

BUMC Weekly Bible and Sermon Study

Sermon: Baptism Renewal

Scripture: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Key take-aways from the Scripture

- “Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”
- This section of Luke discusses the baptism of Jesus, which is also discussed in Matthew 3:13-17 and Mark 1:9-11. Jesus’ baptism is a confirmation that He is the Messiah and Savior the prophets spoke of.
- Luke’s account of Jesus’ baptism begins by saying this occurred “when all the people were baptized...”. Emphasizing this shows that Christ wanted to identify with and relate to all He had come to serve and bring salvation to. In this act of baptism, Jesus is validating John’s work, validating His obedience to God (see also Matt 3:13-15) and providing an example for us to follow.
- The Life Application Study Bible commentary says, “Luke emphasizes Jesus’ human nature. Jesus was born to humble parents, a birth unannounced except to shepherds and foreigners. This baptism recorded here was the first public declaration of Jesus’ ministry. Instead of going to Jerusalem and identifying with the established religious leaders, Jesus went to a river and identified with those who were repenting of sin. When Jesus, at age 12, had visited the Temple, He had understood his mission (2:49). Eighteen years later, at his baptism, he began carrying it out. And as Jesus prayed, God spoke and confirmed His decision to act. God was breaking into human history through Jesus the Christ.”

Key take-aways from the Sermon

- Today's service celebrates the new year by a reaffirmation of our baptism, as well as the baptism of Jesus. The idea that Jesus was baptized was cause of concern for those in the early church.
- John's baptism was a baptism of repentance and sorrow for sin. Jesus is the only person that ever lived that was without sin, and for some this was troubling. Also, it appears that John put Jesus into a subordinate role, however, John tried to prevent it. Jesus insists that it is right to do so to fulfil all righteousness.
- From the very beginning, we see that Jesus does not distance Himself from sinners (see Luke 3). Sometimes the church appears to *correct* people rather than *connect* with them, and this is what Jesus taught us to do.
- Incarnation: relationship comes first and then change comes later!
- The Pharisees even asked why Jesus dined with sinners and tax collectors. Jesus replied that it's not the healthy that need a doctor but the sick people!
- Most people, no matter their beliefs or place in life, will come to church on Christmas Eve because we inherently desire *transcendence* and *connection*. For meaning beyond ourselves.
- The life of Jesus is punctuated by prayer and His life is a dialogue in prayer with God, which is infused to serve.
- Baptism is so pivotal in the life of faith is because it is a sacramental symbol and a sacred means of conferring upon us an identity.
- Agapetos/Beloved: it means that you are esteemed, favored, worthy of love. This forms the basis of our true identity. Our core identity is in the baptismal bowl, in the water. Not in temporal things that only polarize us. It is our capacity to love and be love. When we see ourselves as God's beloved, it helps us to see this in others as well.
- We are the beloved. What matters most is not *what* you are but *who* you are...and whose!
- You have been loved into loving. We are the beloved of God. Receive it because this is your core identity. It's in the baptismal water. When you receive it, the rest of your life becomes a means to make God as happy and joyful as God has made us!

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- What were your key take-aways from the sermon? How can you apply this to your everyday life?
- Why did Jesus get baptized by John? What was the significance of Him doing so?
- What is the significance of heaven being opened up in v. 21?
- Why does Jesus pray in v. 21?
- What is the role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' baptism?
- How do you rely upon the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's call for your life?
- How does Jesus' baptism fulfill righteousness?
- How can we see ourselves as God's beloved? What does doing so help us to do?

