

Baptism of Our Lord

Mark 1:4-11 1-7-18

“All the People Were Going Out To Him”

Messiah: means “deliverer”. About 400 years before Jesus’ birth the term was originally applied to the Persian Cyrus the Great who released the Jews from their captivity in Babylon after 70 years of bondage and allowed them to go home to Palestine. For example, Isaiah calls Cyrus the Messiah / savior (Isaiah 45:1-8)

A. Some historical background

1. Mark begins the Jesus story with John the Baptizer
2. The “Anointed One” – The Messiah

B. Mark’s signs of authenticity...the dove and the voice

C. So what does all this mean for Christians today?

2nd Sunday after Epiphany

John 1:45 1-14-18

PERSON-TO-PERSON

“Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘we have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.’” John 1:45

We are often led to believe or do something because of a witness and invitation from another individual – in other words, it happens person-to-person. That’s how things work.

“Our Gospel lesson for this morning also tells us this is how things work with respect to our faith in Jesus Christ.” That’s how it started with Jesus and how it’s been for 2,000 plus years. Examples abound.

Philip and Nathanael

- People in the Gospels
- People in the Book of Acts
- People today

We reflect on our own experience

How is it that we have come to faith and have been sustained in the same?

How might God want to use you and me as his person-to-person ambassadors?

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“The Holy Spirit does not come without the Word. But He wants to come through the harp, that is, through meditation on the Word or through the voices of father, mother, or others.”

Ewald Plass, ed., *What Luther Says*, CPH, 1991, #4726, p. 1463.

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Third Sunday after Epiphany

1 Corinthians 7:29-31 1-21-18

“The Appointed Time Has Grown Short”

A. “*Scriptura ex scripturam explicanda est...*” The three readings help us understand our text...

- 1. Jonah’s urgent message: “*Yet forty days...*”**
- 2. Jesus’ first disciples: “*Immediately...*”**
- 3. St. Paul to the Church: “*The appointed time has grown short...the present form of this world is passing away.*”**

B. So what does this Scripture mean for you and for me?

*A Luther Sermon Quotation: (From the ex position of Psalm 62:10 in 1526) Even if riches were to come to you in a rightful way, from God, do not rely on them and make mammon your God; for possessions are not given that we may rely on them and glory in them, which is futile and foolish, but that we may use and enjoy them and share them with others... Our possessions should be in our hands, not n our hearts. Thus St. Paul tells the Corinthians (1Corinthians 7:31) that we should use the world as though we used it not, etc. (Plass, *What Luther Says*, 4304, p. 1339)*

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### **4th Sunday after Epiphany**

**Mark 1:23-26    1-28-18**

**WHAT HAVE YOU TO DO WITH US?**

*“Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.’ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent, and come out of him! And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.’”* Mark 1:23-26

To help us understand the message of our Gospel lesson, it is beneficial to imagine what it was like on that Sabbath in the synagogue – the place, the time, the man possessed by evil.

The words Jesus spoke to the man were exactly what the authoritative Word of God does to people – what it did to this man and does in us.

· The Word Jesus speaks REVEALS

· The Word Jesus speaks HEALS

The good news that comes to us from this incident is we know the evil in us and around us does NOT have the last word. Yes, Jesus’ authoritative word reveals dark forces at work in our lives, but that same word also frees us again and again and will one day usher us into God’s presence where we will shout, *“Free at last, Free at last. Thank God, I’m free at last.”*

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*“Though devils all the world should fill, All eager to devour us, We tremble not, we fear no ill, They shall not overpower us. This world’s prince may still, Scowl fierce as he will, He can harm us none, He’s judged; the deed is done; One little word can tell him.”*

Ewald Plass, ed., *What Luther Says*, CPH, 1991, #3822, p. 1201