**Jesus’ Baptism & The HS** Jan 12, 2022 Lk 3:15-17, 21-22

*Fear not, I have redeemed you. I have* ***summoned you by name; You are mine***. (Isaiah 43:1)

* If these words don’t give you a sense of belonging, they should because we belong.
* Common thread through the Scripture readings today is the Holy Spirit.
* Begins in Isaiah with God declaring to His people, “***Fear not, I have redeemed you. I have summoned you by name; You are mine***.”
* Read in Acts where the receiving of the HS was so important that when the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted the Word of God, they immediately sent Peter and John to them to pray with them to receive the HS.
* We read where Peter & John laid their hands on these Samarians & they did indeed receive the HS.
* And then there is the account in Luke’s gospel where Jesus was baptized by John in the River Jordan and we read that the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in bodily form like a dove.
* Because the Holy Spirit is so prevalent in

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today’s scripture readings, I think it is worthy of further exploration.

* Not to overlook however the controversial subject of ***Jesus’ baptism by John***.
* This is a troubling thing for some people, but it is also something that is very important to grasp.
* And, because this too involves the Holy Spirit, I’ll also do a quick review of why Jesus was being baptized by John, and why that has been such a controversial thing for many and for the church.
* Not only was this a cause for concern in the early church, it was also a cause for concern for John himself.
* Luke doesn’t record John’s protest, but if we look at Matthew’s account we read: “***Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?***’” (Matt 3:13-14)
* Because of John’s powerful ministry, the

people were wondering if John might possibly be the Christ.

* We just read how John responded to them by saying: “***I baptize you with water. But***

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***one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the HS & with fire.***”

* John’s baptism represented only one thing – **repentance**
* John was calling people to repentance, and for those who responded he would then baptize them to symbolize that they were cleansed and would be leading a different life.
* **Why** would Jesus go down into the water and ask John to baptism him?
* Jesus was sinless – He had nothing to repent off.
* That is why even John protested.
* He said: “***‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?***’”
* It is no wonder that John and the early church were confused.
* We find the answer to this in Matthew’s gospel where Jesus’ response to John’s protest is simply: “***That it is the will of God that he be baptized***.”
* Jesus had to be baptized by John in order to stress His solidarity with sinners – to

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identify with them – to identify with you & me.

* “***The will of God and To identify with us***” Just what does that mean?
* I believe this is best explained using an example from the Alpha course (The righteousness of Christ taking our sin so that we then walk in the righteousness of Christ) 2 Cor 5:21
* If Jesus’ purpose was to bear the sins of humanity – yours and mine, then it was/is necessary for him to meet us where we are at – in our sinfulness.
* We read numerous times in the gospels where the Pharisees were very upset with Jesus because he ate and drank with outcasts and sinners.
* Jesus’ response to them was: “***It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.***” (Matt 9:12)
* In other words, he was going to be where the sick are. In this case the sick are the sinners and outcasts.
* This is also something that today’s modern and progressive society has misrepresented.

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* They would say that the fact that Jesus spent time with sinners indicates his approval or condoning of their actions.
* But, that’s not so.
* Let’s not forget the woman caught in adultery, or the woman at the well.
* Jesus certainly spent time with them, but in the case of the woman caught in adultery, he told her to Go and sin no more, and the woman at the well - He confronted her with all that was wrong in her life.
* In both cases there was a transformation in their lives.
* In Matthew’s gospel Jesus said it was proper for John to baptize him to fulfill all righteousness.
* We don’t have to hide our deep secrets from Jesus because he already knows them. He wants to lift us out of the mire, and when we turn to Him, even though we are still sinners, we walk in His righteousness.
* That is how Jesus was identifying with the sinners.
* Just as he identified with & took our sin on the cross of Calvary

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* Jesus said that he came to seek & save the lost (Lk 19:10)
  + ***That meant he was willing to associate with them and he was willing to identify with them.***
  + I’ll give you an illustration that may be a bit hard to some to visualize.
  + We know that many people were going to be baptized by John. So picture, if you will, a lineup of people waiting to be baptized by John and Jesus is standing in that line waiting for his turn.
  + That is identifying with the sinner.
  + WHY would Jesus want to identify with the sinners?
* Because he wanted all to be saved.
* It is still the same today
* Jesus identifies with us – even in our sin.
* But he does not want us to remain in our situation of sin.
* And when we turn to Jesus, he sustains us and strengthens us to walk with Him through the Holy Spirit.
* The Holy Spirit was never meant to be some mysterious thing, but rather just a normal part of who we are in our everyday

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life.

* Holy Spirit gives us our identity in Christ
* Gives us freedom & joy in that identity
  + Brings us healing & wholeness in our identity
* Gives us courage to stand for truth –courage to be all that God calls us to be.
* I believe the best way to explore the Holy Spirit is to share a true life story of someone I believe we all know off and respect – ***Billy Graham***
* I’m going to share a bit from the book: “***A Prophet with Honor - The Billy Graham Story***.”
* As I read this account, keep in mind that Billy Graham was a Baptist.
* My experience with Baptists and the Holy Spirit was an Alpha Holy Spirit weekend that Jean and I were leading, and I can say that, in this case they were definitely not open to have anything to do with the Holy Spirit.
* A very significant thing happened to Billy Graham at the young age of 28 when he had an encounter with a young Welsh evangelist named Stephen Olford whom he

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was visiting in Wales.

* Olford actually spent two days teaching Billy Graham about the HS.
* He led Billy Graham step by step through the process that had resulted in a profound spiritual renewal in him a few month earlier.
* The 1st day, writes Olford, we spent on the Word; not memorizing the texts – but on what it really means to expose oneself to the Word in one’s quiet time.

*Read from pgs 101 102*

* In reading this book, I would say that Billy Graham definitely reached his full potential in God’s calling for his life, but he did so because he was Spirit filled.
* Willing to acknowledge his need for the Holy Spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to work in him in truly seeking God’s will, and throughout his life and ministry he was always able to walk in the joy of the Lord.
* We obviously are not Billy Graham, but if we, in humility, can allow the HS to heal us and empower us, then we can walk in the true joy of the Lord knowing we are responding to His will for our lives.

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* + When we think we don’t need the Holy Spirit – what we are actually saying is we can do it on our own.
* Our true destiny however is to walk always in the power of the Holy Spirit – which is the real presence of Jesus in our lives.
* Remember who we belong to.
* God said: “***I have summoned you by name; You are mine***.”