

Emotional Response to Life Second Week of Advent Friday, December 15, 2017 8:15 AM Is 48:17-19; **Mt 11:16-19** (Not let circumstances dictate how I feel, and surely not being contrary.)

“But wisdom is vindicated by her works.”

This little story that Jesus tells is actually about **how contrary we can be. It centers on our emotional response to life.** Life is full of possibilities, and many of them are, shall we say, negative; that is, they can cause pain and suffering—that’s just part of life. But there’s also joy. **Jesus’ way of living is to accept everything.** When the day is beautiful, to enjoy the day; when it’s not, to accept the darkness, the drear, the misery, if you will, not picking and choosing, **not letting circumstances dictate how I feel, and surely not being contrary.**

Now this idea of being contrary is really the exact focus of today’s reading, because children can be very contrary: whatever it is, they don’t want it. They are not happy. Now of course children cannot be aware of themselves to a great degree, and they’re not yet able to discipline themselves. But **adults, although we are able to be aware of ourselves and we are able to discipline ourselves, we often don’t. We don’t focus. We let circumstances dictate to us how we feel, how we react.**

So there are moments for dancing; and when there are moments for dancing, we should dance. And there are moments for mourning; and when there are moments for mourning, we should mourn, and not simply refuse to enter into life because we don’t like it or it doesn’t suit us or we are just out of sorts. **We have to engage.**

And speaking of engaging, of course now he is referring to the fact—this is all about something else of course; it’s about how **John the Baptist came with the message of renewal and purification and reform, and the people said that man is crazy,** which is what it means to say a person has a demon. It means a person is no longer or truly sane. But then **Jesus comes welcoming the downtrodden, the sinner, the broken, the outcast, and they don’t accept that either.** That’s the point.

We make choices and very often our choices are dictated by our feelings, and they’re not very good choices. We have to focus deliberately. We have to discipline our feelings. And **we have to look at every day to see what good is in it, and what message comes from God in it, and how we might quite voluntarily respond to it.**