May the words of my mouth and the mediations of all our hearts, be acceptable in your sight – Our strength and our redeemer – Amen.

*“Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another”?*

So what are we looking for? Think about the many ways in which that question comes up for us.

“Is she the love of my life or is it another?” “Is this my career or should I be doing something else?” “How do I know God’s will for my life; is it this or is it that?” “Did I make the right decision or should I have chosen differently?” Those examples describe our searching to recognize and identify God with us. They reveal our desire to align our lives with the kingdom.

Beneath John’s question and all other those questions, is the longing to know our selves, to be fully alive, to be made whole, to be complete, to live with meaning and significance. It is not about getting the right answer but about living the right relationship with our selves, with each other, and with God.

Jesus does not say to John, “Yes, I’m the guy.” John will have to decide that for himself. So do we. Jesus rarely provides a direct answer. More often than not he answers a question with another question. What do you hear and see? Look around. Pay attention. Watch and listen.

Jesus is not denying us anything. He just won’t let himself be historicized, categorized, or localized. The one who is more powerful cannot be confined or limited by time and space. The Messiah brings life not an answer to a question. So instead of giving John a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer, Jesus describes what to look for, how to recognize the kingdom. For the blind the kingdom comes as sight, for the lame as walking, for lepers as cleansing, for the deaf as hearing, for the dead as rising, and for the poor as good news.

Let’s open our eyes to see the fruit of the kingdom and the strength of the one who is more powerful than us. So, what do you hear and see? Look around. Pay attention. Watch and listen. Have you ever had new insights into your life, discovered beauty in a place or person you thought it couldn’t be, seen new opportunities and possibilities for your life? Then you know the blind receive sight and the kingdom of heaven has come near.

Have you ever felt yourself crippled by grief and loss, depression, or addiction to the point you just can’t move? You feel as if you can’t go on? Then one day something happens you take a step, and another, and another. It may be slow but you are moving and you can see change and progress. The lame walk and the kingdom of heaven has come near.

Remember those times when you just couldn’t get comfortable in your own skin? Maybe it was shame or guilt. It seemed as if everyone saw it and pointed it out. You had no place of belonging. Then one day you experienced forgiveness and you discovered the original beauty of your creation. You accepted that you were acceptable. If you know what that’s like then you know lepers are cleansed and the kingdom of heaven has come near.

Have you ever heard a new truth about your life, the soft voice of love, or the silence that speaks of intimacy and presence? Have you heard a cry for justice or help and responded with prayer, action, compassion? Then you know the deaf hear and the kingdom of heaven has come near.

How about those times in life when it seems a part of you has died? Maybe it is a relationship, a dream, or a loved one. You feel incomplete, numb, broken. Something is missing. One day you sense a new vitality. There is energy and enthusiasm. Life, though changed and different, has returned. In those times the dead are raised and the kingdom of heaven has come near.

Sometimes it seems as if we have nothing left to give. We are empty. There are no resources or reserves. We cannot do it on our own and we face our own poverty. We are poor and in need of good news. Someone speaks a word of hope, encouragement, or love. Those are words of good news that reveal the kingdom of heaven has come near.

These and so many more are the moments of our life when we recognize the coming one, when we see and know that the kingdom of heaven has already come near to us, brushed against us and changed us. These are the moments of our anointing, to share in the life and work of the Messiah, to participate in the kingdom of heaven, to take our place as members of the Body of Christ. They are moments of recognition. We recognize Jesus, the one who is to come, and in him we recognize our selves.

So tell me, what do you hear and see? Look at your life and recognize the one who is to come. Amen.