

Baptism of Christ Sun 10th Jan 2015

INTRO

There is so much that I could share from this morning's readings. The passages could be the basis of a month's sermons.

Don't panic! I won't try to fit them all in today !!

I am going to go through the few verses we heard from Luke's gospel, follow it if you like on the pew sheet.

I will highlight a few verses and draw in parts from the other readings

And then maybe you could take your sheet home and read the passages again and see what God highlights to you.

PRAY

EXPECTATION

*As the people were filled with **expectation**..... John answered them (Vs 15)*

The people were filled with expectation...

Expectations are funny things

They can be big or small... sub-conscious or very conscious! Positive and negative

How was Christmas for you? And New Year?

Did it meet your expectations?

Christmas can be very hard for people, exactly because of the very definite and often high expectations we sometimes set for the festivities....

But we can also have almost subconscious expectations ... last Sunday a friend and I went for a walk on Woolacombe beach. When we got there and the sun was shining (and stayed shining!) I realised that I had been expecting a damp, drizzly walk! What a good surprise.

The people in the passage from Luke are **filled with expectation**

They have seen John in action

They have heard his teaching

They know the scriptures of old

And they are wondering if John might be the one they are waiting for... the new Messiah

They are wondering, questioning, open, excited EXPECTANT

Their expectations don't materialise in to quite what they thought but at least they are open to the possibilities. And will actually see far greater things than they expect.

Do you have any expectations for 2016? (PAUSE)

Conscious or almost sub conscious....?

We might have all sorts of expectations...

Social Economic Work Health...

But what about Spiritual expectations?

Do you have any real expectations about your faith? about your spiritual journey in 2016? (PAUSE)

Are you like the people in the gospel reading?

'the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts...'

How often are our minds switched on when it comes to our faith?
How often do we get excited about prayer and really expectant in our prayers?
Or do we carry around with us a low level, almost subconscious lack of expectation when it comes to God and His part in our daily lives???

SO my first highlight is verse 15... the people were filled with EXPECTATION
Are we filled with expectation of what God may be going to do in our lives and the life of St George's this year?

Now look down to verse 21

'Now when all the people were baptised, and when Jesus had been baptised and was PRAYING...'

The people had heard the message from John and been baptised in their hundreds, baptised with water once they had repented for their sins

John said *'I baptise you with water but one who is more powerful than I ... will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire'*

If John was baptising people as a sign of their repentance why was Jesus baptised who was pure and holy and in no need of forgiveness?

That is material for another sermon :-)

But the fact is that Jesus was baptised and so those of us who have been baptised also have something in common with Him. He and us have that connecting experience

Each of the other gospels puts a different emphasis on what and how they write, their accounts of the same events give different details. Luke is quite sparing in what he writes about Jesus baptism
But non the less, Jesus was baptised, an act of solidarity with us.
He identifies himself with us as sinners through baptism

But this passage also describes a pivotal moment

John had been the preacher and teacher. He had been the for runner of Christ. He had been the herald it says in one reading

His teaching ministry had come to an end (verses 18-20 that were not read today tell us that John was put in prison and we hear later in scripture that he was beheaded)

Jesus public ministry was about to start

And look what Jesus did.

'when Jesus also had been baptised and was PRAYING, the heaven opened, and the HOLY SPIRIT descended upon Him...' (vs 21)

Jesus, the Son of God, did not undertake His public ministry on His own but with PRAYER, connecting Him to His Father

Prayer makes a qualitative difference in our relationship with God.

Throughout the gospels we hear of Jesus praying

It was vital to Jesus and His life and ministry

And it is the key to unlocking God's prevailing power in our lives too.

Once Jesus had been baptised and PRAYED then the Holy Spirit descended upon Him

Remember that we worship a triune God, God 3 in 1, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

At the start of Jesus public ministry He PRAYED and the HOLY SPIRIT descended upon Him

Both were crucial to His life and ministry

These 2 things are not just important for Jesus

In the passage from Acts we know that Peter and John went to the new believers specifically to *pray for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit* (Acts 8:15)

How well do we follow Jesus example and that of the early disciples and connect with God the Father in PRAYER and depend on God the HOLY SPIRIT for wisdom and strength as we go in to the world and live our lives as Christians, followers of Jesus? (PAUSE)

And after Jesus had prayed and the Holy Spirit had descended upon him like a dove we hear these amazing words

'You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased' Luke 3:22

What incredible affirmation to Jesus, and commission of Jesus to those around Him

In his humanity how he must have been strengthened by those words from his Father

To know that His heavenly Father was there and loving Him and giving His incredible approval and affirmation

Let us just look at the passage from Isaiah for a moment because I think those words are for all of us, not just Jesus

Through Isaiah the Lord says

you are mine Vs1

I will be with you Vs 2

I am the Lord your God Vs 3

You are precious in my sight Vs 4

I will bring my sons and daughters Vs 6

Everyone who is called by my name Vs 7

Each and everyone of us is a child of God, created by God - see Psalm 139 if you want to read more about this

He is God our heavenly Father

And He loves us and wants to affirm each of us and say to us 'YOU ARE MY BELOVED'

Each and everyone of us is a child of God, loved unconditionally by Him

Do you really know that? (PAUSE)

So these have been just some of the highlights of these passages for me

If you remember nothing else from this morning remember that YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD AND LOVED BY HIM

But I pray that you will also think about your faith EXPECTATION, that you may raise them this year

And that you will take PRAYER and the presence of the HOLY SPIRIT more seriously this year and see how those new expectations are more than fulfilled