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The Baptism of Jesus
Mark 1:9ff

Intro:

People might think that the New Testament is just a simple book that tells us how to be nice and be kind, but actually it is a book that many have wanted to suppress over the years because they found it to be threatening and subversive to the current cultural rulers such as the Romans and the Jewish leaders. There have been others since then who have seen the Gospels and the Bible as a threat: The Catholic Church in pre-reformation France, the communist all over the globe, Islam, and secularist, etc.

There is a power in the Gospel that shakes people up and challenges their cultural, social, political, and theological idols. When we read them without our preconceived ideas, we are forced to look at Jesus as he is presented in the narrative. The Bible doesn't give us a multiple-choice Jesus. One of the most dangerous ideas is..."I like to think of Jesus as..." THE REAL Jesus rarely conforms to how we like to think of Him, so it's all too easy to miss Him.

Those who followed Him for 3 years had their misconceptions, and they were in despair the DAY He died. Those who were the experts in the OT Law and Prophets had their misconceptions, and they were in a panic 3 days AFTER Jesus died.

3

The "Gospel of Jesus" according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, i.e. their purpose is not so much to give a biographical history but to proclaim GOOD NEWS of a Savior. **The Gospels tell a STORY TO PREACH A MESSAGE.**

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9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; 11 and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

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12 Immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. 13 And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.

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John does come to baptize because he knows that something big is coming and that the people of Israel are not ready. Mark is brief in his account of the baptism and temptation of Jesus, but in Matthew we are given a very descriptive picture of the ministry of John.

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4 Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; 6 and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins. 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; 9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. 10 The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 11 "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Matthew 3

John is saying that the way to prepare for the coming one is to repent and to mark that repentance with a baptism. It's a public statement to drive a stake in the ground regarding your desire to follow the Messiah by being baptized. The Old Testament had multiple washing rituals some of which people would do themselves before they would go to make an offering, but this is one in which you came and had someone wash you through baptism.

The coming of the Messiah was good news built on the reality of our sinful condition which meant we needed to repent. The Messiah wasn't just coming to rejoice, sing kum by ya, and enter into our world without making any changes or demanding a response on our part. The first response is to recognize your need and repent.

The coming King will stake his claim over kingdoms large and small, even down to our own lives, and that is where Jesus becomes something of a threat to us.

When Jesus arrives, people tend to either like him or not like him. The ones who do not like him are typically those who are spiritually self-righteous who don't see their need of repentance and don't see their need of a savior unless he fits the Messiah of their own minds. The Pharisees are very guilty of the problem of "I like to think of the Messiah as ..."

Those who had no illusions about their own moral goodness were typically drawn to Jesus. And he had no illusions about their moral goodness. But he did understand their human worth as being created in the image of God.

When John sees Jesus, he makes the declarative statement, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." That statement is loaded with OT MEANING and symbolism, but it doesn't register with those who don't see their own sin.

John the Baptist is calling people to do some deep reflection and recognize that their self-salvation, self-renovation, self-governing project has brought ruin, and they need to stop to recognize that and acknowledge their need for a real savior.

John is drawing people to the movement of faith in the one who is coming after him who will baptize with the holy Spirit. And that idea would resonate with people with an Old testament background

12 Ezekiel 36

24 For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

13

Try to put yourself into the scene out near the Jordan river.

Throngs of people from Jerusalem and Judea were going out to be baptized. While ritual washings were common among the Jews, mass outdoor baptisms were not.

EX: Current examples where we have seen of mass baptisms recently on college campuses such as University of Auburn and FSU and UGA. They had a big rally April 3rd.

John is drawing the crowds, and Luke 3 tells us the people were wondering if he might be the Christ, and John turns the attention away from himself as he points to Jesus as the Lamb of God.

Jesus and John have a discussion about which one will baptize the other and John submits to the idea that he should baptize Jesus.

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WHY WOULD THE LAMB OF God NEED TO BE BAPTIZED?

Jesus, the Messiah, came to represent and be a substitute for His people through His life, death, and resurrection. To fully identify with them he would also be baptized.

16

Matt 3:15 But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he *permitted Him. 16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am

well-pleased.”

To be the perfect redeemer and savior, Jesus had to fulfill ALL Righteousness. The death of Jesus covers our sin, but it does not confer a righteous standing before God. His death for us takes us back to square one.

EX: it would be like getting back to \$0 in Jeopardy after being in the hole an infinite amount. To win Jeopardy you must have a positive \$ total. To get to heaven you must have positive righteousness. Thus, Jesus our substitute lived the life we should have lived to fulfill all righteousness.

19 As Messiah, Jesus’ task was to submit himself in full obedience to every word from the mouth of God and to obey every dimension of the law. Though he did not sin, he identified with us to fulfill all righteousness.

20 Through faith in Him our sin is transferred to Jesus and His righteous is credited to us. That is the FULL GOSPEL.

JUST-I-FIED means that through a union with Christ, God sees me just if I NEVER sinned and Just-if-ied ALWAYS obeyed.

22 EX: This struck me years ago when we were home on furlough and I was reading the Confession of La Rochelle. Something about reading it in French hit me in a fresh way.

23 La Rochelle 1559 (Paris, at the risk of their lives)

24 XVIII. We believe that all our justification rests upon the remission of our sins, which is also our only blessedness. We reject all other means of justification before God, and without claiming any virtue or merit, we rest simply in the obedience of Jesus Christ, which is imputed to us to blot out all our sins AND to make us find grace and favor in the sight of God. And we believe that in falling away from this foundation, even slightly, we could not find rest elsewhere, but should always be troubled. As such, we are never at peace with God until we resolve to be loved in Jesus Christ, for of ourselves we are worthy of God’s wrath.

In Christ we have Forgiveness and the Favor of God!!!!

What did God the Father say at the baptism of Jesus?

Matt 3:17 17:5 ; 2 Pet 1:7 This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.

Salvation through faith in Christ means that what God says about His Son, he says about us, about YOU. This is your NEW PARENT TAPE. “my beloved child in whom I am well pleased.”

In Christ, God loves you and He is pleased with you.

As such, we are never at peace with God till we resolve to be loved in Jesus Christ.

27 That is what Paul is talking about when he says in Phil 3

28 7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

29 To resolve to be loved in Jesus Christ IS the Movement of Faith.

This is the movement of faith for salvation if you’ve never received Christ as Savior. Give up trying to create a righteousness of your own to gain approval with God. His standards are too high, and our performance is too low. Let go of the idol of SELF and come to the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.

Christian friend, we ALSO need to stay rooted in the resolve to be loved in Jesus. We stray from that when we are trying to find the love and favor of men or women or a man or a woman or kids or parents or

colleagues etc, etc. When the opinion of people becomes big, then the love of God becomes small and we become defensive, self-pitying, easily offended, and judgmental.

Ex: think of a recent time when you felt hurt or offended or defensive. Was your heart centered on the reality that God LOVES You IN Christ, or was it centered on being mistreated or misunderstood by someone else?

This movement of faith is SO COUNTER-CULTURAL.

Every message of our culture goes against this biblical truth. We want to be loved in and for ourselves, not in Jesus.

From 'I'm OK You're OK, to Self-esteem to 'finding yourself' to the current mantra of creating your own unique label to add to the identity alphabet, the man centered effort to ground our peace in ourselves or a righteousness of our own, has led to despair and dysfunction.

Our society is filled with more people than ever who are self-identifying, self-authenticating,... and self-medicating.. The self-imposed burden of trying to find, create, or discover some sort of unique identity is creating a mental health crisis in this country, especially among young people.

EX: Abigail Shrier - BAD THERAPY-: INTRO..."with unprecedented help from mental health experts, we have raised the loneliest, most anxious, depressed, pessimistic, helpless, and fearful generation on record. This is especially true for girls ages 15-19 Why?"

I think a big reason "why" is that we have lost our understanding of our place in this world.

31 **Friends, we were created by God, in the image of God, to find our identity and our meaning IN God,**
In Adam, we blew it in the Garden, by turning from God toward ourselves, but Jesus came to save us from our own self-authentication and self-salvation strategies.

32 **The words You long to hear, "this is my beloved child, in whom I am well pleased" are YOURS IN Christ, if you will abandon your kingdom and embrace the True King.**

The longing to hear those words is at the root of countless sleepless nights, bottles of booze, workaholic stress, overspending on gifts, emotional energy wasted just trying to please someone – all of that in countless movies, novels, and TV dramas and maybe some lives in this room.

The Holy Spirit who descended upon Jesus at his baptism will descend and dwell within you when you embrace Christ alone by faith. That same Holy Spirit will whisper the words of affirmation to your heart..."You are God's beloved child."

He is the Spirit by which we cry out ABBA Father because we are no longer slaves to sin and death but are beloved children of the Father.

34 **Being loved by God in Christ is even more fulfilling, liberating, empowering, satisfying, and eternal than being loved and accepted by our family and friends on earth.**

At Eugene Peterson's funeral, his son said "My father would tell me four things every night when he would put me to bed.

35 **First: God loves you.
Second: He is on your side.
Third: He is pursuing you.
Fourth: He is relentless."**

That is basically the message that John brings regarding Jesus the Christ the son of God.

That is really good news if you are willing to abdicate your kingdom and live according to his kingdom.

BEFORE the savior can be known, we must answer the question, "Am I the problem or not?" i.e. Do I need a cleansing power or is that just for just others? Do I need to repent or is that just for others?

EX: me at 17 but by May at 18 I saw that I was the problem.

John came to point to Christ, and Christ came to identify with and save a people for the glory of God.

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