

Mark 1:4-11

⁴ And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁶ John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I baptize you with^[a] water, but he will baptize you with^[b] the Holy Spirit."

The Baptism and Testing of Jesus

⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Talk Mark 1 4-11

A few weeks ago, I preached on the first eight verses of Mark chapter one. I wonder if you can recall what I said? Not to worry, I had a sneaky feeling that you may not remember. So, I thought of saving myself time, effort and stress and will just re-deliver my last talk! Don't worry I am not going to do that but I shall just do a quick re-cap.

I spoke about how John prepared the way for Jesus and how we may have felt about John if we met him now. I questioned, whether we would feel comfortable in his presence and then suggested that we may not want to be associated with any one that was a little different to us.

Last month during advent I suggested that we prepare ourselves for the coming of Jesus, by learning more about God by reading, praying and studying Gods word. I wanted to encourage all of us to do this to deepen our relationships with God so that we could also be amazing messengers for God and the people that we meet.

I shared with you, how I feel, Johns words can be like a sharp arrow that can pierce our hearts and if this was so then how awesome, powerful and heart piercing are Jesus' messages to us!

I described John as a person who spoke with conviction, who was probably a rough talker and straight to the point with his messages. But John also seemed humble to me as when he spoke he said, "After me comes one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie."

John was preaching a baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sins and many people listened and were baptised. John said "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ^a I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with ^b the Holy Spirit."

It still inspires me when I read that Jesus was baptised by John. It hasn't got anything to do with John. It's the fact that Jesus was Gods Son. Jesus was pure, free from sin!

So why was Jesus baptised? Well for a start back in the day when all this was happening, in the time of Jewish law a 'fact' had to be witnessed. We know ourselves know that it is so much easier to believe something if you have witnessed it with you our own eyes.

Jesus was not baptised because Jesus needed to repent of his sins, it wasn't because he needed God his Father to forgive Him.

Jesus' baptism was a public declaration of his love for God.

Can you imagine seeing this? John knew who Jesus was and could hardly believe that Jesus wanted him to baptise Jesus. The scene must have been life transforming to many of the onlookers. Just like our baptism should be to us. Some of us may not be able to recall your baptism but we say the promises that were made for us ourselves in many of the services we have.

Jesus' baptism was a public declaration of his commitment to the Father.

Jesus was showing us that we all need to be baptised and we shall do well by following and trusting in God. What an extraordinary example he was and still is.

If we sum this up Jesus baptism basically shows us that Jesus wanted to publicly declare His love and commitment for God, His Father. This is also our God and our Father. Jesus' God is our God, His Father is our Father.

At the end of our reading we can see God, Jesus' Fathers response to His baptism.

"This is my Son, whom I love: with him I am well pleased."

Could you imagine God saying to us, "This is my Son or Daughter, whom I love, with them I am well pleased."

Well, let me tell you all God does love you. I'll also take this time to tell you something else too, God is pleased with you even more so when you put him first and do what is right!

We are all God's children and He is counting on all of His children to spread His name and His love. We need to shine and bring light to those around us.

I am going to end with a bit of a legend, I don't know if you have heard it before or how old it is but....

There is an old legend which says when Jesus had ascended into heaven, the angel Gabriel asked him,

"Lord what plans have you made for carrying on your ministry in the world?

How will people learn of what you have done for them?"

Jesus responded, "I left that to Peter, James and John, Martha and Mary.

They are to tell their friends and their friends will tell other friends until the whole world has heard the good news."

Gabriel then asked, "What if Peter is so busy with his nets and Martha so full of her housework and the friends so preoccupied that they all forget to tell their friends?"

Don't you think you should make a "Plan B"

Jesus answered, "I have no Plan B."

I am counting on My Children to spread my name and my love.

Please remember that WE are God's children.

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