Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“Blessed is the one who takes no offense at me” (Luke 7:23).

Is 45:6c-8, 18, 21c-25; Luke 7:18b-23

John the Baptist sends messengers from his prison cell to ask Jesus if he is the one to come or should they look for another. John was apparently troubled that Jesus’ message of mercy does not match his own preaching about the coming wrath of God on sinners. Jesus sends back word to John that proof of his divine mission is that he is fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah that healing and joy would be the signs that God’s promised one has come.

Jesus’s message ends with the words: “Blessed is the one who takes no offense at me.” This special beatitude comes to those who are able to set aside their initial expectations and accept God’s surprising truth without being scandalized. Jesus came not with threats and judgment but with mercy from a loving and forgiving God.

This “good news” was welcomed by sinners but rejected by righteous people as “too good to be true.” It did not fit their expectations that sinners would be punished while they would be blessed. The blessing came instead to those able to grasp the wonder of God’s unconditional and undeserved love on everyone, especially sinners and failures.

Our joy at Christmas is first in knowing that we are among the sinners and failures who need mercy. Then, when we are open to the surprise and scandal of underserved love, we will grasp that God’s love is not something we can earn or achieve, but a pure gift. Blessed are those who accept this gift, for they in turn will be able to share it with others.

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