



# JOY

**Sunday, December 12, 2021**

*Luke 3:10-18*

John the Baptist was an impassioned and dedicated man of faith. He encourages people from all sorts of backgrounds to do what is just, care for one another, and to be courteous. When he saw wrongdoings around him, he was proactive and supportive in finding resolution. Although he was able to baptize and renew the faith of those who came to him, he also reminds them, "one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals." John embodies his role to spread the message of Jesus. However, we don't need to be a saint like John in order to spread the love and joy of God. Everyday, we are called to bring others face-to-face with God. This advent season, let us aim to be bringers of God's love and joy by being more like John the Baptist. By unconditionally showing others toward the presence of God in their lives, we also show others more joy in their lives. When we are like John, and encourage those around us to be more like Christ, we also are able to spread joy.

Brian Clark  
Class of 2023





# JOY

**Monday, December 13, 2021**

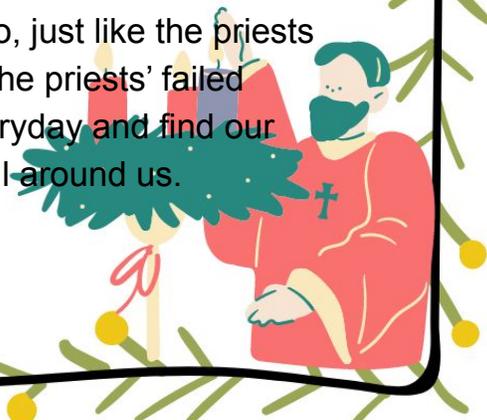
*Matthew 21:23-27*

In Matthew 21:23-27, the chief priests and elders come to Jesus, questioning his authority. They are skeptical as to who gave Jesus the authority to say the things he did, and so He says He will tell them if they can answer this question: “25 ‘Where did John's right to baptize come from: was it from God or from human beings?’” They cannot come up with an answer so Jesus does not tell them.

When I read this passage, I was filled with joy at the miraculousness of Christ's own authority. The priests were confounded by the question, but I take it as both. In much the same way, I take great joy that John's authority, and therefore Christ's, cannot be so easily questioned. This joy comes from the promises and teachings of Christ, but also from the backing that this passage lends: His authority is uncontestable and therefore so are his teachings. Especially as we move toward His birth this Advent season, I search for joy.

Happiness is all around us in our everyday, mundane blessings. As we approach Christmas, I would invite everyone to slow down and look around them: look for the reasons we do what we do, just like the priests questioned why Jesus did what he did. Learn from the priests' failed attempt so that we might succeed: question our everyday and find our answer, that joy is all around us because Christ is all-around us.

Max Hoelker  
Class of 2022





# JOY

**Tuesday, December 14, 2021**

*Matthew 21:28-32*

In this reading from Matthew's Gospel, we hear the Parable of the Two Sons. In the parable a father asks one son to go into the field and work, to which the son replies "no," but later changes his mind and decides to work. The father then asks the second son to go into the field and work, to which the son replies "yes," but then does not go into the field and work. The crowd answers to Jesus the first son did the will of the father. Jesus then draws a comparison between John coming and the tax collectors and prostitutes following, while the people saw John and ignored him and continue to ignore him. Because of that the people will not be the ones entering the Kingdom of God first, but the tax collectors and prostitutes will be. When looked at through the lens of joy or bringing joy, it is clear what we must do. To bring joy we cannot continue to ignore the Kingdom of God, but we have to accept it. Now that does not mean blindly following Jesus and asking no questions, we should do that. But, we should not ignore or turn away Him or it. How can we bring joy though? Well, especially during this time of Advent it's not too difficult, even with such challenges as Covid which may inhibit bringing joy. There are plenty of service opportunities to take part in as Christmas approaches, but even if someone has too busy of a schedule to commit to those opportunities, simply be kind. It sounds cliché, but it is true. A person does not have to do something large either, start with a friendly "Hello" or "How are you?" when passing other people. And remember this season does not last forever, but bringing joy is still needed when it's over. Advent is a superb time to develop the habit of bringing joy and continuing to do so throughout the rest of the year and the next one. Remember this parable from Matthew's Gospel and stop ignoring, but join in the Kingdom of God by spreading Joy.

Kevin Bohm  
Class of 2022





# JOY

**Wednesday, December 15, 2021**

*Luke 7:18b-23*

This reading is about a message sent from John the Baptist to Jesus, via two of John's disciples. They were sent to Jesus to ask him if John got his message correctly: that Jesus is the prophet sent down, the "one who is to come." Jesus answers them by curing many people with diseases – not in detail mind you – yet curing them nonetheless. Jesus then sent them back to John to report to him the miracles committed by Jesus, and to assure him that he shouldn't be afraid. In our day to day lives, we too have a number of fears and doubts. There have been a number of different characters in the Bible who have turned to God to ask, "what is your plan for me?" While we might not see the end result of a struggle we're stuck in, we have to know that God does see a solution in us. In fact, the joy that we can find in this passage comes from the resolution of this struggle. Just as Jesus cured the sick and helpless to soothe the nerves of John the Baptist, God too reassures us that he has a plan in place for us and that we can find happiness in this breakthrough. In particular, this passage makes me think about the famous spiritual "we shall overcome," sung during the Civil Rights Movement. A popular symbol of defiance and determination to grant equal rights to everyone in the United States, when the Civil Rights Amendment went into effect, the joy that people all across the country felt could not be more aptly captured than in the triumphant lyrics in that song. Even when in prison, whether it be John the Baptist or MLK Jr, the joy of knowing that they were following God's plan for them was empowering. Even in doubt, through Jesus, they were able to overcome. We have to remember that even when we doubt, as long as we believe in Jesus, we will find joy.

Max Morscher  
Class of 2022





# JOY

**Thursday, December 16, 2021**

*Luke 7:24-30*

The work of the Church can not be left for others while we sit idly like “reeds blowing in the wind.” Rather than passively looking for joy in modern entertainment, it is important to go out into the world around us and create joy from where none existed before. To be like John is to live a life of active service and teaching in the community. But this service can not be for show, just as the “fancy robes” were not the reason for the crowds to gather around John. The service we do must be for God and the poor, and the opinions of our peers must be cast aside. In doing so, service can transcend being a task we must do for community service. It will become a source of joy in our lives, fostering a lifetime of service and love which will last far past our time at St. Edward.

Sam Richardson  
Class of 2022





# JOY

**Friday, December 17, 2021**

*Matthew 1:1-17*

Upon reading the first 17 verses of the first chapter of Matthew I only had questions: Why is the Genealogy of Jesus Christ important and why should I care? Moreover, why is it the first thing that Matthew writes about in his Gospel? After some careful thought, I concluded that it is supposed to be a reminder to all of us that Jesus is fully human. Sometimes we forget this and in the daily struggle of life, we feel abandoned - like no one understands what we are feeling. However, Jesus felt abandoned. Jesus wept. Jesus lost friends to sickness and death. Jesus suffered and died. We are never alone. In fact, we are the furthest thing from being alone: we are loved.

Jesus experienced so much of what we do throughout his life making him the ultimate source of empathy. This advent season try to find comfort and even joy in that Jesus fully understands and cares what you are feeling in any situation. Remember that Jesus was human and is fully divine and his experiences, although two-thousand years ago, are relevant and similar to what you have and will experience. Peace.

Emmett Blakely  
Class of 2022





# JOY

**Saturday, December 18, 2021**

*Matthew 1:18-25*

Often in Scripture, the figure of Joseph is overlooked. In this passage he is described as “an upright man.” What makes him upright is not just what he is unwilling to do, namely “expose [Mary] to the law.” Rather, the most compelling thing about Joseph in this account is his willingness to trust God. He had planned to divorce her quietly, but because of his willingness (not his desire) he chose instead to surrender to God’s divine providence. And the world is a better place for it. Surrendering to God is no easy feat. Even as someone who believes in God, I find it challenging to forego my own wants and take a leap of faith, trusting in God’s plan for me. Human beings are selfish by nature, and relinquishing our perceived control over a situation to God just doesn’t fit into our programming. But there is so much joy in doing so. I’ve experienced it and I know I’m not the only one. The first step is asking. That is one of the challenges we are called to take up during this advent season.

Issac Cudnick  
Class of 2022

