

Mark 1:9-11

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[0 : 00] Alright, and as you're being seated, please take out your copy of God's Word and turn with me to the gospel according to Mark.

Last week, some correspondence from the Christian Video Licensing International, which is a good organization, a good thing to do if you're going to use multimedia video clips.

There's copyright issues there, and you have to be legal and appropriate in dealing with those things. But the front of it, the advertisement here on the front of it to entice you to open it, says, Plan your upcoming events and sermon illustrations with these new releases in mind.

And then it lists off the clips that are coming out. Star Trek Into Darkness, Iron Man 3, World War Z, etc. The Croods, I don't even know what that's all about.

Munster University. So, I just really brought to mind not any kind of indignation or frustration with churches that tend to do that type of thing.

[1 : 24] There's value in good illustration, and I have nothing against people using media to make that point. But what it did do for me is it brought to my mind how really thankful I am that I don't feel a pressure to do things like this.

That you people just want the Word of God preached to you, and that's a blessing to me. Certainly, I try to come up with illustrations and to better explain things and do so, but I'm so glad that I don't have to plan my sermon illustrations around the releases of what's coming out soon.

Movies I haven't even seen. I'm going to hand that to you, so I don't have to deal with it up here. So, that being said, I appreciate you. And let's pray together, and let's thank God for His Word to us.

Father, we thank you so very much for your inspired words that you gave to Mark to pin down. For the Roman believers that were his intended audience, and yet, because it is your Word, it has meaning for us this day.

This book, penned so many years ago, has real-life implication for today, for us, for those who have called on your name. And I just pray, Father, that it will be instructive in that way, that you will work by your Spirit to help us understand its meaning, to give us wisdom as to how we should apply it to our lives.

[2 : 42] We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. So, our text for today, as Mark has been quickly pushing us into this Gospel account, he says in verse 1, the beginning of the Gospel, the good news, the proclamation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

He's pressing us now to verse 9, to behold the baptism of Jesus. And this is a major event, a huge event in the life of Christ.

Very, very important to the historical narrative here. And Mark gives it all of three verses. And I told you in our very first sermon that he moves and he scoots along through things, ultimately pressing the readers here to a devotion to being disciples of Christ.

So, he's moving through things quickly to get us to that point, to get us to understand and to realize that. So, he does it for a very specific reason. I kind of feel like as we're pausing and preparing, as I'm looking at just three verses this morning, I kind of feel like Mark sometimes is sitting in the office with me going, get to it, keep moving, keep moving, hurry up, go, go, go.

And I'm saying, yeah, but we've got to stop. We have to stop. These words that you penned are far too precious for us to not reflect on them at some length. So, remember, last week we talked about John the Baptist, as I called him, John the Baptizer.

[4 : 09] This was his significance. One that was sent as a prophet of God. God had been silent for 400 years and now was speaking through John the Baptist in the wilderness as he fulfilled this prophecy about who he would be.

He was in the line of the prophets dressed in camel hair and he was preaching baptism and repentance in order to prepare the way for the one who would come after him. And that is Jesus Christ. The one that he says, I'm not even unworthy to unstrap his sandals. And it's in these days, these days that John the Baptist is about his ministry in the wilderness where we see verse 9.

So let's read together verses 9 through 11. In those days, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

And a voice came from heaven, You are my beloved Son. With you I am well pleased. So we see here in these days that John the Baptist is active.

[5 : 23] It is proposed, he's been active doing this ministry in the wilderness for about six months at this point. Traveling up and down the Jordan Valley.

Heralding the coming of Jesus Christ. We see that all Jerusalem and all Judea, meaning a great multitude of people, are coming out of the city, coming out to receive this baptism that John was performing.

We saw last week that this was a baptism called proselytite baptism. For those who were not of Jewish descent, but desired to worship the God of Israel.

They were permitted to come into that family in this way that they would be baptized. And so it was significant for the Jews to be traveling out to be baptized with a proselytite baptism because they were saying in doing that, that we are no better than the Gentiles.

We recognize our sinfulness. Our blood relation is not enough to have us stand rightly before God. We must repent.

[6 : 29] We must believe in the Messiah who is to come. So it was a radical form of repentance, but it was simply preparatory for the Jesus that would come onto the scene as we see him here happening.

This is the only record, this account of this baptism that we see of John and Jesus interacting, in person interacting. And as I kind of just mused about this this week, just thought about this connection, it caused me to think about the fact that they were related.

Mary and Elizabeth, Mary's Jesus' mother, Elizabeth, John's mother, were cousins. So more than likely, depending on the paternal, maternal nature of their relationship, I don't know if you even understand how the second cousin that wants to remove and all of that works, but more than likely, more than likely, John and Jesus were second cousins.

It's likely in that way. And so certainly John knew of Jesus. He was sent to be the herald before him and knew that this distant relative of his, this potentially second cousin, Jesus, was that person. So more than likely, they knew each other as they came together to encounter one another in this way. I just like to think sometimes outside of the text and just kind of imagine the conversations that are taking place between Elizabeth and Mary, cousins, as they get together and talk about how their boys are doing, both of them, and about their 30th year of life.

[7 : 59] And Elizabeth says, oh yeah, John, he's out there full of the Spirit, traveling around, wearing camel hair, doing this baptism. He's eating locusts and honey. And how's Jesus doing? And Mary probably couldn't resist to go, oh, he's perfect.

He's perfect in every way. I just wonder in my mind, particularly this week with our two, what a perfect baby would be like. Would be nice.

But certainly though, even if they had not met each other up to this point in this first 30 years, which I probably would think that the cousins got together and played and did some things together in their early years, but certainly John knew of Jesus, right?

Don't know if he recognized him or not, but he certainly knew that he was the Messiah. And we see that Jesus comes, the record here is, from Nazareth of Galilee.

And this Galilee was commonly called the Galilee of the Gentiles. This was part of the land that was originally conquered by Joshua, but also part of the land that was conquered by the Assyrians.

[9 : 06] And during one of the captivities of Israel, they were carried away. And guess who came in and replaced them in the land? Gentiles, right? The people of the nations, peoples who were not of Israel, came in and occupied this place.

And this is where Jesus comes from. He comes from Nazareth of Galilee, which was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. The second half of Isaiah 9.1 says, In the latter time, he has made

glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations, or Galilee of the Gentiles.

And people miss that at every point, all of the prophecies, all the things that were foretold about who Jesus was, that he fulfilled them perfectly. People miss this.

An example, John 7, verses 40-42 says, When they heard these words, Jesus just said some shocking things. He says, Some of the people said, This really is the prophet.

Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?

[10:24] And here we see Christ perfectly fulfilling all these prophecies as he was born in the town of Bethlehem. I hope you're all familiar with that story. So here we see him perfectly accomplishing this.

Now, this place that he came from, has some interesting significance, because it was rather far away from Jerusalem. And it was understood in these days that the further you got away from Jerusalem, the less the Israeli population existed.

It was more and more Gentile, and therefore in their minds, more and more pagan. So for him to come from Galilee of the Gentiles, in their minds, in the Jewish mind, was not a holy place for him to be from.

They would have much preferred their Savior, their King, to come from Jerusalem. Born in the center of town. That's where they would have liked to have seen him come.

Isn't it amazing that the most significant man to have ever lived came from a place that was little and insignificant? In fact, the fact that it records here that he was from Nazareth of Galilee, because Nazareth is a totally insignificant town.

[11:39] Completely insignificant. It doesn't exist in any historic record outside of the Bible. Small, dinky town. Not worth talking about in any other literature at all.

Dahlonega at least has some history being the side of the first American gold rush, right? But some of you experienced, somebody asked, where are you going to school? All of you who were in college?

I go to school in North Georgia. It's in Dahlonega, in Lumpkin County, about an hour north of Atlanta, right? You always feel like you have to add some qualifiers, right? To help people understand where it is that you live, right?

This would have been the case, and that's what Mark is doing here for us. He's from Nazareth of Galilee, a very insignificant place, and out of that comes much significance.

I hope that's a little bit of encouragement to you, those of us who live in small towns like Dahlonega. And as he came, he was baptized by John in the Jordan.

[12:38] See this record of that. Let's look at it also in Matthew 3, verse 13-15. Please turn there with me. Matthew 3, beginning in verse 13.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him. Here's some of the interaction between the two of them in this. John would have prevented him, saying, I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?

But Jesus answered him, Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he, being John, consented. So here we see a little bit of the interaction that takes place.

And the thing I want to get into your mind is the significance of what Jesus came to do. Isn't it very interesting that this day, as we do baptisms together in our stock tank on our stage, that what we're saying is that there's been a change in our hearts that we once were sinners.

This was our nature. Enemies of God. But because of what Christ has done for us and our faith in Him, we are now believers. We've been buried with Him in baptism. Raised to walk in newness of life.

[13:59] It's a symbol of that death that has come spiritually and the newness we now have in Christ. That's the symbol of what this is. It's what it was designed to do for us.

So how is it that Jesus was baptized? Was Jesus made new at this point? Certainly not. Jesus was without sin. Did He need to experience radical repentance?

No. He had nothing to repent for. So why? Why? Did Jesus Christ, the Son of God, come to John to be baptized.

John didn't understand it until he explained it to him. And that's where we're going to get to here in just a moment. But I want to show you three significant things that we can notice, that we can observe here.

So what is the significance of Jesus' baptism? Three matters. And they're all incredibly important, but they move in level of importance, the way I'm going to present them to you. So let me say that to you. Number one, important.

[15:02] Number two, a little more important. Number three, of utmost importance. So number one, Jesus set for us an example in baptism. He didn't need it.

He didn't need to experience this proselyte baptism. He didn't need to have an outward showing of repentance as a man set apart. Right? The God-man who had lived in perfection up until this day. But He did it for us as an example. Mark 16. This is the great commission charge recorded in Mark. Jesus says, whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. So notice, it's not that baptism saves us, but whoever believes and is baptized as evidence of that belief will be saved.

Because notice, He doesn't say next, but whoever does not believe and is not baptized will be condemned. Right? It's not an equation. Believing plus baptism equals salvation. But simply, believing.

[16:05] And the obedient outflow of that being baptism is the evidence of this belief. And you will be saved. So here's the command, the turning out of that. For those of us who now have faith in Christ, we are to be baptized as believers.

Right? We believe in that. Believer's baptism. The fancier term for it is credo baptism. Right? We're credo Baptists here at Christ's Family Church.

Matthew 28. 18-20. Probably a more familiar account of the great commission. And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. So again, we see here this process of going and making disciples begins faith, repentance, baptism.

Right? It's the obedient thing that should be happening as an outflow of what God has done for us, displaying to a community of believers what He has done. It's a beautiful, beautiful picture.

[17:13] Symbolic in every way. What a beautiful picture. We do baptism the way we do baptism. We find it all together to be biblical because we see here that Jesus was baptized.

The Greek is baptizo. It's where we get this word from. Which means literally to immerse or submerge. It in no way in any stretch of the imagination could possibly ever mean to sprinkle.

It's impossible. Right? Not a, let's do some work with the Greek, let's really wrestle with this. No, there's no way this word can be made to mean that. An absolute impossibility.

It means to immerse or to submerge. Notice that Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan. Not next to it. It wasn't an ample source of water for John to go around and dip from.

They got in the water together. Verse 10 says, and when he came up out of the water. Right? Not referring to him walking out of the Jordan, but that he actually was underwater and he came up out of the water.

[18:20] So here's the example that he's given to us for how this should be done. And just think, if this is meant to be something that's symbolic of our death and resurrection, we ought to be immersed in that case.

I think many of you have heard me say, if we change our traditions, the way we deal with dead bodies, right, where we just simply lay them on the ground and throw dirt on their face and we walk away, I might consider, maybe, I wouldn't actually because of the example given to us in scripture, but then maybe we could make some justification for sprinkling being the case for baptism.

That's not how people are taken care of when they die, is it? Right? They are entombed, put in the earth and if they raise again, they come up out of the same and that is what we're showing forth.

It's a better picture. To the degree that it's worth all the work it takes to get this thing in here and get it filled. On Friday, some great guys stick around and help me get it all set up and then we worked on filling it and I said, you guys take off, I'll take care of it, no big deal.

And I went downstairs and I forgot that it was filling again. This is the second time this has happened. This was worse than the last time.

[19 : 38] Those of you who experienced, the last one happened at a college Bible study. This one, fortunately, the homeschool co-op that meets here, a couple of the kids were here a little bit early and came frantically running downstairs. There's water everywhere.

And there was. I mean, it was water everywhere all over the stage. I had to get a shot back out and vacuum it up and I think I dumped about 15 gallons of water out the door from the shop vac.

If you could just imagine, hey, but look, everything is okay. Now everything's dry and managing quite well. It all got taken care of. Kim Luttrell rightly said that we probably in the budget next year need to put in a stage repair line item.

And I said, why don't we call it pastor's mistakes? Let's just go ahead and designate some dollars for that kind of thing. I'd like to say that I'm a smart man so I learned from my mistakes and hopefully it took two in this case and it will never happen again.

It was a lot of trouble though. Let me say to you, it was a lot of trouble. Even if we had done it right, it was a lot of trouble. But certainly, having done it wrong and never once in all of that time that I think, I wish we just did this a different way.

[20 : 46] Man, wouldn't it be easier if we just did this a different way? It would be wrong, I believe, to do it a different way. This is the way it should be done by immersion to show what is happening in the heart.

I hope that as you guys experience this today that it's beautiful to you, that the imagery means something to you. That it's not just like, oh yeah, baptism's great, fine, right?

But that you see that it actually is a picture, something we can kind of sort of see and wrap our minds around what actually happens in the heart of men when they believe in Jesus Christ.

So, that's the first one. Jesus set for us an example of baptism. He didn't need to. We do. He didn't need to, but He did it anyway. Secondly, Jesus affirmed His deity in being baptized.

He affirmed His deity in being baptized. As Wes mentioned earlier, in verse 10 and 11 we observe a rare moment that we can observe in the Scriptures when the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all recorded as being present, seen, heard, interacting together.

[21 : 59] We see this happening right here. There's some debate about who experienced it. You'll notice that in verse 10 it says, when He came up out of the water immediately He saw the heavens being torn open.

This would have been Jesus that they're referring to in this case. One of the commentators, a book that I've picked up, to help me with my study of Mark, said that Jesus was the only one that experienced this.

He saw the heavens torn open, saw the Spirit descending like a dove. Jesus was the one that experienced this. I disagree. I disagree entirely with Him, in fact.

Because what's happening here is this fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. It's the confirmation of who Jesus is. It's a coronation ceremony, so to speak, of Him becoming the King.

He already was, but this is like the crown is being placed upon His head now to confirm who He is. Why would God deny that for the people observing?

[22 : 57] Why would they not experience this to be true? Isaiah 64.1 Isaiah has been prophesying of the coming of the Messiah all along, and then in 64.1 he prays, Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down.

After this 400 years of prophetic silence, God finally did just that. Pour the heavens open. The Greek here, schismo, our word schism comes from that.

The heavens were ripped open as Isaiah had prayed for, and the Spirit descended like a dove. Right? So we see this picture of this rather graphic thing happening.

I have no idea how to even describe what that might have looked like to you. The heavens being torn open, and the Spirit descending. So this almost violent thing, and then this very gentle thing. Right? The text does not read that the Spirit descended as a dove. Most of us have probably seen some photo, or painting, I shouldn't say photo, painting somewhere of Jesus coming out of the water, and a dove.

[24 : 04] Right? It's usually got some light lines around it coming down. It does not say that the Spirit descended as a dove, but rather like a dove. And I think that the picture we're meant to see here is that it came down gently, and rested on Christ.

Again, some commentators have tried to do some interesting things with this. They've tried to relate this to the dove with Noah, and the ark that Noah sent out. Nope. Right?

That was just a dove that brought back an olive branch. That's the significance there. It was an animal that he sent away. Certainly, we know that doves are very gentle. Right? This is the description that's happening here.

Right? We know that John saw it. In the Gospel of John, chapter 132, it says, and John bore witness. I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.

Right? There's a record. John the Baptist saw this as well. This is so key and so important that the Spirit came down and descended and rested and remained upon him because, remember the point, Jesus affirmed his deity in being baptized.

[25 : 18] Again, the book of Isaiah, chapter 11, verses 1 and 2. There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his root shall bear fruit. This is his Davidic line.

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. Right? This fulfillment here of this prophecy, the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.

Who is he talking about? They're talking about the Messiah, the Christ, Jesus, the Son of God.

Again, Isaiah 42, 1. Behold my servant whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights.

I have put my Spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the nations. So here we see this fulfillment, this confirmation of Jesus' deity.

It's said to the observers, this is the Christ. A coronation ceremony, so to speak. And the people there, if they knew their Bibles, knew this was the Son of God.

[26 : 24] So, firstly, Jesus was baptized. Significant. Sets for us an example. Secondly, he affirmed his deity in being baptized. And remember, moving in levels of importance. I would say to you, number three, is the most important thing for you to hear and to grasp and to wrap your mind around this morning.

The third one, Jesus maintained a perfect obedience in being baptized. Jesus maintained a perfect obedience in being baptized. Do you remember what he said to John?

His response to John? The thing that we see recorded for us in Matthew that causes John, the simple record of Matthew, is that then he consented. Then John consented.

Jesus answered him, said, Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. So here is Jesus, the man, the only man who ever didn't need to repent, who was perfect to this time, had no need of it whatsoever, but because God had commanded the baptism of repentance.

Isn't that what John was preaching? Mark records for us, that was John was traveling around and preaching that very thing. As a prophet sent by God, he was teaching people that they ought to be baptized to show repentance.

[27 : 43] So Jesus was baptized to be fully obedient to the commands of the Father. He didn't need to be.

A unique person in this case. The only person that stood on those grounds, but he was baptized anyway to show forth a perfect obedience.

And here we see the heavens have been ripped open, and the Spirit of God has descended like a dove and rested upon him. And then we hear the voice of the Father from heaven say, You are my beloved Son.

With you I am well pleased. Which is a composite Scripture citation of Psalm 2-7 and Isaiah 42-1.

It's God's Word. He can do with it what He pleases.

Right? You are my beloved Son. With you I am well pleased. Because Jesus was bringing Himself into conformity. Lived in that state of perfect obedience to the Father.

[28 : 47] And we get the blessing of God then on Christ for the ministry He was about to start.

Right? Jesus Christ was perfect in every sense of the word.

Right? Mary was proper to boast in her Son. He was perfect. The only way, this is the only way, God could have made a way for us back to Him as we are completely imperfect in our sin.

In every way, without faith, everything we do, even the good things by the world's terms that we do are still filthy. All of our own effort, all of our righteousness, all of it is utterly filthy before God.

He can have nothing to do with it. But because God is just, He must punish sin. Hear me carefully.

It's not that when you believe in Christ, God just forgives your sin the way we would think of forgiveness.

It's not that God goes, yeah, I was offended by that, but it's okay. God can't do that. God is all the things He is all the time.

[30 : 02] He's in no way split personality. And so if God is wrath and justice pours that out on sin, He must punish our sin. And so who did He punish it in?

Christ. The perfect, the spotless Lamb. The only one that was without flaw. He poured out His wrath on Christ for you.

And in a sense, our sins are forgiven, just not the way we typically think of it. We are now justified before God because of that. You often get a picture of justification of standing in a courtroom before a judge of a crime you are absolutely guilty of.

And the judge knows it full well. The evidence is there. They've played the video. They've seen you do it. You paused and stared at the camera. They know it's you. You held up your license. You said, hey, my name is Nathan.

Without a doubt, you committed the crime. And the judge says, you know what? I'm going to pardon you for this crime. We get an idea of that. That is a sense of what justification looks like.

[31 : 10] But more than that, more than that, there was a man sitting in the courtroom that's innocent and the judge says, I'm going to pardon you for the crime and I'm going to punish him instead. He's going to take your punishment.

And this is the way God must act. And so, Christ being completely obedient in every way is good for us.

Because God is pleased with Jesus Christ. With His perfect obedience. For those of us who have placed our faith in Christ, He is also pleased with us.

For those of us who have believed in Christ, Christ's perfection has been given to us. Imputed is the big fancy term for that. Martin Luther called it the great exchange.

Jesus Christ gave us His righteousness and He took our sin. He swapped it with us. So when God sees us now in Christ, in the Beloved, He sees Christ.

[32 : 14] Ah! If you don't know this Christ, God sees you and He sees your sin and because He's perfect and holy and just, He must punish that sin.

You deserve it to be clear. Don't place that blame on God. You've rejected His ways. He gave you a conscience. He gave you evidence of Himself and the nature. You're fully guilty of the things that you've done against Him.

Don't blame it on Him and His character. His character is perfect and holy. You are utterly sinful. For those of us who do know Christ, we get to stand before Him justified.

He sees us as He sees Jesus. This is a massive blessing because we are not perfect. The faith we have wasn't even ours to begin with.

Don't think you're better than anybody else. God gave it to you as a gift. So as we struggle in this life, as we've experienced these great gospel truths and yet we live in contradiction to them all the time, we can go back to God.

[33 : 16] We can continue to return to Him because we've been given Christ's righteousness.

Charles Spurgeon once said in similar words, God is so boundlessly pleased with Jesus that in Him He is altogether pleased with us.

Let me read that to you again. God is so boundlessly pleased with Jesus that in Him He is altogether pleased with us. Ephesians 1 6 in the ESV translation, which is what I'm using and I know many of you use.

It says that He, being God, has blessed us in the Beloved, Jesus Christ. King James, I really like the way it renders that.

He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. We are accepted in the Beloved for all the reasons that I just said to you. If you've placed your faith in Christ, God sees Jesus when He sees you.

1 John 3, 1-3, John writes this letter. It says, See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God, and so we are.

[34 : 27] The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Now here, listen carefully to this. Verse 2, Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.

And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure. Notice what John does. The language that he uses here.

Verse 2. I think this is so good. I have heard people preach from the book of 1 John and talk about how John was very old at this point that he's writing, and so he had the right to call everybody

children.

That was the explanation that was given for that. Oh no. What he's doing is he's helping believers understand their identity. He's calling us children because we are children of the Most High God. That's why he's using this language, and I think we see this best at the beginning of verse 2 of 1 John chapter 3. Beloved, there's that word, beloved. Like, in your mind when you read that, I hope that you're hearing God from heaven saying to Jesus Christ, you are my beloved son.

[35 : 39] With you I am well pleased. This is a title that God gives to Jesus, and here John on the inspiration of the Spirit gives it to us. Have you ever wondered in my preaching why sometimes I refer to you all as beloved?

I'm not talking about my love for you, although I do love you very much. I'm giving you the title that God has given you in Christ. Beloved, we are God's children now.

And the rest of that verse, verse 2, just talks about how we've yet to come into perfection. We're not quite there yet, this is what I was just saying, but we're on our way in that direction.

We're moving that way to be like Christ. I'll read to you another quote from Charles Spurgeon. I should try not to quote the same guy twice in a sermon, but this was way too good.

I believe that when we have been in heaven 10,000 years, this will still be a subject of rapture and surprise, that he should ever have found anything in us which he could take delight.

[36 : 50] That he should ever have found anything in us which he could take delight. To pity us, to show mercy to us, that I can understand, but to love us?

The big heart of God to love a creeping thing like man. The infinite soul of the Most High to pour itself out on such a mean, worthless creature as man.

The everlasting God who fills all in all to concentrate as it were the powers of a spirit and set the whole upon a creature that his own hands have made. A creature that had revolted and rebelled and at the best is still worthless.

At the best is still worthless. Oh, sing of this, you spirits before the throne. We cannot speak of it today as we should. Hear what he's saying.

There's no way we can even comprehend now. There's no way we could possibly sing the praises of God for what he's done for us in Christ now. And he's saying that even when we've been in heaven for 10,000 years, he thinks that this will still be a subject of rapture and surprise.

[37 : 54] To think that God, a merciful, holy God, perfect in every way, would condescend to show love to man. Charles Spurgeon says that he could get maybe mercy, but to love us the way he loves the Son.

As he said to the Son, you are my beloved. With you I am well pleased. Someday he will say to us, because if we have placed our faith in him, he sees us as he sees Jesus.

I hope that you are with me in wanting that to be true. In recognizing that if that's not true, eternal damnation is your place. Destruction forever.

I can't even comprehend how very horrible that will be. Separated eternally from God. Thrown into a place of fire and weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Right? And again, don't blame that on God. That is not his fault. You bought it. You were told the way you ought to live, which we fail at every point.

[39 : 01] You were told to believe in Christ. You're accountable for that. And yet you rejected him. You deserve eternal punishment. I hope that you don't want to experience that.

I hope this morning that there's a pricking in your heart if you've never placed faith in Christ to respond in faith today. The simple call of the gospel is to repent and believe. Turn from your sin and turn towards God.

Recognize that your sufficiency comes from him. And so I just have three questions for you just to kind of filter some of that. Are you found in Christ?

When God looks upon you this morning, can he say of you that you're his beloved? Does he see Christ when he sees you? And so just three questions for you to ponder. Firstly, do you depend on the beloved?

Do you depend on Christ for your salvation? Is he your salvation? Or is it some manner of works? Being a member of a particular church or denomination?

[39 : 59] Or is it Christ that is your salvation? Do you bear fruit as one who is dependent on the beloved? Do you live as you should live?

We saw in 1 John 3 there that this is something that we do because of what God has done for us? Not that our works earn us our salvation but our works are evidence of what we've done.

That's what baptism is. It's an obedient act of response to what God has done for us in Christ. Do you do bear fruit in that way? And thirdly, do you love the beloved?

Do you love Christ? Christ should be the most attractive thing to a regenerate heart? His person and his work.

Knowing, reflecting upon, understanding what he has done for us, he ought to be the most valuable thing to us. Do you love the beloved or do you love the things of the world?

[40 : 59] These things are said in contradiction to one another. We should be ever increasing as we're growing in grace, our love for Christ and our disdain for the world. I'm not saying that you don't enjoy your family, that you don't enjoy having a home, I'm not saying any of that.

What I'm saying to you is in comparison to Christ, all things in the words of Paul are rubbish, trash, vile, in comparison to knowing Jesus Christ as Lord.

So do you love him? I'm going to close today as we come to the end of that point, which I hope you understand why I believe that's so drastically important as we look at this short record, these three verses of Jesus being baptized.

baptized. I came across a hymn that was new to me, written in 1930, called In the Beloved by a woman named Sevilla Martin. I just want you to listen to these words.

Wes is going to try to put these to music for us soon. In the beloved, accepted I am, risen, ascended, and seated on high, saved from all sin through his infinite grace, with the redeemed ones, accorded a place.

[42 : 08] In the beloved, God's marvelous grace calls me to dwell in this wonderful place. God sees my Savior and then he sees me. In the beloved, accepted and free.

In the beloved, how safe my retreat. In the beloved, accounted complete. Who can condemn me? In him I am free. Savior and keeper forever is he.

In the beloved, God's marvelous grace calls me to dwell in this wonderful place. God sees my Savior and then he sees me. In the beloved, accepted and free. In the beloved, I went to the tree. There in his person by faith I may see. Infinite wrath rolling over his head, infinite grace, for he died in my stead. In the beloved, God's marvelous grace calls me to dwell in this wonderful place. God sees my Savior and then he sees me. In the beloved, accepted and free. Let's pray together.