

Each of today's readings has some poignant passages worthy of considerable reflection.

ISAIAH

- "Here is your God...He comes to save you."

JAMES

- "Be patient until the coming of the Lord."

MATTHEW

- "Are you the one to come, or should we look for another?"

Isaiah is telling his readers, "Fear not, be strong, for here is your God." And why is God "here"? "He comes to save you."

Perhaps, we do not often enough realize the enormous love of God for each of us. God came here (on earth) to save us. God is here. God is near. God is with us. God is among us. God is present. Are we present to Him?

What does James mean when he exhorts us to be patient? Patience involves and expectant waiting without frustration (impatience). For what are we to be patient? James answers "for the coming of the Lord". But that, certainly, is not a singular event. He comes to us in our inspirations. He comes to dwell within us. We do not deserve and cannot merit all the many blessings He bestows on us. Each blessing is a manifestation of His coming within us. We may want more. We desire more. We long for the fullness of His coming within us.

When James exhorts us to be patient, it is not an inactive patience in which we do nothing, our active patience seeks His will to be done in and by us. We do all expecting the fullness of His coming within us in patient awaiting.....

Matthew writes that John the Baptist sent his disciples to Jesus to ask a specific question "Are you the one to come or should we look for another." John the Baptist certainly knew who Jesus was. He met Him at the Jordan, and even proclaimed Him to be the Lamb of God. John did not need the answer for himself but for his disciples.

Jesus did not answer their question directly but told them to pay attention to what they see and hear. Look at what happened to the blind, the lame, the lepers and the dead. Listen to what the crowds are saying.

Did the disciples go back to John and report what Jesus said? Or did they recognize that Jesus was the true Messiah and decided to stay with Him.

It is up to us to be like the disciples and recognize all that Jesus said and did and not just recognize His words and actions but to reflect on them frequently, so as to follow Him more closely.