

BAPTISM OF THE LORD  
Matthew 3:13-17

LAST WEEK I SPOKE ABOUT HAVING A NEW VISION –

WHAT DO YOU WANT OUR CHURCH TO LOOK LIKE AND BE LIKE  
IN THE COMING YEAR.

THIS WEEK WE WANT TO TALK ABOUT NEW BEGINNINGS.

THE WATERS OF BAPTISM SYMBOLIZE THE OPPORTUNITY WE HAVE  
TO MAKE A NEW BEGINNING.

JESUS CAME FROM GALILEE TO THE RIVER JORDEN

TO BE BAPTIZED BY JOHN THE BAPTIST.

REMEMBER JOHN'S BAPTISM WAS A BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE.

JOHN KNEW THAT JESUS,

WHO WAS JOHN'S COUSIN,

DID NOT NEED TO REPENT.

JOHN DOES NOT KNOW AT THIS POINT

THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH,

BUT HE KNOWS THAT HE IS SPECIAL.

HE FEELS SO STRONGLY ABOUT THIS

THAT HE TRIES TO KEEP JESUS OUT OF THE WATER.

HE SAYS TO JESUS,

“I NEED TO BE BAPTIZED BY YOU, AND DO YOU COME TO ME”?

THAT IS BEAUTIFUL!

WHAT WOULD YOUR COUSINS SAY ABOUT YOU  
OR PERHAPS YOUR BROTHERS OR SISTERS,  
THE PEOPLE YOU GOLF WITH OR WORK WITH  
THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW YOU BEST?  
HOW WOULD THEY REACT IF THEY KNEW  
THAT YOU WERE COMING FOR A BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE?  
WOULD THEY SAY, “BOY, IT IS ABOUT TIME?  
MORE THAN LIKELY, THEY WOULD SAY,  
“WONDER WHAT SHE IS HIDING?  
WOULD ANY OF THEM TRY TO KEEP YOU OUT OF THE WATER  
BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT YOU WERE SO SINLESS  
THAT YOU DID NOT NEED TO REPENT?  
JESUS OBVIOUSLY DID NOT NEED TO MAKE A NEW BEGINNING;  
MANY OF US DO.  
HOWEVER, THE RITE OF BAPTISM DID MARK A NEW PHASE IN JESUS’ LIFE  
HE USED IT TO PREPARE FOR HIS MINISTRY.  
NO LONGER WOULD HE BE BUILDING FURNITURE IN THE SHOP  
NOW HE WOULD BE BUILDING A FUTURE FOR ALL HUMANITY.  
NO MATTER WHO WE ARE  
OF WHERE WE ARE ON THE FAITH JOURNEY,  
THIS IS A MESSAGE OF HOPE.

NEW BEGINNINGS ARE POSSIBLE.

BUT THREE THINGS ARE NECESSARY TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.

**FIRST OF ALL, WE MUST BE WILLING TO CHANGE.**

THIS MAY SOUND OBVIOUS,

BUT THIS IS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE FOR MANY PEOPLE.

THEY ARE IN A ROUTINE,

YOU MIGHT CALL IT A RUT.

DO YOU REALLY WANT TO CHANGE?

HERE IS A LIGHT BULB JOKE THAT APPEALS TO ME.

IT COMES FROM A PRESBYTERIAN PASTOR.

HOW MANY CHRISTIANS DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE A LIGHT BULB?

IF YOU ARE CHARISMATIC: ONLY ONE, YOUR HANDS ARE ALREADY IN  
THE AIR.

CATHOLIC: NONE, CANDLES, ONLY CANDLES.

NAZARENE: SIX, ONE WOMAN TO REPLACE THE BULB

WHILE FIVE MEN REVIEW THE CHURCH LIGHTING POLICY.

TV EVANGELIST: JUST ONE, BUT FOR THE MESSAGE OF LIGHT

TO CONTINUE, PICK UP THAT PHONE AND PLEDGE YOUR  
SUPPORT TODAY.

AMISH: WHAT IS A LIGHT BULB?

PRESBYTERIAN: CHANGE? MY GRANDMOTHER GAVE THAT LIGHT  
BULB.

WELL PRESBYTERIANS ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES WHO RESIST CHANGE.

IN FACT, THIS IS THE CONDITION THAT VEXES MOST OF US.

WHAT DO MOST COUNSELORS SAY?

MOST PEOPLE CHANGE ONLY WHEN THE PAIN  
OF STAYING THE SAME,  
IS GREATER THAN THE PAIN OF CHANGE.

**THE SECOND OBSERVATION IS**

**WE MUST BE WILLING TO CONFRONT ISSUES  
THAT WE HAVE AVOIDED IN THE PAST.**

IF WE ARE GOING TO MAKE A NEW BEGINNING,

WE CANNOT AVOID LOOKING BACK AT OLD PROBLEMS.

THIS MAY INCLUDE PERSONAL HABITS.

IT MAY INCLUDE HOW WE RELATE TO OUR SPOUSES, CHILDREN.

REPENTANCE IS NOT JUST FEELING BAD ABOUT OUR SHORTCOMING,

IT IS TAKING STOCK OF OUR SITUATION

OUR PERSONAL ATTITUDES AND HABITS,

OUR RELATIONSHIPS AND THE DIRECTION OF OUR LIVES

AND THEN TAKING ACTION TO REMEDY

THOSE AREAS THAT NEED IMPROVEMENT.

ONLY YOU KNOW WHAT NEEDS TO BE CHANGED IN YOUR LIFE –

ARE YOU WILLING TO CHANGE?

ARE YOU WILLING TO FACE UP TO ISSUES

THAT YOU HAVE IGNORED IN THE PAST?

**AND FINALLY,**

**WE MUST BE WILLING TO LIVE OUT**

**THE MEANING OF OUR BAPTISM.**

THIS IS NOT A SELF HELP SEMINAR

THIS IS OUR EUCHARISTIC SERVICE

WE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED.

WE HAVE A CHALLENGE TO LIVE UP TO

AND A RESOURCE UPON WHICH TO DRAW –

OUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

HERE IS A TRUE STORY –

IT IS ABOUT A WOMAN SHOPPING AT WAL-MART

WITH HER 6 YEAR OLD RED HEAD DAUGHTER.

IT WAS POURING OUTSIDE.

THE MOTHER AND DAUGHTER STOOD WITH OTHER SHOPPERS

WAITING FOR A BREAK IN THE RAIN

TO MAKE IT TO THE CAR.

THEN THE LITTLE GIRL SPOKE UP

“MOM”, LET’S RUN THROUGH THE RAIN.

“WHAT” THE MOTHER ANSWERED.

“LET’S RUN THROUGH THE RAIN”, THE LITTLE GIRL REPEATED.

“NO HONEY”, WE WILL WAIT UNTIL IT SLOWS DOWN A BIT.

THE CHILD WAITED ANOTHER MINUTE AND REPEATED:

“MOM, LET’S RUN THROUGH THE RAIN”

“WE WILL GET SOAKED, THE MOTHER ANSWERED.

“NO WE WON’T, MOM.

THAT IS NOT WHAT YOU SAID THIS MORNING”

“THIS MORNING”?

WHEN DID I SAY WE COULD RUN THROUGH THE RAIN

AND NOT GET WET?”

“DON’T YOU REMEMBER?” SAID THE PERSISTENT CHILD.

“WHEN YOU WERE TALKING TO DADDY ABOUT HIS CANCER,

YOU SAID,

“IF GOD CAN GET US THROUGH THIS,

HE CAN GET US THROUGH ANYTHING”!

THE ENTIRE CROWD WENT DEAD SILENT.

YOU COULD NOT HEAR ANYTHING

BUT THE RAIN.

THEY ALL STOOD SILENTLY.

MOM PAUSED AND THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT

ABOUT WHAT SHE WOULD SAY.

NOW SOME WOULD LAUGH IT OFF

OR MAYBE SCOLD THE CHILD FOR BEING SILLY.

BUT THIS MOTHER KNEW

THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT MOMENT IN THIS LITTLE GIRL’S LIFE.

“HONEY, YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT”, SHE SAID

LETS RUN THROUGH THE RAIN.

IF GOD LETS US GET WET,  
WELL MAYBE WE JUST NEEDED WASHING”.  
THEN OFF THEY RAN.  
THE OTHER SHOPPERS STOOD WATCHING,  
SMILING  
AND LAUGHTING  
AS THEY WATCHED THE TWO  
DART PAST THE CARS AND THE PUDDLES.  
AND THEY GOT SOAKED.  
DO YOU NEED WASHING?  
HAVE YOU BEEN LIVING UP TO YOUR BAPTISM?  
JESUS MADE A NEW BEGINNING WHEN HE WAS BAPTIZED BY JOHN.  
THERE WAS NO CAUSE ON HIS PART FOR REPENTANCE.  
BUT HE WAS STARTING HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY  
AND HE WANTED TO SET AN EXAMPLE FOR US.  
YOU KNOW HOW THE STORY ENDS.  
“AS SOON AS JESUS WAS BAPTIZED,  
THE HEAVENS OPENED,  
AND HE SAW THE SPIRIT OF GOD DESCENDING  
LIKE A DOVE.  
AND A VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAID:

THIS IS MY SON, WHOM I LOVE;

WITH HIM I AM WELL PLEASED”.

DEEP DOWN WITHIN EACH OF US

THAT IS WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR GOD SAY

ABOUT OUR LIVES.

THIS IS MY SON, THIS IS MY DAUGHTER

WHOM I LOVE;

WITH WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED”

IF THIS IS SO,

WE NEED TO MAKE A NEW BEGINNING TODAY.