



This week's Revd. Morris' message: ***Can we fulfil our own Baptismal calling to go into all the world to baptise others?***

Today's Gospel concerns the well known story of Jesus' Baptism by His cousin John. Again, we need to be careful that our familiarity with the narrative will not deprive us of a deeper understanding of this important passage of Scripture. This action packed Gospel traverses many vital issues, including:

Why do we get Baptised today anyways? In the Anglican tradition, Baptism is a gift of Grace which involves for those receiving it, forgiveness of sins, regeneration, adoption as Children of God, new birth, the sign and seal of the Holy Spirit and membership of the Church of Christ. It is also the Christian counterpart to the Jewish practice of Circumcision [see Genesis 17:9 ff and Colossians 2:11 ff] Both ceremonies were to join the recipient into a Covenant relationship with God. Circumcision was the mark and seal of entry into the Abrahamic Old Testament covenant and thus those circumcised became a beneficiary of God's promises to Abraham including His gift of the land of Israel and to be the God of the Jewish people. Baptism is likewise a mark and seal of entry into the New Covenant of Love made possible by Jesus's death on the cross.

Why then did Jesus get Baptised? If forgiveness of sins is a key aspect of Baptism, ***why did the sinless Jesus*** need to be Baptised? There have been many theories advanced by Biblical Scholars - some say that it is Jesus' way of identifying with those who He came to save; some posit that, since Baptism involves a symbolic death of the old self and the rising to new life of the recipient, Jesus' Baptism was a foretaste and promise concerning His Death and Resurrection, others believe that it was a necessary public Divine anointing and confirmation of Jesus' Messiahship in order to bring to a close his private life and commence His public Ministry. Perhaps all these and other theories, are helpful in coming to a deeper understanding of God's Plan for Jesus' Baptism.

However, one thing is for certain; namely, that John's Baptism of others was ***a baptism of repentance and an identification of the recipient as a believer who was waiting for the imminent arrival of the Messiah.*** As noted above, Christian Baptism is much more than this. John had been Divinely called to His ministry to 'prepare the way of the Lord' and a part of that ministry was a call to repentance and Baptism. John had also been Divinely led to believe that in the exercise of his ministry, the Messiah ['the more mightier one whose sandals I am unworthy to untie'] will be revealed .. Jesus is the only one who Baptises with the Holy Spirit and with Fire [a foretaste of the Disciple's Baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost -see Acts 2]. Thus, Jesus' Baptism marked a fulcrum point in both John's and Jesus's ministries and brings to fulfilment the insights of John's Mother and John himself in her womb when meeting with the pregnant Virgin Mary at Ein Karem. [see Luke 1:39 ff and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_the_Visitation] Jesus' Baptism

also was designed as a **dramatic unveiling of the Triune nature of God** - Father, Son and Holy Spirit working and appearing together for all to witness.

Well, what does this all mean for us today?

*I wonder how often we reflect upon our own Baptism and the Grace and gift of the Holy Spirit thereby provided? This Baptismal seal marks us as belonging to Jesus, fully assured of His Love and forgiveness and provided with the fellowship of the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen us as we walk the path God has set before us. We only need to ask for these gifts of Grace and use them in His service as he leads. God also charges us to fulfil our own Baptismal calling to **go into all the world to make Disciples and baptise others**. I wonder what God may be calling us to do this week to help others move closer to Him? **Gospel reading: Luke 3:15-22***

Some resources to dig deeper: <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revise-common-lectionary/baptism-of-our-lord-3/commentary-on-luke-315-17-21-22-5> ; <https://www.christianity.com/jesus/life-of-jesus/youth-and-baptism/why-did-jesus-need-to-be-baptized.html>; <https://anglicancompass.com/holy-baptism/>; <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/circumcision/>; <https://versebyverseministry.org/bible-answers/the-purpose-of-johns-baptism/>; <https://www.yardenit.com/>

[See Photo to the right of Yardenit Israel one of the possible sites of Jesus' Baptism]

Upcoming Parish Activities: Midweek service Wednesday 10:30 am. All regular parish activities are in recess.

Today's Notices Highlights: Video Training available; Calendars available \$20; Behind the scenes thx: Our Musicians! Wanted - Op Shop Volunteers and Treasurer 2IC.

Readings for Next Sunday: Margaret - Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36: 5-10; Clyda - 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11; John 2:1-11.

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Bank Details: Holland Park Anglican Church Anfin BSB 704 901; Acct: 00000760.

Parish website : <https://www.stmatthewshollandpark.com/>

Parish Private Facebook site : <https://www.facebook.com/groups/292308270851142> ;

Public Site: <https://www.facebook.com/StMatthewsHollandPark> ;

Tipper's Treasure's Facebook site: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61559040358754>

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY:

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Turrbal and Jagera Peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather today. We acknowledge their continued spiritual connection to country and surrounding land, sky and water. We pay our respect to their Elders, past present and emerging and pray that we may continue to learn from and nurture one another in the spirit of Reconciliation.

