

November 30 2025 First Sunday of Advent
Dunn's Corners Community Church

I have always felt that the stories in the scriptures become more meaningful when the people in them are understood to be real people. This sermon is how I imagine John might have felt as he was beginning his ministry.

Rev. Dr. Mobby Larson

“Crying in the Wilderness”

There's something about sitting out here in the dark, looking at the stars above... I almost feel more at home here than anywhere else. It's dark...quiet...peaceful...a precious time by myself to think and to wonder, to try to put life into perspective.

What have these stars seen in the past? How many years have they been floating above us? What have they seen? Who have they seen? Who has gazed at these same stars, and what did they think about?

The world does not seem very peaceful to me right now. Days of darkness, like a heavy cloak, have been settling upon us all, growing darker and heavier with each year.

The Romans, of course. I don't know what is going on in Rome, but the soldiers here are reminders that we are not in control of our lives. No matter how simply we try to live, they are here to enforce taxes, laws we don't agree with, even where we can go and what we can do. The people of the land are struggling hard enough just trying to survive and raise their own families.

And then, we see the hypocrisy of our own leaders, who seem to be more motivated by keeping peace with Rome than obeying the law of Moses. But even the ancient rituals and religious laws themselves have lost their meaning and their truth. The laws are not bringing us closer to God, or to

the messages of the prophets. God's word was meant to teach us ways to live together in peace, to seek the good, to care for each other. Not what sacrifices to make, or how many times to wash our hands. Hah! That's a joke out here in the desert! But out here, I feel closer to God, seeing the ancient stars, breathing the air God created.

That's why I left home. My parents were older, committed to the old religion. My father was a priest in the Temple, for God's sake! Or he believed it was for God's sake. Really?? I did not want to follow in his footsteps. I loved them, but when they died, I felt set free, in a way.

I was restless. Something inside me called me away from all that I knew growing up. I don't know what it was, but I had to follow it. We all have to live our own truth. Now, I sense that something, someone is coming to break open the darkness, to bring light. It is time to wake up and be real!

I slowly started talking with people about this idea. Did they sense it, too? First, it was a couple of people when I stopped at a well. Then a few more, walking down the road—again and again. The more I shared, the more came back to me. People are thirsting for meaning, for good, for God. I couldn't name this feeling so many of us had. It was a kind of expectation, maybe a fulfillment of God's prophecies, maybe even the presence of God with us.

I became convinced—God is coming, to us, in our own time! God's presence is closer and closer. We have to be watchful, have to get ready! I need to keep sharing, so people will be ready. We've got to shake off the old ideas and stale traditions that were holding us back. We've got to turn our lives around and be ready for a clean start. What can we do? Baptism! Converts to Judaism are given a clean bath to start fresh. Maybe that's what we should do, to give us all a fresh start. I need to tell everyone, shout it from the mountaintop, invite them to the river! Something is coming, and we will be ready! We will live in that promise, that hope.

Oh stars, do you feel it too? Do you know what is coming? What do you see, and what will you see in all the ages forward?