

11.6.2023, SERMON: THIS IS MY BELOVED SON

Matthew 3:13-17 *"13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be given baptism by him. 14 But John would have kept him back, saying, It is I who have need of baptism from you, and do you come to me? 15 But Jesus made answer, saying to him, Let it be so now: because so it is right for us to make righteousness complete. Then he gave him baptism. 16 And Jesus, having been given baptism, straight away went up from the water; and, the heavens opening, he saw the Spirit of God coming down on him as a dove; 17 And a voice came out of heaven, saying, This is my dearly loved Son, with whom I am well pleased."*

We recently had some baptisms in our church so we can imagine the scenery of today's story.

- Baptism is a process of initiation. We baptize on the basis of a confession of faith. In Judaism the initiation process is the circumcision.
- By baptism, a person becomes part of the community of faith in Jesus Christ - we believe that baptism is only one, it is unrepeatable. Christ himself baptizes - it is not just symbolism (but no magic either). Baptism is a public confession before the visible and invisible world that says: "I belong to Jesus Christ."

Jesus came to his cousin John, who was baptizing in the Jordan river in Israel.

- He asks for baptism from him, he asks for service from him.
- The Lord want to be baptized from his servant (the King from the one who prepares his way)
- He who came not to be served, but to serve... receives service from another one.
- We emphasize Jesus as the one who serves (before the Passover dinner, he takes a towel and washes the disciples' feet)
- Today I would like to emphasize Jesus as the one who was served. He has been served by his co-workers.
- There is a tension between Maria and Martha (Jesus was a friend of their family).
 - Sometimes we have the inner fight between "Martha" (I don't do enough!) and "Maria" (It is enough if I am just sitting in a presence of Jesus and enjoying it.)

There was a person in church where I was a preacher who asked me for a meeting. I was expecting the situation as usual. This person would probably have some kind of difficulties in his life and I will be there to help him, to serve him. But when we met instead of this he asked me how he could serve me (Is there something I can pray for?). It was such a powerful and strong feeling. I remember it very well.

Luke 10:41-42 "41 But the Lord, answering, said to her, Martha, Martha, you are full of care and troubled about such a number of things: 42 Little is needed, or even one thing only: for Mary has taken that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Sometimes all we need is to "not stand in the way" of God's purpose, not stand in the way of what God has prepared for us. Not stand in the way of other people serving us. If we do not hinder God's action, we can witness miraculous things - heaven opened, God's spirit descending in the form of a dove...It was probably a unique and unrepeatable event, but the point is that by our attitude we can make space for the Holy spirit to take the action.

A voice came from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"

- What should the voice mean? Wasn't Jesus the Son of God before he was baptized? Why does the voice of God sound just like that?

I am convinced that Jesus was the Son of God from all eternity, even before the world was created. And He is forever.

God considered it important to confirm through the dove and the voice what had always been true.

God confirmed his love for his Son before Jesus had a chance to prove himself. Before Jesus made the first miracle, before He had his very first sermon. Before He called disciples and became a leader. God's love for his Son or for us is unconditional. God loves us regardless of what we have done for the Kingdom of heaven. Love of God is not conditioned by our achievements.

Maybe that is the message that you need to hear today: You are the beloved son/daughter of God.

- God loves you for who you are, not for what you have done.
- Maybe you heard from this pulpit what still needs to be done, what needs to be added, where to put the second gear and where to start...

Your church had an election today. You have elected members of the elder board and the preacher. I would love to tell them one thing: Your heavenly Father loves you entirely. Nothing you will do can change it. You can't make God love you less. We have planned a summer full of camps, trips and so on. And even if we do none of these activities God loves us the same.

APPLICATION:

What can you do during the next week? You can write a message/email/text to your preacher or one of your brothers/sisters from the elder board and ask them: How can I help you? Is there anything I can pray for? How can I serve you?

Task for everyone of you: How can Jesus serve me this week?

Task for some of you: What is my relationship with my biological father? Is there something I want to talk to him about? Is there something I should forgive? Do I need to feel love from him differently? It's really worth repairing the relationship with our parents while we still have the chance.

RECOMMENDATION FOR READING:

Patty D.: [Father God: Daring to Draw Near](#)