

3rd Week of Advent

Remember when I was little:

Star bright, Star Light	First star I see tonight
Wish I may	Wish I might
Get the wish I wish tonight	(Make a wish)

Cute – made you happy when you did it – a glimmer of joy

But you had to wait and watch for that 1st star

People of Jesus' time were waiting and watching for the Messiah

It was going to be a time of great Joy when HE came

Well -

- Today is Joy Sunday – 3rd week of Advent – Almost there!
 - Wherever God is – There is JOY – and God is among us!
 - In the midst of our day to day lives – God is there with us
 - Whether we succeed or fail God is there with us – and it is JOY to be with Him
 - Jesus comes to be with us – to lead us, singing, into eternal joy!
 - **BUT** as long as we live in the world God's joy doesn't seem to too present
We have: Suffering Crime Unemployment Sickness
WHY?
 - Because as long as we live alongside sin we are going to have problems
 - But we can endure them with joy, knowing God is with us
 - A boy & girl build a sandcastle at the beach - the tide comes in, washes it away
 - They laugh and build another
 - Same with us, in our trial, in our problems, we struggle
 - BUT don't despair – we dig in and trust in God & persevere
- **Look at John the Baptist** – Spent his life as a hermit in the desert – fasting and praying
 - When it was time he comes out of the desert with a message from God
 - REPENT – He knew it was from God – He knew it was truth – He proclaims it to everyone
 - The people come in droves
 - His disciples grow
 - Lives are changed
 - His ministry flourishes From the desert – to THIS
 - – THEN – King Herod (who also needed to repent)
 - John is in prison
 - *From Jail* John prays
 - *From Jail* John seeks God
 - *From Jail* John hears about JESUS
 - So *From Jail* John sends his disciples to Jesus
 - “Are you the messiah, or should we seek another?”
 - Jesus said “Look around, the signs of the Messiah are all around you”
 - J O Y! The Kingdom of God is at hand - REJOICE
 - That same JOY is OURS
 - The Kingdom of God is here – right here, right now!
 - REJOICE = it is Gaudete Sunday. REJOICE SUNDAY
 - The light of truth has destroyed the darkness of sin – and we are children of light