

St. Barnabas Homily, 2nd Sun of Advent 12/09/2018 (LUKE 3: 1 - 6) Yr C

THIS WEEKEND,,, WE CELEBRATE,,, THE 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT,,, AS WE PREPARE FOR THE COMING OF THE NATIVITY.

IN TODAY'S READING,,, WE FIND JOHN THE BAPTIST,,, COMING OUT OF THE WILDERNESS,,, WEARING CLOTHING MADE OF CAMELS HAIR,,, WITH A WIDE LEATHER BELT AROUND HIS WAIST,,, SMELLING REALLY BAD AND PREACHING A MESSAGE OF REPENTENCE.

JOHN ISN'T GENTLE,,, OR EVEN POLITE,,, HE OFFENDS EVERYONE,,, WHO MIGHT BE OFFENDED,,, AND HE CUTS RIGHT TO THE CHASE,,, SAYING:

REPENT! FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD,,, HAS COME NEAR. YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH,,, PAY ATTENTION – HE IS COMING!

JOHN'S MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF HIS TIME,,, IS THE EXACT SAME MESSAGE GIVEN TO US TODAY!

REPENT- GET READY! PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

CUT THROUGH LIFE'S MANY DISTRACTIONS,,, AND ELIMINATE THE NONSENSE IN YOUR LIVES,,, AND,,, PAY ATTENTION! STOP TURNING AWAY FROM GOD! GOD IS IN SEARCH OF YOU,,, SO BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, STOP RUNNING AFTER

“ALL THOSE ‘THINGS’ THAT GLITTER!”

DURING ADVENT,,, WE HEAR A LOT ABOUT JOHN THE BAPTIST,,, HIS MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE,,, AND HOW SO MANY PEOPLE HAD GONE OUT INTO THE WILDERNESS TO HEAR HIM,,, AND TO BE BAPTIZED.

OVER 300 YEARS HAD PASSED SINCE A PROPHET PROCLAIMED A SIMILAR MESSAGE IN ISRAEL,,, BUT THE WONDERFUL THING ABOUT JOHN,,, IS THAT;

JOHN REDIRECTS THE FOCUS OF ATTENTION,,
AWAY FROM HIMSELF,,
AND ONTO

THE MESSIAH,, JESUS CHRIST,,

WHO SCRIPTURE SAYS; ***“IS GREATER THAN JOHN”.***

WHEN JOHN SPOKE OF ***THE ONE GREATER THAN HIM,,***
HE WAS SPEAKING ABOUT THE ONE WHO CAME
FROM NAZARETH OF GALILEE,, TO BE BAPTIZED BY
JOHN IN THE JORDAN RIVER. HE WAS SPEAKING OF:

JESUS CHRIST!

EACH OF THE 4 GOSPELS,, GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF
JESUS’ BAPTISM,, AND THAT ALONE SIGNIFIES THE
IMPORTANCE OF THIS EVENT.

THE UNIQUE;***SON OF GOD,, EMANUEL,, GOD WITH US,,***
IS VISIBLY IDENTIFIED IN THE EYES OF HUMANITY,,
AND ALSO,, ***IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD THE FATHER.***

ON THAT DAY,, CHRIST’S IDENTITY WAS UNVEILED
BEFORE JOHN AND THE CROWDS OF PEOPLE.

***IT MUST HAVE BEEN A POWERFUL SCENE,, THAT DAY!
THE CROWDS WATCHED,, AS JOHN THE BAPTIST,,
LOWERED JESUS UNDER THE WATER OF THE JORDAN
RIVER. THEN,, AS JOHN BROUGHT JESUS UP,,
SUDDENLY,, THEY SAW THE HEAVENS ABOVE,, BE
TORN OPEN,, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT LIKE A DOVE,,
DECEND INTO JESUS,, MAKING A COMPLETE UNION
BETWEEN JESUS & THE HOLY SPIRIT.***

THIS AWESOME SIGHT,, WAS AN ANSWER TO AN OLD
PRAYER,, THAT THE PROPHET ISAIAH CRIED OUT TO
GOD,, SOME 700 YEARS BEFORE JESUS’ BAPTISM,,
WHEN HE SAID:

***“OH,, THAT YOU WOULD REND THE HEAVENS,, AND
COME DOWN,, TO MAKE YOUR NAME KNOWN”.***

AND THAT’S EXACTLY WHAT TOOK PLACE,, WHEN
JESUS CAME UP,, OUT OF THE WATER.

THE HEAVENS TORN OPEN,,, IS ANOTHER WONDERFUL SUPERNATURAL EVENT,,, LIKE THE STAR,,, THAT LED THE MAGI TO JESUS IS A **GOD EVENT** THAT REVEALED TO ALL OF HUMANITY,,, THAT;

THIS WAS TRULY THE SON OF GOD!

YOU MIGHT BE SAYING TO YOURSELVES,,, THAT;
“*I SURE WISH,,, THAT I COULD SEE SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPEN TO ME. IT WOULD MAKE BELIEVING,,, AND HAVING A DEEPER FAITH,,, MUCH EASIER*”.

WELL,,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, THE MASSES OF PEOPLE,,, WHO HAD COME OUT TO SEE AND HEAR JOHN THE BAPTIST,,, AND TO BE BAPTIZED,,, ACTUALLY SAW AND HEARD THESE AWESOME EVENTS! THEY EVEN HEARD THE VOICE OF **GOD THE FATHER** FROM HEAVEN,,, JUST LIKE THEIR ANCESTORS HAD EXPERIENCED,,, IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

NOW,,, THEY HEAR **GOD THE FATHER** SAY;

YOU ARE MY BELOVED SON,,, WITH WHOM,,, I AM WELL PLEASED!

THEY SAW,,, THEY HEARD,,, AND BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, THEY WERE ACTUAL PARTICIPANTS IN THIS SUPERNATURAL,,, HISTORICAL,,, GOD EVENT,,, YET,,, ONLY THREE YEARS LATER,,, THIS SAME CROWD,,, FROM JERUSALEM,,, CRUCIFIED JESUS!

THE JEWISH PEOPLE,,, AND THEIR RELIGIOUS LEADERS,,, WERE ALWAYS ASKING FOR SIGNS AND MIRACLES,,, FROM JESUS,,, TO PROVE WHO HE WAS!

REMEMBER,,, JESUS HAD HEALED THE SICK,,, RAISED THE DEAD,,, MADE THE DEAF,,, HEAR,,, FORGAVE SINS HEALED THE LEPERS,,, MADE THE BLIND,,, SEE,,, FED THOUSANDS WITH FIVE LOAVES AND THREE FISH,,, BUT,,, THE PEOPLE WERE NEVER SATISFIED!

SO,,, JESUS REBUKED THEM,,, SAYING;

“UNLESS YOU PEOPLE SEE MIRACULOUS SIGNS AND WONDERS,,, YOU WILL NEVER BELIEVE!”

THESE THINGS,,, BRING US BACK TO THE VERY PURPOSE OF JESUS’ BAPTISM.;

HE WAS THE PERFECT,,, SINLESS,,, LAMB OF GOD,,, THE SON OF GOD,,, WHO KNEW NO SIN!

HIS BAPTISM,,, WAS NOT ONE OF JOHN’S BAPTISMS,,, AND IT WAS NOT ONE OF REPENTANCE,,, OR EVEN RESTORATION. SO,,, IF NOT FOR THESE REASONS,,, THEN;

(*) WHY WAS JESUS BAPTIZED?

(*) WHAT KIND OF BAPTISM WAS IT?

(*) WHAT WAS THE NATURE OF JESUS’ BAPTISM?

WELL,,, HAVE YOU EVER HEARD THE OLD PHRASE;

“A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS?”

IN THIS WORD-PICTURE,,, IN THE GOSPEL,,, WE SEE: ***THE HEAVENS BEING TORN OPEN,,, THE HOLY SPIRIT DESCENDING INTO JESUS,,,*** AND THE FATHER’S VOICE SAYING;

YOU ARE MY BELOVED SON,,, IN YOU,,, I AM WELL PLEASED”.

(*) ***NOTHING,,, CAN BE MORE SPECIFIC!***

(*) ***NOTHING,,, CAN EXPLAIN,,, WITH GREATER CLARITY,,, GOD’S INTENT,,, THAN TO IDENTIFY JESUS,,, AS HIS ONE & ONLY SON!***

NOT JUST ANOTHER,,, IN A LONG LINE OF PROPHETS,,, ***BUT,,, GOD’S ONLY SON,,,*** IN A WAY THAT OTHERS,,, CREATED IN GOD’S IMAGE ARE NOT!

THROUGH THIS BAPTISM,,, ***JESUS,,, GOD INCARNATE,,, GOD IN THE FLESH,,, WITH DIVINE PURPOSE,,, IDENTIFIES WITH YOU AND ME!***

GOD BLESSED AND SANCTIFIED THE WATERS OF THE JORDAN RIVER,,, SO THAT YOU AND I,,, COULD ENTER INTO THE WATERS OF BAPTISM,,, AND IDENTIFY WITH,,, AND BECOME,,, ONE IN JESUS CHRIST!

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, **CHRIST DIDN'T NEED TO BE BAPTIZED,, HE IS SINLESS!** HE DID THIS FOR US! HE BECAME LIKE US,,, SO THAT WE MIGHT BE IN HIM,,, AND GROW IN HIS LIKENESS!

OUR BAPTISM INTO CHRIST,,, MEANS,,, THAT TODAY,,, WE CAN HEAR THE SAME LOVING VOICE OF THE FATHER,,, THAT JESUS HEARD,,, AND THE SAME MESSAGE THAT JESUS HEARD,,, FROM HIS FATHER,,, FROM HEAVEN,,, AS IT COMES TO US,,, THOSE WHOSE HEARTS HAVE RECEIVED THE LOVE,,, GRACE AND FORGIVENESS OF JESUS,,, BY FAITH!

YOU ARE MY BELOVED CHILD,,, WITH YOU,,, I AM WELL PLEASSED!

NOW,,, YOU MIGHT THINK THAT SEEMS OUTRAGEOUS!

AND YOU MIGHT EVEN SAY: **WHO ME? WHO AM I,,, THAT GOD THE FATHER WOULD SAY THAT TO ME?**

WELL,,, YOU WERE JUST TOLD,,, WHO YOU ARE!

YOU ARE; ***ONE WITH JESUS,,, BAPTIZED INTO HIM,,, LOVED BY HIM,,, AND LOVED EQUALLY WITH HIM,,, BY GOD THE FATHER!***

ONCE AGAIN,,, TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU FULLY UNDERSTAND,,, THAT WHAT THE FATHER SAID TO JESUS,,, HE ALSO SAYS TO YOU AND ME TODAY!

YOU,,, ARE MY BELOVED CHILD,,, WITH YOU,,, I AM WELL PLEASSED!

SO,,, WHEN YOU GET HOME TODAY,,, I ASK YOU TO TAKE A MOMENT AND WRITE DOWN THOSE WORDS OF THE FATHER,,, ON A STICK-UM.

AND,,, PUT THEM IN A PLACE,,, WHERE YOU WILL ALWAYS SEE THOSE SPECIAL WORDS,,, TO REMIND YOU,,, OF WHO YOU ARE!

AFTER THAT,,, JUST SIT BACK FOR A MOMENT,,, RELAX,,, AND TAKE A CLOSE LOOK,,, INTO THOSE SECRET PLACES OF YOUR HEART,,, AND IN YOUR MOMENT OF QUIETNESS AND REFLECTION,,, REPENT AND ASK JESUS,,,

FOR FORGIVENESS OF YOUR SINS.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, THROUGH HIS MERCY AND FORGIVENESS,,, YOU WILL HEAR THE LORD JESUS SAY THIS TO YOU,,,

YOU ARE MY BELOVED CHILD,,, WITH YOU,,, I AM WELL PLEASSED!

+++ AMEN +++

(1,223 Wds – 6pgs)