

When Jesus Draws Near

Biblical Texts: Isaiah 11:1-10 & Matthew 3:1-12

By Rev. Dr. Fontella Irons
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“Love”

(The following is an excerpt from the sermon. You may listen to the sermon in its entirety by clicking on the headphone button.)

When Jesus draws near lives are changed. When Jesus draws near the lost are no longer lost. When Jesus draws near orphans are no longer fatherless or motherless. When Jesus draws near demons tremble. When Jesus draws near wholeness and harmony and unity rule. When Jesus draws near love never fails. I saw that yesterday in the people who came here to the church looking for coats. You could not have known what would happen when you donated your coat or coats. You could not have known that someone would come with a tiny little girl named Deborah. She wore a very thin summer dress on December 7 and she came here with a parent looking for a coat. But when Jesus draws near lives are impacted, changed forever. That was the case yesterday. I am sure that young Deborah and her family did not leave here the same as they found just the right coats for her. No charge. Jesus paid the price.

Isaiah prophesied about this every thing. He prophesied in the passage from Chapter 11 by saying this : “a shoot shall come from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.” Isaiah gave ancient Israel a glimpse of what would happen when the Messiah drew near. When that happened, says Isaiah, “The spirit of the Lord will rest on Him...” What did Gabriel tell Mary? “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you,” (Luke 1:35).

When Jesus draws near, according to the passage in Isaiah, judgment takes place not according to what is visible with the human eye or according to what can be heard with human ears, but with righteousness — and who takes center stage? Who gets his attention? The poor. The meek. Righteousness rules the day. What’s the key to it all: repentance. John the Baptist shows us that when Jesus draws near truth is revealed and His truth — the truth of Christ — demands a response. Repentance or rejection?