



Dec. 16, 2018 Luke 3: 7-18 & Zeph. 3: 14-18

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ENTERING THE SCENE:

What ought we to do? It is interesting that only Luke includes this question in his gospel. This is the ancient question that confronts us again as we enter into this third week of preparing the way of the Lord. John asks us to look inside and discover the ways we can offer help to others in need or use our position or knowledge to ease others burdens. Pope Francis gives us a role model for how to answer the questions of our own day and time. It will be unique to each of us just as it was in John's day. Take some time this week to find your own answer to "what should I do"?

LK 3: 7-18 (Verses in italics in Revised Common Lectionary)

7 He would say to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him: "You brood of vipers! Who told you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Give some evidence that you mean to reform. Do not begin by saying to yourselves, 'Abraham is our father.' I tell you, God can raise up children

to Abraham from these stones. 9 Even now the ax is laid to the root of the tree. Every tree that is not fruitful will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

10 The crowds asked John, "What ought we to do?" 11 In reply he said, "Let the man with two coats give to him who has none. The man who has food should do the same." 12 Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what are we to do?" 13 He answered them, "Exact nothing over and above your fixed amount." 14 Soldiers likewise asked him, "What about us?" He told them, "Do not bully anyone. Denounce no one falsely. Be content with your pay." 15 The people were full of anticipation, wondering in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah. 16 John answered them all by saying: "I am baptizing you in water, but there is one to come who is mightier than I. I am not fit to loosen his sandal strap. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire. 17 His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn in unquenchable fire." 18 Using exhortations of this sort, he preached the good news to the people.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: The people ask John what they must do. He gives them concrete ways to change their responses to life's challenges. What ways am I making changes so as to be ready to receive God's unconditional love?

PRAYER: The good news of this week is that God is breaking into my world in a new way to reveal God's very self. The people in John's day ask what they must do to prepare, and I ask now what I must do to also prepare for God's coming into my life in a deeper way this Advent. Help me cut down everything that is not fruitful in my life and use the dead wood to fuel the fire of my love. Amen.