

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, January 8th, 2023
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Baptism of The Lord
Matthew 3:13–17

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

God of heaven and earth,
you call us to come in humility before you,
bringing the offering of our very selves.
As you revealed Jesus to be your Son
in his baptism at the hand of John,
so you claimed our lives in baptism,
that we might die to sin
and be raised with him to new life.
By your Spirit,
confirm in our hearts the witness
that Christ is Savior of the world and our Lord.
**Accept all we have and are, O God,
in the service of Jesus Christ,
and strengthen us with your Spirit's power,
now and forever. Amen.**

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Lord God, gracious and merciful,
you anointed your beloved Son with the Holy Spirit
at his baptism in the Jordan,
and you consecrated him prophet, priest, and king.
Pour out your Spirit on us again
that we may be faithful to our baptismal calling,
ardently desire the communion of Christ's body and blood,
and serve the poor of your people and all who need your love,
through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
ever one God, world without end. Amen

Opening Hymn #625: "Seek Ye First"

Seek ye first the kingdom of God
 And His righteousness;
 And all these things shall be added unto you.
 Hallelu, Hallelujah!

Ask, and it shall be given unto you;
 Seek, and you shall find.
 Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
 Hallelu, Hallelujah!

Man shall not live by bread alone,
 But by every word
 That proceeds out from the mouth of God.
 Hallelu, Hallelujah!

Call to Confession

Prepare the way of the Lord!
 Let us make our confession to God

Prayer of Confession

**God of all mercy,
 in our baptisms you have marked us as your own;
 you have given us a new identity
 and made us part of the body of Christ.
 In doing so, you have called us to rise to new life
 and to live together in community.
 However, we have not been faithful to your call.
 We have forged our own identity
 and held to destructive habits.
 We confess we have failed to welcome others,
 broken bonds we have had with brothers and sisters,
 and served ourselves more than you.
 Forgive us, we pray, for the sake of Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

Friends, hear the good news!
 Though we are unworthy,
 we are granted God's favor in Jesus Christ
 and are baptized into the church of his beloved Son.
 Friends, believe the good news!
 In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
 Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread.
 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.
 For Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory,
 Forever and ever. Amen.

Responsive Reading

Question 110. Why do Christians worship on Sunday rather than on the Sabbath?

Jesus was raised from the dead on Sunday. From earliest times Christians gathered on the first day of the week to worship and celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

Mt 28:1, Jn 20:1, Acts 20:7

Question 111. How do we summarize the first four commandments?

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37) is the way Jesus summarized them in what is called the first and greatest commandment.

Deut 6:4-5, Mk 12:29-30

Puppets Performance: "Welcome to the Family"

Children's Hymn #656: "Jesus Friend of All Children"

Jesus, friend of all the children,
 be my friend and guide;
 take my hand, and ever keep me
 by your side.

Step by step, oh lead me onward,
 growing into youth,
 wiser, stronger, still increasing
 in your truth.

Never leave me nor forsake me;
 always be my friend,
 for I need you, from life's dawning
 to its end.

Prayer for illumination **(Congregant Prepared)**

Scripture

Matthew 3:13-17

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Sermon

Our world is filled with improper examples of how to live. Almost all of our actors, athletes, politicians, and businesspeople live their lives focused on worldly pleasures and consumerism. People today are inundated with examples of living in this world, being shown that they should be looking to gain in power, prestige, and possessions, even at the cost of friends and family.

Many of the people that are idolized in this world are in fact alcoholics, drug addicts, and worse. They are so focused on trying to fill the empty void they have inside with worldly pleasures they cannot see past their own desires to find God.

Yet people of this world turn to them as role models on what we should desire and work towards in this life.

However, for people who do not want to walk down this road of sin and depravity there is another role model that we can follow in this life, our Lord Jesus Christ. In the story of Jesus's baptism, he displays the attributes that every Christian should emulate in their lives as they walk with Christ. In the scripture today we are going to see examples of how Jesus submitted himself to the will of God and did so in humility.

The text begins simply but there is a strong message in that simplicity, 'Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him.' It sounds simple, like I went to Costco yesterday in Kanata. Not a big deal really, unless the weather was bad. However, there is more to this than a simple trip to the store.

The trip to the Kanata Costco is actually a fairly accurate estimate of the distance between Galilee and the river Jordan, and that is the distance that Jesus travelled to be baptized, on foot. Think about walking from here to Costco, not a simple trip. I imagine it would take a few days and that if the weather got bad it could be a challenge to keep going. Yet Jesus did not hesitate to make this journey.

Secondly, Jesus made this trip to be baptized. Why would Jesus need to be baptized? After all he is the Son of God. John the Baptist was offering baptisms of Repentance in the river Jordan

and Jesus had no sin and nothing to repent from. So why is it that he would walk over 100 km to receive a baptism of repentance by John?

Jesus was leaving us an example of submission; he was submitting himself to God's plan and by doing so giving us all an example of submittance in our lives. Although he was God, greater than John the Baptist he was going to submit himself to baptism in the river Jordan in order to fulfill the prophecies and to connect himself with the ministry which John had started in preparation for the way of the Lord.

He submitted himself to baptism by John because he was the Messiah, the Lamb of God, the one who was greater, in whose name John had been preaching and baptizing until the day that Jesus walked up to him and asked to be baptized.

Jesus required the desire to make the trip and the submission to God's will in his baptism and these are two things which we are called to emulate in living a Christ like life.

Submission. That word has received such a bad reputation that we rarely use it. It is the willful act of yielding to the power, control, or authority of another. Submission is a voluntary act. It is a critical part of the learning process. Submission is a key concept in the Bible. To be true followers of Jesus, we must learn to be submissive.

In our submission to God, we are worshipping him as our Lord. We are submitting our emotions, our wills, and our bodies to the one true living God. Honestly, there are many times in our lives when we may not feel like worshipping, but when we submit to the Lord in worship, we find he lifts our spirits and brings us closer to him.

That submission is voluntary, we cannot force anyone to become a Christian, they must do it themselves, we cannot make them or trick them into becoming a follower of Christ. Being Christian requires a willful submission of yourself to God, and to other people, out of obedience to God's word.

Submission to God is something Christians do because of their faith in Him as Lord and Saviour. It is not based on superiority, or we could fall into the same pattern that King Ahaz and jump between any idol of the world who seemed to be in power at the time. Christians submit their lives to God based on his divine plan for their lives.

This is why when it tells wives to submit to their husbands in the bible it is not wives submitting because the husband is superior, but because it is God's design for the family. For wives it means submit to your husband as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the family in the same manner that Christ is the head of the Church, however, it also says that Husbands should love their wives in the same manner in which Christ loves the church, Christ who gave up everything he had including his own life for his Church.

Jesus was willing to submit to the plan that God had Enacted in the creation of the world, so we should be willing to submit ourselves to his plan in our lives and to be changed by his works in us.

The second lesson we are given in this scripture is one of humility. John recognizes the Messiah and states that it should be Jesus who is baptizing John, not John baptizing Jesus. Both men display humility.

John shows his humility by expressing his knowledge and understanding that Jesus is greater than he is, in fact he seems kind of amazed that Jesus has come to him for a baptism. He knows that he is just a man, a sinner like everyone else he is baptizing and that the Messiah standing before him is the Lamb of God.

Jesus too shows humility, Jesus is spotless and sinless, he is filled with righteousness and holiness, the Son of God, the one who created all things submitting himself to a sinner's baptism. He has no need to be baptized, especially a sinner baptism. Yet here Jesus is standing before John, seeking to be baptized by John in the river Jordan. He tells John, **'Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.'** That bit that states to fulfill all righteousness in Greek carries the connotation of carrying out all that God requires, not just for Jesus Christ but for all of his people. Through His words Jesus is telling John that it is God's will that Jesus is to be baptized by John that day in the river Jordan, and that Jesus will fulfill that righteousness, he will submit himself to God and Obery His will by being baptized that day. So even though he did not need a baptism, he did so because it was the Father's will.

The humility of Christ in being baptized is something that we all must have. The setting aside of self in obedience of God's will, submitting to him, even when we feel like we do not need to do what he has called on us to do.

Philippians 2:5-8

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Jesus was fully God and he humbled himself in service of the Father while he walked among us as our Messiah, a living example of what we are all called to do in this world.

1 Peter 5:6-7

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

We are called to humble ourselves before him in the same manner, submitting ourselves to God's will until he exalts us, casting all of our anxieties and worries upon God and trusting in him to take care of them in His way at His time.

This means that we are called to be humble in the way we look at ourselves and our deeds and accomplishments. We are to be humble in the ways that we look at others and their deeds and accomplishments. As I said a few weeks ago, all of our successes, all of our accomplishments are not our own, they have come because of the Gifts, the time, talent, and treasure which God has blessed us with in this world. They are not ours but instead they are God's.

Submission and humility are Christian traits, based on the examples that Jesus gave us throughout his life here on Earth.

Finally, through Jesus's submission and humility in his baptism we are given a vision of what awaits for all true believers.

After Jesus was baptized the heavens opened up and a dove descended from above. After his baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus Christ. This is why we hold baptism as one of the main sacraments of the Church. Many of the Jewish people of Jesus's day believed that the Holy Spirit was no longer among them. So, seeing or hearing about the Holy Spirit descending from the opened heaven indicated that Jesus Christ was indeed the Messiah that they had been waiting for, the one come to bring them salvation.

This should teach all of us that it is through our Faith, shown in our humility and submission, shown in our obedience to the Lord's teachings that we are blessed with the Holy Spirit in our lives, and it is that blessing which marks us as one of God's people and grants us eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

When Jesus was baptized a voice from Heaven, the voice of the Father said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.' The Father was pleased with the faithfulness of the Son, this is the same voice that all Christians seek to hear when they enter the kingdom of heaven, the voice which will say to each of us, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'

If we live our lives faithfully here on earth, we will receive the greatest gift we can ever receive, our salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. The act of Baptism is a symbol of that salvation, a symbolic reminder of the day that Jesus came to the river Jordan in humility and submitted himself to be baptized with a baptism that he did not require, by a man that was just a man, in obedience and in submission to the will of the Lord.

This is what your baptism symbolized, this is what your confirmation symbolized, submitting yourself humbly to the One True Living God's will in your life. We baptize with water as a symbol of the true baptism of the Holy Spirit which comes upon all true believers in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

So those of you who have been baptized, are you walking in the way of the Lord in humility and submission to God's plan in your life? Are you living your life as an example of Christ in your life? If yes, carry on good and faithful servant, if no, listen to the words of the baptism that we will have today and recognize that they are the same words that have been spoken over baptisms for centuries, a promise between, a person, even a child, parents, congregations and God to walk their life in this world in faith, in submission and obedience to God in all that we think, all that we say and all that we do.

Let us pray,

A Prayer for the Baptism of Our Lord

O Lord Jesus Christ,
 in order to fulfill all righteousness,
 you were baptized by John in the Jordan.
 Clothe us with this same righteousness,
 that as your baptized people,
 we, too, may be called beloved children of your Father,
 and because of you, know he is well pleased with us;
 through your mercy, O our God,
 you are blessed,
 and live and govern all things,
 now and forever.
 Amen.

Hymn #570: "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

I have decided to follow Jesus;
 I have decided to follow Jesus;
 I have decided to follow Jesus,
 No turning back, no turning back.

The world behind me, the cross before me;
 the world behind me, the cross before me;
 the world behind me, the cross behind me,
 No turning back, no turning back.

Though none go with me, I still will follow;
 though none go with me, I still will follow;
 though none go with me, I still will follow;
 No turning back, no turning back.

Will you decide now to follow Jesus?
 Will you decide now to follow Jesus?
 Will you decide now to follow Jesus?
 No turning back, no turning back.

Baptism

The Minister addresses all present:

Hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ:
 All authority in heaven and on earth
 has been given to me.
 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
 baptizing them in the name of the Father,
 and of the Son,
 and of the Holy Spirit,
 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.
 And remember, I am with you always,
 to the end of the age.

Obeying the word of our Lord Jesus,
 and confident of his promises,
 we baptize those whom God has called.

In baptism God claims us,
 and seals us to show that we belong to God.
 God frees us from sin and death,
 uniting us with Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection.
 By water and the Holy Spirit,
 we are made members of the church, the body of Christ,
 and joined to Christ's ministry of love, peace, and justice.
 Let us remember with joy our own baptism,
 as we celebrate this sacrament.

An Elder presents the candidate for baptism,
 On behalf of the session,
 I present Tessa Echlin, daughter of Holden and Peri-Ann Echlin,
 to receive the sacrament of Baptism.

The Minister addresses parents presenting children for baptism:
 Do you desire that Tessa be baptized?

The Parent(s) respond:
 We do.

Minister:
 Relying on God's grace,
 do you promise to live the Christian faith,
 and to teach that faith to your child?

The Parent(s) respond:

We do.

The Minister addresses the congregation:

Do you, as members of the church of Jesus Christ,
promise to guide and nurture Tessa
by word and deed,
with love and prayer,
encouraging them to know and follow Christ
and to be faithful members of his church?

The people respond:

We do.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Through baptism we enter the covenant God has established.
Within this covenant God gives us new life,
guards us from evil,
and nurtures us in love.

In embracing that covenant, we choose whom we will serve,
by turning from evil
and turning to Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION

The Minister continues:

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

The People stand.

All present profess their faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Water is poured visibly and audibly into the font.

THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER

The following prayers is said by the Minister.

Eternal and gracious God, we give you thanks.
In countless ways you have revealed yourself in ages past,
and have blessed us with signs of your grace.

We praise you that through the waters of the sea,
you led your people Israel out of bondage,
into freedom in the land of your promise.

We praise you for sending Jesus your Son,
who for us was baptized in the waters of the Jordan,
and was anointed as the Christ by your Holy Spirit.
Through the baptism of his death and resurrection,
you set us free from the bondage of sin and death,
and give us cleansing and rebirth.

We praise you that in baptism
you give us your Holy Spirit,
who teaches us and leads us into all truth,
filling us with a variety of gifts,
that we might proclaim the gospel to all nations
and serve you as a royal priesthood.
The minister may touch the water.

Pour out your Spirit upon us
and upon this water,
that this font may be your womb of new birth.
May all who now pass through these waters
be delivered from death to life,
from bondage to freedom,
from sin to righteousness.
Bind them to the household of faith,
guard them from all evil.
Strengthen them to serve you with joy
until the day you make all things new.
To you be all praise, honor, and glory;
through Jesus Christ our Savior,

who, with you and the Holy Spirit,
lives and reigns forever.
Amen.

THE BAPTISM

The candidates, other than infants, who are to be baptized by pouring or sprinkling may kneel.

Calling each candidate by their Christian (given) name or names only, the Minister shall pour or sprinkle water visibly and generously on the candidate's head, or immerse the candidate in the water, while saying:

Tessa Echlin, I baptize you
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

The Minister lays hands on the head of each person baptized, while saying one of the following:

O Lord, uphold Tessa by your Holy Spirit.
Give her the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord,
the spirit of joy in your presence,
both now and forever.
Amen.

WELCOME

A representative of the Session, addresses the congregation in these or similar words:

Tessa Echlin has been received into the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic church
through baptism.

God has made them members of the household of God,
to share with us in the priesthood of Christ.
Let us welcome the newly baptized.

The People respond, saying:

**With joy and thanksgiving
we welcome you into Christ's church
to share with us in his ministry,
for we are all one in Christ**

Those who have been baptized are welcomed in a manner appropriate to the particular congregation.

THE PEACE

The Minister then says to all assembled at the font:

The peace of Christ be with you.

They respond:

And also with you.

***The People may exchange signs of God's peace, greeting those who have been baptized.
(Baptismal Gifts)***

Invitation to Offering

Offering

Presenting our tithes and offerings is an act of worship. I want to encourage you to write a cheque and drop it in the mail to the church using your envelope, if you have one. (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 161, 1 Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 3E3). We also have another option for you for giving and that is you can make an e-Transfer. This note from our treasurer:

E-transfers are now accepted. Please note the new email address for this purpose only. standrewspert offering@gmail.com If you have an Offering Envelope #, please include it in the message section of the INTERAC transfer page you fill in. If you wish any part of your donation to go to a specific fund (e.g., Presbyterian Sharing) please mention this in your message.

Offertory Prayer

(Congregant Prepared)

Closing Hymn: "Go Now in Peace"

Go now in peace,
never be afraid.
God will go with you
each hour of ev'ry day.

Go now in faith,
steadfast, strong and true.
Know He will guide you
in all you do.

Go now in love,
and show you believe.
Reach out to others
so all the world can see.

God will be there
watching from above.
Go now in peace,
in faith, and in love.

Pastoral Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
you emptied yourself of heaven's riches
and came to share our lot.
You made yourself poor
so that by your poverty we might become rich.
Perfect in purity, you submitted to baptism,
like any sinner in need of cleansing.
So many today need your tender care.
Tend your prisoners, lonely and abandoned.
Tend your addicts, trapped by lethal hungers.
Tend your refugees, footsore, threadbare, humiliated by their loss.
Tend your unemployed and underpaid,
your lonely ones, your depressed ones, your wretched ones.
O Lord Jesus Christ, welcome our brothers and sisters
whose calling this day is to die.
Escort them by a party of angels into your radiance
and enlighten them with the rays of your love.
O Lord Jesus Christ, you who were baptized like any sinner,
love us sinners and intercede for us in the hour of our need. Amen.

Benediction

May the Holy Spirit of God,
who at Jordan's riverside
descended upon the Father's well-loved Son, Jesus Christ,
and empowered him to obey God's will,
now rest upon you.
May the Spirit give you courage and strength
to turn away from sin,
to obey God's will,
and to proclaim the coming reign of God.
May the triune God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you and keep you always. Amen