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| Isaiah 42:1-9  Matthew 3:13-17 | What’s UN-Baptised? | Pinelands – 9am – 28/01/2024 |

There are two very different ways to think about baptism.

**The FIRST approach…**

recognizes the time of baptism as a **SAVING MOMENT…**

* acceptance of the love and forgiveness of God.
* Moment of Salvation
* Most important a specific **MOMENT** in one’s life

- Always able to recall baptism as…

the time when life changed.

**The SECOND approach…** *wouldn't disagree with any of that,*

*but significantly adds to it.*

Baptism is a time when…

* God's love and forgiveness are experienced.
* time of change.
* baptism more of **A BEGINNING…**

Not just a **Moment**

The first approach often overlooks…

the journey which follows **Baptism.**

**Baptism is a beginning…** of something ***ONGOING***

- the desire to see the world differently,

* to see each other differently,
* and even to see ourselves differently.

- A ***fresh start***, **NOT A destination.**

- Beginning of our journey of faith

**For Jesus**, baptism represents the beginning of his earthly ministry.

***AND…*** the rest of Christ’s life was…

**Working out** the meaning of His Baptism

Throughout our lives we need to ***WORK OUT…***

the meaning of our **Baptism.**

Every year, month, week, day and moment…

Is a new beginning.

*As we bring* ***each area*** *of our lives to* ***Jesus…***

It is a new beginning.

**Story** of a minister who had a dream that he died.

Arrived at the pearly gates **BUT**, to his dismay,

He was ***DENIED*** entrance…

**HE** *presented his credentials*

Proudly the Pastor articulated…

* the *number of sermons preached*
* the *prominent pulpits occupied.*

But **Saint Peter** said no one had heard them in heaven.

The minister went on to…

* *enumerated his community involvement*.

He was told they were not recorded.

Sorrowfully, the pastor turned to leave, when Peter said,

***"Stay a moment, and tell me,***

***are you the man who fed the sparrows?"***

"Yes," the minister replied, "but what does that have to do with it?"  
  
***"Come in,"*** said Saint Peter, "***the Master of the sparrows…***

***wants to thank you."***  
**The point of the dream is…**

**- great and prominent positions indicate *Skill And Capacity,***

**BUT** **- small services suggest the depth of one's *Consecration.***

***We can have***… **Skill** and **Capacity**  ***BUT…*** Do we have **Consecration**?

It is about… **THE WAY…** we live our lives,

**THE WAY…** Go about our business,

**THE WAY…** Interact with others,

**THE WAY…** we do things…

***Working out the meaning of our Baptism***

It is **WHO** WE ARE that counts ***NOT…*** **WHAT** WE ARE.

There is an interesting story from the **15th Century…**

About…**Ivan the Great**

***He was…*** - The Tsar of all of Russia

*(To date the longest reigning Tsar)*

- He brought together the warring tribes into one

vast empire - the Soviet Union.

* a courageous fighting man.
* A brilliant general.
* Established peace across the nation.

However, **Ivan** was so busy he did not have a family.

Friends and advisers were quite concerned.

Reminded him that there was no heir to the throne,

and should anything happen to him…

the union would shatter into chaos.

*“You must take a wife who can bear you a son.”*

The busy soldier-statesman said to them that he did not have the time to search for a bride, but if they would find a suitable one,

***He would gladly marry her.***  
The counselors and advisers searched the capitals of Europe to find an appropriate wife for the great Tsar. And find her, they did.

They reported to **Ivan** of the beautiful dark eyed daughter of the

King of Greece. She was young, brilliant, and charming.

*On the Spot… He agreed to marry her.*  
But there was a ***condition***,

**“He cannot marry the princess unless he becomes**

**a member of the Greek Orthodox Church.”**

**Ivan’s** response, *“No Problem, I will do it!”*

After all the preparation…  
He was to be baptized into the Orthodox Church by full immersion,

as was the custom of the Eastern Church.

Ivan’s ever-loyal soldiers, 500 in all, asked to be baptized also.

After all the preparation…

The soldiers, all 500 of them, were to be immersed in one mass baptism.

Crowds gathered from all over Greece.  
  
What a sight that must have been, 500 priests and 500 soldiers,

a thousand people, walking into the blue Mediterranean.

**The Priests** - dressed in black robes and tall black hats,

the official dress of the Orthodox Church.

**The Soldiers** - wore their battle uniforms with all their regalia

ribbons of valor, medals of courage, and

their weapons of battle.

***Suddenly*, there was a problem.**

The Church prohibited professional soldiers from being members;

they would have to give up their commitment to bloodshed.

**They could not be killers and church members too.**  
The problem was solved quite simply.

As the words were spoken and the priests began to baptize them,

each soldier reached to his side and withdrew his sword.

Lifting it high overhead, every soldier was totally

immersed-everything baptized except his

fighting arm and sword.  
  
That historical fact became known as... **The unbaptized arm.**

***What a powerful picture of Christianity today***.

How many of us, here this morning, have **unbaptized arms?**

How many unbaptized wills are here?

- do all the right things, go to all the right services

**BUT** are not right with Jesus.

How many unbaptized talents and gifts and skills?

- talents and gifts that are not being used for God…

Music, painting, writing, etc

Unbaptized Bank Accounts?

- Does God have a say in the way we spend money?

Unbaptized Social Activities?

- What part does God play in the way we play / socialize?

**The WORKING OUT of our Baptism is…**

That we bring ***EVERY AREA of our LIVES…*** **to Christ**

***EVERY ASPECT of LIFE…*** **to Christ**

It is **NOT…**  **WHAT we** **are** that counts…

**BUT… WHO we are…**

**And** **WHO we** are is determined by…

How we work out our ***baptism / faith***

***IN EVERY DAY LIFE.***

*Next week is our Covenant Service…*

*We mark a new beginning – recommitting ourselves to Jesus*

**Isaiah 42:1-9 The Lord's Servant**

The Lord says,

“Here is my servant, whom I strengthen—

the one I have chosen, with whom I am pleased.

I have filled him with my Spirit,

and he will bring justice to every nation.

He will not shout or raise his voice

or make loud speeches in the streets.

He will not break off a bent reed

nor put out a flickering lamp.

He will bring lasting justice to all.

He will not lose hope or courage;

he will establish justice on the earth.

Distant lands eagerly wait for his teaching.”

God created the heavens and stretched them out;

he fashioned the earth and all that lives there;

he gave life and breath to all its people.

And now the Lord God says to his servant,

“I, the Lord, have called you and given you power

to see that justice is done on earth.

Through you I will make a covenant with all peoples;

through you I will bring light to the nations.

You will open the eyes of the blind

and set free those who sit in dark prisons.

“I alone am the Lord your God.

No other god may share my glory;

I will not let idols share my praise.

The things I predicted have now come true.

Now I will tell you of new things

even before they begin to happen.”

**Matthew 3:13-17 The Baptism of Jesus**

At that time Jesus arrived from Galilee and came to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. But John tried to make him change his mind. “I ought to be baptized by you,” John said, “and yet you have come to me!”

But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so for now. For in this way we shall do all that God requires.” So John agreed.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water. Then heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and lighting on him. Then a voice said from heaven, “This is my own dear Son, with whom I am pleased.”