

Saint Timothy Lutheran – Edmonds, WA

October 25, 2009 – Rev. Craig A. Patterson

“To What Shall I Compare This Generation?”

(Text: Matthew 11:12-19)

Context: After John’s imprisonment, Jesus was teaching and preaching in the cities. He responded to John’s question as to whether He was the “Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?” Jesus answered by saying, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the Blind receive sight and the lame walk...and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.” Jesus was doing what had been prophesied regarding the coming Messiah. Yes, indeed He was the One. Then, Jesus spoke of John the Baptist and his role as the fulfillment of the words of the prophet Malachi, “Behold, I send My messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you” (Mal. 3:1). Finally, Jesus uses the fickle behavior of children in order to shine a light on the sinful behavior of the people toward both John and Jesus, their preferences contradicting themselves.

- I. **Like The Children Of The Parable, The People Demonstrated Their Fickle Desire To Have It Their Way, Whichever Way They Happened To Be In The Mood For.**
 - A. Imitating their elders, the children first desired to play a happy game (a wedding).
 1. When the other children across the way refused to cooperate and follow their directions, they blamed and criticized the others.
 - a. That is what the people did toward John who lived an austere and humble existence in the desert. The called John “morose and intolerable and turned from him aggrieved and disappointed” (Lenski, p. 442).
 - B. Next, the children, again imitating the grown-ups, desired to be serious and desired to play a sad game (a funeral).
 1. When their mates would not play with them and be controlled by them, they complained and whined that they could not have it their way.
 - a. That is how they treated Jesus when He, instead, fellowshipped with sinners. They complained and called Jesus a “winebibber” and a “glutton.”
 - C. How do people display this ‘I want to have it my way’ attitude today?
 1. When it comes to seeking the answers to the issues of life (Why are we here? Why do people die? Why is their evil? Is there life after death? Is there going to be an accounting that we must give to an Almighty God?, etc.), what was the trend 50 years ago, 20 years ago, 10 years ago, and today?
 2. What kind of religion, or no religion, are people desiring today? What will they desire tomorrow?
- II. **Jesus Is God’s Wisdom Incarnate Who Has Come To Reveal God’s Love And Mercy To Sinners Such As Us. (He Even Loves Fickle Ones Like Us.)**
 - A. John the Baptist prepared the way for the Savior, the Messiah.
 - B. Jesus fulfilled all of the promises regarding the “Expected One,” in word and in deed. (The Word made flesh, the rod of Jesse, born of a virgin, etc.)
 1. Jesus told John’s disciples to answer John’s question by reporting what Jesus was doing. (Healing and preaching Good News.)
 - C. Jesus is still doing things in our world today.
 1. The Good News of Jesus is still being proclaimed to sinners.
 2. The Gospel is still being believed (Sins are still forgiven and people are enabled to love like God loves us all.)