

THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD!

“Who is he?” That’s a question people asked about 2,000 years ago when Jesus walked the face of this earth. There were some who believed he was the promised Messiah, the Son of God. The majority of people had all different kinds of thoughts about who he might be. That has not changed throughout the years. Many think of Jesus as one of the greatest teachers who ever lived; a man who was kind and compassionate; a man who encouraged people to love each other. Was he the Son of God? No, he was just a nice man. I met a young atheist years ago who told me he believed Jesus was a pretty cool guy because he was the first hippie who ever lived. He rebelled against the authorities of his day and they killed him for it. Oh, yes, all kinds of ideas are out there.

How about you? Who do you believe Jesus is? By the grace of God the Holy Spirit has opened our eyes to see Jesus for whom he truly is. The account of Jesus’ baptism makes us able to say with confidence. **There is no doubt about it. Jesus is the Son of God.** We have no doubts because of John’s testimony about Jesus and even more importantly, because of the testimony of God the Father himself.

About 30 years had passed since the shepherds found the baby Jesus in a stable at Bethlehem and worshiped him. Don’t you think they may have been wondering where this baby Jesus who was now a grown man had gone? What was he doing? He is supposed to be the Savior of the world but it seems like he vanished off the face of the earth. Nothing was happening.

That was about to change as we go to the Jordan River and see John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, at work, preaching a message of repentance. Besides his hairy robe and his odd diet, what set John apart from the other preachers of his day was the location of his temple, the wilderness; the message he preached, ***Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near!***; and his baptisms. John’s work was to prepare the hearts of the people to welcome Jesus, the promised Messiah.

The time for the Messiah to make his public appearance had come. There were no bands playing, no crowds lined up to cheer him, no grand entrance. Jesus who looked like an ordinary guy simply walked up to John and asked John to baptize him. Why would Jesus ask such a thing? If Jesus is the sinless Son of God, why would he want or need to be baptized? John struggled with that question himself because he knew who Jesus was. There was no doubt about it. Jesus was the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world; the one whom John said ***is more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie***; the Son of God who was both true God and true man. John felt unworthy and rightfully so. So why did Jesus ask? Jesus needed to be baptized to let the world know that he, the Son of God, had come to stand with sinners, and even more importantly, to stand in the place of sinners. Jesus came to take upon himself the sins of the entire world as well as the punishment for the sins of the entire world. So John did as he was asked.

When John baptized Jesus, the people witnessed something absolutely amazing. ***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.”*** What a breathtaking event it must have been to see the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus in the form of a dove and then hear the booming voice of God the Father stating that Jesus was not just some ordinary guy! He was his very own Son sent to earth on a mission, a mission that God the Father put his stamp of approval on, the mission of paying for the sins of the world. His enemy was the devil who was going to fight Jesus every step of the way. All the devil wanted was for Jesus to sin once. The devil was going to influence

people to hate Jesus, attack him, reject him, betray him, beat and whip him, holler out “Crucify him,” and pound nails into his hands and feet all in an effort to make Jesus fail. Jesus did not fail. He died but rose again. Where did Jesus find the strength to resist and defeat the devil? He was the sinless Son of God who also had the support of the Holy Spirit and the backing of his heavenly Father who told him, ***You are my Son whom I love, with you I am well pleased.*** How blessed those people were to witness Jesus’ baptism and how blessed we are that God recorded this event for us to read and hear! What a baptism!

My friends, the same thing can be said about your baptism. Your baptism too was an amazing event. If you were baptized when you were a little baby, through the power of God’s Word connected with the water, the Holy Spirit descended on you and God spoke from heaven, “You are my child whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” The Holy Spirit washed away every one of your sins, the sins you inherited from your parents at conception. He created faith in your heart and God became your heavenly Father. You who are a sinner can claim to be God’s child not because of anything you have done but because of what God has done for you in Baptism. When a child is adopted, the child doesn’t make any promises about being a good and faithful child and doesn’t pay any legal fees to join the family. The adopting parents make all the promises, sign all the documents and pay any costs to finalize the adoption. The same is true in Baptism. The Holy Spirit entered your heart and the Father said to you, “You are my forgiven child whom I promise to love and take care of for the rest of your life.” The adoption papers were signed and paid for with Jesus, the Son of God’s holy, precious blood.

Did you hear what I just said? Paid for by Jesus, the Son of God. Jesus is the Son of God. There is no doubt about it. You might be thinking, “Pastor, you aren’t telling us anything new. We know that. We hear that all the time. Aren’t you beating a dead horse?” Am I? Do you ever get tired of your spouse or your kids saying, “I love you?” It’s nice to hear those words and be reassured especially when you are having a bad day. Can you ever get tired of hearing again and again that Jesus is the Son of God? I hope not. Just think what that means. It means that your baptism was not some meaningless ceremony. Your sins were washed away and the Holy Spirit did create faith in Jesus, the Son of God, the only faith that saves.

When the devil comes and says to you, “How can God be well pleased with you when he sees everything that you do, hears every word that comes out of your mouth and reads every thought that pops into your head? He is holy and has to be disgusted with you. You deserve only his wrath and punishment and that’s what you are going to get.” You can answer, “I know that’s what I deserve but Jesus is the Son of God who lived and died to pay for my sins. Through faith in Jesus I am clothed in Jesus’ holiness so that means when God looks at me, he doesn’t see sin. All he sees is the white robe of Christ’s righteousness and can’t help but be pleased with that.”

When you wonder what the future is going to hold for your children and grandchildren and the temptations they are going to face; when your teen-age children are rebelling and you aren’t sure what to do next; when you are down and out, lonely and depressed; when you are struggling with an addiction whether it be drugs, alcohol, gambling, pornography; when you are lying in a hospital bed or recovering from surgery; when your cane or walker has to be your companion wherever you go; when you are getting treatments for cancer; when a loved one dies and the pain and tears don’t seem to go away; as you get older and weaker and know that death is probably not that far down the road, is there anything more assuring or that can give you more strength than knowing without a doubt that Jesus is the Son of God, the 2nd person of the Trinity, your Savior, your brother, your friend?

Yet, life can get hard at times, real hard. So how do you find strength for each day? How do you get the trust that says “There is no doubt about it. Jesus is the Son of God?” Just as the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus and gave him support and strength as he began his ministry, so also the Holy Spirit descended on you at your Baptism and continues to do that every time you hear or read God’s Word and receive Holy Communion. You find strength when you think back to your Baptism and say with joy in your heart. “I am a baptized child of God.” You find strength when you receive the Lord’s Supper and hear Jesus say to you as you receive the bread and wine, ***Take and eat, this is my body. Take and drink, this is my blood given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins.*** You find strength in Jesus’ promise, ***Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.*** You find hope in God’s promise, ***Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you and you will honor me.*** On your own, you are weak and no match for the devil. The good news is that you are not on your own. You have the Son of God on your side and in your heart, the Son of God who already defeated the devil for you.

Who is he? That question about Jesus has been asked throughout the centuries and will be asked by people until the end of time. Sad to say, the majority of people do not believe he is the Son of God, the Savior of the world. By the grace of God, we do. Through the Gospel, the Holy Spirit has revealed to us the truth about who Jesus is, a truth this morning that is based on John the Baptist’s testimony as well as the testimony from the lips of God the Father himself. There is no truth that brings more comfort, hope and peace. This is the only truth that brings forgiveness and salvation. My friends, what a blessing it is to go through life knowing this truth about Jesus. Jesus is the Son of God. There is no doubt about it. Amen.