



# Christmas Unwrapped!

An Advent Worship and Preaching Series

December 13th, 2009

Week 3: Luke 7:18ff.

Unwrapping God's INTIMACY

## Luke 7:21-23 (The Message)

<sup>21-23</sup>*In the next two or three hours Jesus healed many from diseases, distress, and evil spirits. To many of the blind he gave the gift of sight. Then he gave his answer: "Go back and tell John what you have just seen and heard:*

*The blind see,  
The lame walk,  
Lepers are cleansed,  
The deaf hear,  
The dead are raised,  
The wretched of the earth  
have God's salvation hospitality extended to them.  
"Is this what you were expecting? Then count yourselves fortunate!"*

This section of the Gospel of Luke anticipates the rest of chapter by introducing the theme of this section: the acceptance and rejection of Jesus and John. What is critical at this point is this: What does one think of Jesus?

Two possible stumbling blocks exist: First, the obstacle could come from identifying Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah as prophesied in the OT. The miracles and teaching of Jesus identify him as this prophet/Messiah, but not all are willing to acknowledge this. The people of his hometown, Nazareth were offended because they thought they knew him too well for him to be their Savior.

Second, the obstacle could come because at his first Advent Jesus reveals himself primarily as a Messiah of mercy, compassion and forgiveness, not one of vengeance. He has come to seek, serve, and save. His ministry now is not to execute judgment, but to absorb God's wrath. (Isaiah 29 and 61). This was contrary to the popular belief, and maybe even the belief of John, that the Messiah was to execute judgment and wrath upon the enemies of God and Israel. Instead, Jesus comes in solidarity with human sinners and takes God's wrath upon himself at the cross. That's why Jesus' ministry is filled with miracles of forgiveness and release for those who are in bondage. Blessed is ANYONE who sees Jesus as the Coming One who brings mercy, compassion and forgiveness.