" he said. "Do you think that a little water will make you OK in God's eyes? The way you live should show that you have repented of your sins and turned to God."

John wanted people to know that labels were not important if they were not a true picture of what was on the inside. That is just as true today as it was when John was telling people of the coming Messiah.

"What should we do then?" you ask.

If God has blessed you, share it with those in need. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry. If you have two coats, give one to someone who is cold.

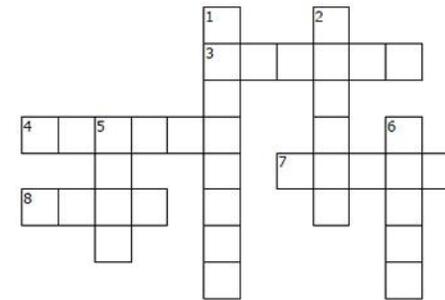
During this season of the year, a lot of people wear a button that says, "Jesus Is the Reason for the Season." Do we really believe that? If so, people should see Jesus in the way we live.

Father, we confess that we don't always live the way we should. Help us to live in such a way that others will see that we have the love of Jesus inside. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia. I am sending my messenger before you, who will prepare your way before you. Alleluia (Matt. 11:10)

Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- 3. To make a charge of wrongdoing against another person
- 4. To confess one's sin and make a change for the better
- 7. The sweet and edible part of a plant or tree
- 8. The opposite of bad

DOWN

- 1. To have water poured on one's head or to be briefly covered completely by water
- 2. Having a desire or need for food
- 5. Having little money or possessions
- 6. A small poisonous snake

BAPTIZED	REPENT	FRUIT	POOR
GOOD	HUNGRY	VIPER	ACCUSE

"LOVE IS THE REAL THING " LOOP CHAINS: Give the children small strips of colored paper (red and green) to write the names of people with whom they can share Jesus or names of family or friends they would like to pray for, and then make a loop chain to hang on the wall or on your Christmas tree.

CROSS NECKLACE: Provide the supplies for children to trace and cut a cross out of construction paper or thin foam to decorate with colored glue and stickers. Provide a plastic string or ribbon to hang the cross as a necklace.



I CAN FOLLOW JESUS BY SHARING

