

January 12, 2014
The Baptism of Our Lord

“Listen to the Father Speak about His Son”

ISAIAH 42:1-7

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. ² He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. ³ A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; ⁴ he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope.” ⁵ This is what God the LORD says-- he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it: ⁶ “I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, ⁷ to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.”

I can't imagine what it must have been like for John the Baptist to baptize Jesus and then see the Holy Spirit descending down on Jesus in the form of a dove. I can't imagine what it must have been like to hear the Father speak from heaven and say of Jesus, "This is my Son whom I love, with him I am well pleased." The voice of the Father and the anointing of the Holy Spirit clearly proclaim Jesus as the one whom we must trust for our hope of eternal life with our God. John the Baptist carried this with him all his life. Later he told the people that he was convinced Jesus was the Son of God because of what he had heard and experienced at Jesus' baptism.

The Lord your God wants you to believe in Jesus as his Son. He wants you to believe he is your only Savior. That is why God has chosen to speak to us on the pages of the Bible. In the words just read to you from the prophet Isaiah our heavenly Father talks to us about Jesus as his chosen servant in whom he delights. We actually get to hear what the Lord our God says to us about his Son. First we hear the Father speak to us about our Savior and then we hear him speak to his Son to encourage him in the work of saving us.

The Father speaks to us about our Savior

Listen now to what the Father says to you about his Son. It is priceless. He says, "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight." I like the translation that reads, "Behold my servant!" That word calls us on us to stop whatever we are doing and look at Jesus, look at Jesus as God's servant. Jesus came to serve us. In Matthew 20 he says, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many." Everything about Jesus' life on this earth showed people how much he cared about them and wanted to serve them. Here is the creator of the universe. He volunteers to serve you by going through hell itself to die for your sins. Your greatest need and highest priority in life is to see how much Jesus wants to serve you and rescue you.

The Father says of Jesus that he is the servant whom he upholds. Think of a little girl walking with her dad on the slippery ice. She takes a hold of her father's hand. She hits a slippery patch of ice and falls. Then she gets up and says, "Daddy, you take hold of my hand." Our heavenly Father says that he held onto his Son. More on that later.

The Father calls his Son Jesus, "my chosen one in whom I delight." We think of what the Father said at Jesus' baptism. "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased." God our Father was totally pleased with the life that Jesus' lived here on this earth. He was totally pleased with the sacrifice he made for our sin. That is why he raised him to life again.

In our Santa Maria Terrace Bible study we ask the people present to grade Jesus on the kind of life he lived. They all agreed that we have to give Jesus and A+. Then when we honestly look at our lives we have to admit that we have nothing been incompletes or failures. What am I going to do if my life is not pleasing to God? What if I fail every attempt at being the kind of person God wants me to be? I have only one hope and that is to believe in the perfect life Jesus lived for me and the perfect sacrifice he made at the cross for my sins. Through Jesus God is pleased with you and me. He sees only the A+'s in Jesus' life. His righteousness becomes my righteousness.

The heavenly Father says of Jesus, "I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations." The Holy Spirit came down on Jesus at his baptism. The Bible tells us he was anointed with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is like the ultimate GPS system that takes a world full of people that are hopelessly lost and directs them to Jesus. If you are driving through LA and are hungry for an In Out Burger, you can just speak in a smart phone and say, "In Out Burger" and it will tell you the nearest location. Open the Bible and listen to the Holy Spirit tell you exactly where you need to put your trust to be saved. It is not in your life and your performance or how well you have done. It is only in Christ and Christ alone.

Jesus will bring justice to the nations. The Hebrew word for justice is the beautiful word *mispat*. The word can be translated as justice or judgment. Without Jesus, I have every reason to fear standing before God in the final judgment. Without Jesus I know what the verdict will be. It will always be the same for all people, "Guilty!" With Jesus the verdict changes from guilty to not guilty. Jesus has come to this world to bring this verdict of not guilty to all people all over the world. He brings justice to the nations.

Jesus really cares about people. "He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out." A bruised reed is like the stalk of a flower that has been broken and needs to be tossed away. The smoldering wick needs to be pulled out and replaced with a new wick. Has the wick ever burnt low in your life? Have you ever felt crushed and broken? Jesus knows the lowest moments of your life better than you know them yourself. He cares about people who are broken and crushed and have hardly any light left in them. He comes to restore us and bring us back. He is the Good Shepherd who gently leads the sheep that have young and carries the lambs close to his heart in his loving arms. "Jesus knows our every weakness, Take it to the Lord in prayer."

The Father has more to tell us about his Son. "In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he

will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope." Jesus wants to bring people all over the world into his justice and his proclamation of being not guilty through him. He stopped under a tree where the tax collector Zacchaeus was hoping to see him as he passed by. Jesus wanted this man to know that all of his sins of the past that were crying out for punishment from God were forgiven.

Jesus sits at the right hand of his heavenly Father. He is sending out his witnesses into the world so they can carry the good news of the forgiveness that is found only in him. He wants the distant islands to put their hope in him. He wants the whole Muslim world to repent of their idolatry and turn to him for forgiveness. Jesus is relentless. He will raise up people who are willing to die just to bring this message to those who don't know this verdict of not guilty. Jesus was faithful in going to the cross for us and he will be faithful in bringing that message of the cross into the whole world. He has promised that the gospel will be preached in all the world and then the end will come.

The Father has told his about his Son. Not let's listen to the Father speak to his Son. Just think, we get to listen in to the heavenly speaking to his Son.

The Father speaks to the Savior

Before the Father speaks to the Son, he reminds us how great he is. "This is what God the Lord says-he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it:" Truly our God is an awesome God in the way he stretches out the heavens and spreads the earth. The Hebrew word has the thought of hammering out something the way you might hammer out sheets of silver or gold over some carved object. Our God created the world and he also sustains the world. He keeps us alive and gives us our daily breath. This same great God who rules the world also takes Jesus by the hand and helps him carry out his Word.

He speaks to his beloved Son. "I the Lord have called you in righteousness. I will take hold of our hand. I will keep you and will make you a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that our blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness." Jesus depended daily on the support and care of his heavenly Father. He often spent nights in prayer to his heavenly Father. The book of Hebrews tells us how dependent Jesus was on his Father. "During the days of his Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears of to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission." The night before he died he prayed, "O Father give me the glory I had with you before the world began."

The Father promises to take his Son by the hand and help him fulfill the great covenant or promise given to Abraham of blessings for the whole world through one of his descendants. The Father promises to help Jesus be a light for the Gentiles. Jesus is the only one to open the eyes of the blind and free the captives from prison and to release them from the dark dungeon of death and punishment in hell. When we hear the Father speak like this to his Son, or when we hear him speak to Jesus at his baptism, we know beyond any doubt

that this is where we need to place our hope of being saved and having eternal life.

Words are important. The book of Proverbs tells us that words kill and they bring life. You can really hurt people and destroy their lives with your harsh words. You can also build them up and help them with your kind words. Your heavenly Father wants you to listen to what he has to tell you about his Son. He wants you to listen to him speaking to his Son. These words build us up and give us hope and a love unlike anything we can experience in this life. Amen.