**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes from 10-10-2021 – Prayer at His Baptism**

**Friends, prayer is meant to be our first response, rather than our last resort**.

You may hear in sports, announcers saying things like he threw up a prayer – which implies a last-ditch effort at something.

But while it is always good to pray, it is better to pray sooner rather than later.

I believe that the most important trait of a vibrant life as a follower of Jesus Chrit is a life of prayer. Prayer is easily neglected or is often underappreciated, but it is essential to living a blessed life. Prayer must be critical to the life of the Christian. And prayer is simply communication with our Triune God. We are to be constantly in communication with our great God.

Prayer is the most important thing because our relationship with the Lord is the most important thing in our lives.

Our Triune God is so amazing. Although He holds all of His creation in the palm of His hand as one would hold a tennis ball, our Lord is also a God who wants us to know Him. To talk with Him constantly.

Jesus said “**My sheep know my voice**.” The Lord expects us to hear from Him often. We wouldn’t get to know His voice if we didn’t hear it regularly. And it doesn’t have to be an audible voice. In fact, it probably will not be in most cases.

But prayer keeps us connected in communication with God. I cannot overemphasize how important a life of prayer is.

Consider this, Jesus, although He Himself was God, He became as human as you and I are. And Jesus constantly made it a point to spend time in prayer communicating with God the Father. It was His regular practice, we are told. Even with all the crowds, He would often get up early to spend that critical time alone with His Father.

And so, it shouldn’t surprise us that at 7 keys moments in Luke’s Gospel, we find Jesus praying.

In the Bible’s use of numbers, 7 often represents fullness. In Luke’s Gospel, as we will explore these 7 moments of Jesus’ praying, it should remind us that we are all called to a life where prayer is of highest priority.

And so today, as we begin a new sermon series, we will take a closer look at these 7 significant moments of Jesus praying and what we can learn from them for our lives today.

The very first example of this found in Luke’s Gospel describes Jesus praying in the midst of His baptism.

Let us now hear from God’s Word together:

**21When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22and 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.”**

Jesus’ baptism was the critical launching point of His ministry. Up until this time, Jesus was likely helping to support His family through working as a carpenter. Joseph, His earthly father, had likely already passed away by this time. And Jesus, as the oldest Son of Mary and Joseph, would have most likely been working to help put food on the table for His Mom and younger half-brothers and half-sisters.

**Just ponder that for a moment --- the One who made heaven and earth and everything in it, having to work to put food on the table.**

What a humble savior we have in Jesus. Amen!

We are told from the very next verse after our highlighted Scripture, that Jesus was about the age of 30 when He was baptized. At this time, for someone to be considered a rabbi or a teacher, they needed to know a trade as well as have reached the age of 30.

So, Jesus patiently waited for this time of cultural acceptance before He officially began His public ministry.

And how does Jesus begin? He begins by requesting baptism from His cousin, John the Baptizer.

Now it is interesting that John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance and Jesus was the only One who truly didn’t need to return or turn from sin in any way. He was sinless. He was completely pure.

In fact, we read in the gospel of how John the Baptist was basically telling him, **‘You need to baptize me. I am the one that has to repent, not You Jesus.”**

But Jesus insisted; and John consented.

And what did Jesus’ baptism accomplish?

**First, Jesus’ baptism affirmed the human need to repent of our sins and to receive God’s cleansing grace**.

Jesus was teaching the world that EVERYONE was guilty before God and in need of God’s mercy.

In other words, Jesus was clearly affirming what John was doing.

Interestingly, water baptism was actually practiced before the time of John the Baptist. I didn’t know that until a few years ago. John the Baptist did not invent baptism.

But baptism was only practiced by Gentiles turning to worship the LORD as their God. It was outward expression of their being cleansed by God, as they turned from idols to the living God.

But here John comes along and he is baptizing Jews. Can you see how scandalous that would have been, especially to some of the Jewish religious leaders?

John is saying that the Jews needed to be washed clean before God just as must as the Gentiles did. All of humanity needs to repent of sin. All of humanity needs to be cleansed before God.

And Jesus, as the first public action in launching His ministry, affirms what John was doing by insisting that John baptize Him even though He didn’t need it Himself.

Jesus’ actions were making a statement to the world that all people are in the same boat. All people need cleansing of sin.

**Second, as Luke tells us, Jesus is praying at His baptism**. Jesus’ attention was turned towards His Heavenly Father through this baptism event. We are not told what Jesus was saying or if He was in time of wordless prayer. But either way, it was clear that Jesus was praying.

And it was also clear that as Jesus was praying two amazing things happened. The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus in bodily form, like a dove and God the Father spoke from heaven saying **“You are my Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased.”**

What a beautiful and amazing scene! And what a picture of our Triune God, with each Person actively involved. The Father speaking and the Spirit coming upon Jesus.

And before everyone present, it was clear that the Father was proud of Jesus. Jesus was surrendered and obedient to the Father. Even before Jesus performed a miracle, He had The Father’s blessing and affirmation.

**And third and finally, at Jesus’ baptism, it is quite likely that God the Father is using that moment to anoint Jesus as King**. King David, whom we just looked at for several weeks, was anointed by Samuel the prophet and oil was poured over him and the Holy Spirit came upon David.

And with Jesus at His baptism, the Holy Spirit came upon Him in visible form. David was also 30 years old when he was made king over all Israel. And here, Jesus who is about 30 years old, is being anointed as King and Savior not only of Israel, but for all of humanity.

So much was happening in this powerful event as Jesus was praying and is being baptized.

As we think about Jesus’ praying at His baptism and all that His baptism meant, what does this all mean for us today?

While there are several points that could be made, I would like for us to focus on this: **Jesus’ baptism and His praying at that moment should call us to a life of prayerful surrender to God.**

Baptism is meant to be a sign of publicly declaring one’s life to not be their own any more, but to be God’s.

And while we do not need to be baptized over and over again, we are called to prayerfully remember the significance of our baptism.

At our baptism, we made a decision or a decision was made by our parents on our behalf, that our life is no longer to be focused to be on our own will, but on doing the will of God. For those of us that were baptized as young children and who do not remember the moment, our public confession of faith affirmed our baptism.

Jesus did not take His own baptism lightly. He was in prayerful communication with His Father through that experience.

In baptism, Jesus was declaring that He was not to live for Himself, but for the glory of God. Even though Jesus was and is God, His baptism teaches us that Jesus lived to point people to the Father and to the Holy Spirit.

If Jesus, our divine Savior, needed to walk in dependence of the Father and the Spirit, it is foolish to think that we can do anything different.

And remember the Father’s affirmation of Jesus. He was pleased with Him before He performed a miracle or began His teaching ministry. Why? Because He was submitted to Him in love and through prayer.

This is a good reminder to all of us that more than anything that we can do for God, the Lord wants our hearts and our surrender to His will and His leading. And we do this in surrendered prayer.

**The biggest thing that we can accomplish in life is living surrendered to Jesus and daily being in prayer with our Triune God. Attending to our personal relationship with God is our primary calling in life.**

So in conclusion, as we remember Jesus’ prayer-filled baptism, I invite us to a time of prayerful remembrance of our baptism as we choose to daily live for Jesus. And if any of you have not yet been baptized, people knew that the Lord experiences this powerful prophetic act of publicly declaring your allegiance to Jesus Christ our Lord and letting Him become Your life.

As we prayerfully remember our baptism, may we repent or turn from any willful sin in our lives. As we prayerfully remember our baptism, may we be reminded that Jesus is our great King and we are His people. And as we prayerfully remember our baptism, may we be reminded to live every day not to point people to ourselves, but to Him.

Sources: BibleGateway.com

Dr. H. Douglas Buckwalter, - lecture notes – lesson 3 – English Bible: Luke