

1/10/2010

**THE PRAYER OF THE DAY** Father in heaven, at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River You proclaimed Him Your beloved Son and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. Bless all of us who are baptized in His name to live in His strength and grace, and to be faithful in our calling as Your children; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON** Isaiah 43:1–7

*(God tells us, "I have called you by name; you are Mine.")*

1 But now, this is what the LORD says-- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. 3 For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. 4 Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life.

5 Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. 6 I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth--7 everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

**THE EPISTLE LESSON** Romans 6:1–11

*(By baptism we were united with Christ into His death and resurrection that we might walk in newness of life.)*

1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

**THE GOSPEL LESSON** Luke 3:15–22

*(Jesus is baptized in the Jordan River by the hand of John.)*

15 The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if

John might possibly be the Christ. 16 John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." 18 And with many other words John exhorted the people and preached the good news to them. 19 But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, 20 Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison.

**21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."**

**THE SERMON**

**"Called as God's child to Ministry"**

INTRO - There is a joke about a catholic monk who was studying in the library at the Vatican. One day a heart wrenching wail came from the library. O No! Another monk ran to him and said, 'What's the matter?' The first priest replied. "It says celeBRATE, not . . . Celibate!" Of course this is just a joke. And most know Catholic priests cannot marry. Imagine the importance of understanding, or missing, just one word.

I. The emphasis in Luke is not so much on the baptism, but on the words of God. And there is one word that stands out.

A. Look at verses 21-22 **21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."**

1. God the Father tells Jesus, You are My Son, whom I love. The emphasis is that Jesus is the Son of Almighty God in heaven.

2. But, in the very next chapter, Jesus is led by the Spirit into the dessert where He is tempted. Three times Satan tries to twist the word of God. Twice he tries to get Jesus to doubt by asserting, "IF you are the Son of God. . ."

3. But, the important word here is clear, Jesus is the beloved Son of God.

B. There is another side to this which is worth seeing, the Father says, "**with you I am well pleased.**"

1. Yes this repeats the heavenly Father's love for His only begotten Son Jesus, but it also tells us something else.

2. The words, "You are my Son," come from Psalm 2, which talks about the honor due the king. It point to Jesus not only as God's Son, but the promised King.

3. On the other hand, the words, "**with you I am well pleased**" are from Isaiah 42, where God says of the suffering servant, behold my servant with whom I delight, or am pleased.

4. Jesus is to be the servant King.

C. In His baptism, Jesus is being encouraged and guided.

1. He is the Son of God in heaven Himself, the King of all creation.

2. But, He is also the King who serves by suffering.

3. Being the Son of God calls Jesus to Ministry. In the verse next verse after our text, the Scripture says, **23 Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry.**

4. Jesus was prepared for his work and ministry as the king who serves and suffers by His baptism, especially as the Father assured Him, "**You are my Son, whom I love;**

II. Before we talk about being God's children, I want to talk about service, or ministry. This takes some thinking. Let's start with that phrase, "**with you I am well pleased.**" Do you know where else that original Greek word appears? One chapter earlier, in Luke 2:14. As the angels sing they say, "**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.**" By His love and favor God calls all of us to service.

A. God calls all of us to serve Him in the church.

1. 1 Peter 2:5 says, **you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**

2. We are all called to worship God with service, **offering spiritual sacrifices**

B. Today, at the beginning of a new year, we install new officers and board members.

1. You have a list of them in your bulletin. Look at it. I counted last night. There are 95 names listed.

2. Leading God's people by service, that is what these leaders do, is not easy. It takes tackling difficult jobs God gives us, dealing with sensitive issues like finance, keeping our faith in God, and dealing in wisdom and faith and love.

3. That description is probably enough to make anyone reconsider serving.

4. Jesus' job was not easy. Neither is the job of the church or leading the church. But God has work for us to do of sharing the love of His Son, Jesus Christ.

III. That's the job, let me remind you what the Father told Jesus, **You are children of God.**

A. God repeats this truth again and again in Scripture.

1. God reveals Himself as our Heavenly Father. Because He's our Father, we are His children.

2. John 1 tells us we become God's children, not just through creation, but through faith in Jesus.

3. Galatians 4, and Hebrews 2 tell us that we are God's children by God's special efforts in Jesus.

B. And, as we come to God, in Jesus as His children, He gives us His love and encouragement, so we are strengthened to serve.

1. God gives us His presence and His guidance.

2. He forgives us through the ministry or service of Jesus through His dying on the cross, and rising again.

3. God loves us in our baptism and the Lord's Supper.

4. As we face the job that is impossible to us, God is with us to give us Himself to strengthen us for the service of telling the world about Him.

C. The job of serving God as a child of His, as a leader in the church is difficult. But, God strengthens us as His children, through His love and favor, through His Son Jesus.

CONCLUSION There another story, not a joke but based on truth of a Seminary Professor from Oklahoma vacationing in Galinburg, TN. As he and his wife were relaxing in a restaurant a distinguished man was going table to table. He came to their table and asked where they were from and what they did. The man replied that he was a seminary professor. So the distinguished gentleman said, "let me tell you a story." "See that mountain over there?" Not far from the base of that mountain, There was a boy born to an unwed mother. He had a hard time growing up, because every place he went! , He was always asked the same question. "Hey boy, who's your daddy?" Whether he was at school, in the grocery store or drug store, People would ask the same question. "Who's your daddy?" He would hide at recess and lunchtime from other students. He would avoid going into stores because that question hurt him so much. When he was about 12 years old, a new preacher came to his church. He would always go in late and slip out early to avoid hearing the question, "Who's your daddy ?" But one day, the new preacher said the benediction so fast, he got caught and had to walk out with the crowd. Just about the time he got to the back door, the new preacher, not knowing anything about him put his hand on his shoulder and asked him, "Son, who's your daddy?" The whole church got deathly quiet. He could feel every eye in the church looking at him. Now everyone would finally know the answer to the, question, "Who's your daddy?" The new preacher, though, sensed the situation around him and using discernment from the Spirit said, "Wait a minute!" he said. "I know who you are. I see The family resemblance now. You are a child of God." He patted the boy on his shoulder and said. "Boy, You've got a great inheritance. Go and claim it. " The boy smiled for the first time in a long time and walked out the door a changed person. He was never the Same again. Whenever anybody asked him, "Who's your Daddy?" he'd just tell them, "I'm a child of God."

The distinguished gentleman got up from the table and said, "Isn't that a great story?" The professor responded that it really was a great story! As the man turned to leave, he said, "You know, if that new Preacher hadn't told me that I was one of God's children, I probably would never have amounted to anything!" And he walked away. The seminary professor and his wife were stunned. He called the waitress over and asked her, "Do you know that man who just left that was sitting at our table?" The waitress grinned and said, "Of course. Everybody here knows him. That's Ben Hooper. He's the former governor of Tennessee !" The love of his Heavenly Father moved Him to effective service.

Today God tells you, **"You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."** But, He

calls you to serve Him, in difficult ways, by first assuring you that you are His beloved child.