

Encountering the Word

with Jeff Cavins

Third Sunday of Advent (A)

Isaiah 35:1–6a, 10 • Psalm 146:6–7, 8–9, 9–10
James 5:7–10 • Matthew 11:2–11



Do Our Actions Show Authentic Faith?

This week's readings center on authenticity—how our actions reflect the truth of our beliefs. In the Gospel Reading, John the Baptist, imprisoned and uncertain, sends his disciples to ask Jesus, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?” (Matthew 11:3). Jesus responds with more than a simple word of affirmation—he points to his works: the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor receive the Good News.

This response mirrors Isaiah 35, where God's presence is marked by transformative deeds of healing and justice. The implication is clear: Authentic faith is demonstrated through action, not merely through words. Authenticity as followers of Christ requires us to embody our faith through concrete acts of love, mercy, and service. The world will know we are Christians by the way we care for the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the marginalized. It's not enough to profess belief; our faith must bear fruit.

As we journey through Advent, let us reflect on how our actions align with our beliefs. Are we living lives that point others to Christ? Are we preparing not only our minds for his coming, but also our hearts and hands as well? By aligning our deeds with our faith, we participate in God's plan of salvation and become authentic witnesses of his love.



Living the Gospel

Jesus responded to John's question by pointing to his works: the blind see, the lame walk, and the poor hear the Good News. This Advent, reflect on your actions: Do they reveal Christ to the world? Focus on concrete acts of love and mercy—caring for the widow, the orphan, and the poor. Let your deeds be a testimony of your faith and a preparation for Christ's coming. Take this week to align your actions with the Gospel. Reflect on Isaiah 35 and Matthew 11 for inspiration.

Dive Deeper

Scan this code to watch:



Or go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dX2xIfKKo0U>

Ponder and Pray

» How do your actions reflect your faith in Christ? Consider specific ways your daily life embodies Christ's love and mercy. Are there areas where your actions could better align with your beliefs?

» When faced with uncertainty, how do you reaffirm your faith? John the Baptist sought confirmation of Jesus' identity in a time of doubt. How do you seek reassurance and remain faithful during times of spiritual questioning?

» How are you preparing your heart and life for Christ's coming during Advent? Beyond external preparations, how are you spiritually aligning your thoughts, habits, and actions to welcome Jesus authentically?

“ **Those whom the LORD has ransomed will return and enter Zion singing, crowned with everlasting joy; they will meet with joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning will flee.**

– Isaiah 35:10 ”

Make It Your Own

You and others in your household may use this space to write anything about today's Mass. It might be your view of Jeff Cavins' reflection, your priest's homily, your answers to the questions on this page—anything to help you and your household get the most out of today's Mass.