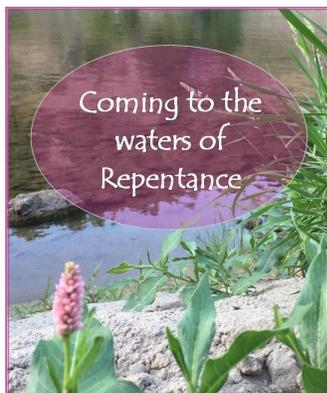


## Coming to the Waters of Repentance (Mark 1)



With Easter approaching, or what we joyfully refer to as Resurrection Sunday, it's always a good idea to read the gospel accounts of Christ's life. As I was reading in the book of Mark, it begins, Jesus came from Nazareth, and Jesus came to the Jordan River to be baptized by His cousin, John. This was the same John who declared to those he baptized, "***I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit***" referring to Christ. John was preaching a baptism of repentance, and yet, we find Jesus coming to the waters of the Jordan to be baptized by him.

Why would Jesus need to repent? What did He, in His perfect life, have to repent of? In order to understand that, we first have to understand the word repentance. So often this word gets equated with forgiveness of sin, or even to salvation, but repentance, the word itself, simply means *a turning and going the opposite direction*. In fact, turning a complete 180 degree, opposite direction. So, Jesus' baptism was not a commitment to no longer live walking in sin (which would be impossible since He knew no sin) but rather, He was repenting from the life He was living up to this point, He was heading a new direction.

You see, Jesus had been living the simple life of a carpenter's son, and it wasn't until this moment that He began to live in what we would call full-time ministry. This baptism was issuing a change of life for Jesus. A repentance, meaning He would turn from the direction He was living and begin to live a new way. No longer would He be only a carpenter's son, He would become known to the world as God's Only Begotten Son (see in Mark 1:9-11.) Baptism was an identification process for Him, similarly, as it symbolizes for us today. When we are baptized it is a picture of a new direction, a new life in Christ. We are showing others that we want to be identified with Christ's way of living, and so we come to the waters. That is why pastors so often as they are baptizing say the words, "Buried with Christ, Raised to walk in newness of life." It's a sign of repentance, a picture of the great exchange of laying down our old life to walk in the salvation of Christ Jesus.

It was there, that day at the Jordan River that the people saw a visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit of God descending upon Jesus as He was raised up out of the water. They said it looked something like a dove flying down from the sky to light on Him. Then, if you can imagine this, they heard a voice, an audible voice from that sky resounding with this truth: "***You*** (referring to Jesus) ***are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.***"

It was such a different era, God the Father speaking aloud for all to hear. When we are told in Genesis that God spoke the world into being, every facet and function came into existence with a word from God Almighty. Then we read in John chapter 1, "***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All***

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***things came into being through Him and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being....And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.***" (John 1:1-3, 14) Jesus Christ was called "the Word" and He spoke all things into being, yet, now God the Father speaks from heaven to declare to the world, here is my Son, in whom I'm well-pleased. The power alone in that voice, omnipotent and holy God was declaring Jesus as God.

Jesus might have come from Nazareth as a human, but before that He was above all, He was before all. He was God. He came to fulfill a plan. A plan that includes you and I. A plan to bring us to repentance. To change the way we were living to live a new way in Christ. Which begs the question, how are we living? Are we walking in His plan for our life? Or by our own desires? Are we fully engaged with His Spirit throughout the day so that we are available to be His hands and feet to those around us? Are we walking with Him, or do we find ourselves straining against His direction for us? If that's the case, repent. 1 John 1:9 will be helpful in that regard.

As we draw nearer to the day we remember His resurrection may we also come to the waters of repentance. May He find us living and walking in the righteousness of Christ, fulfilling His calling in our own life. We may have come from a place of sin, of walking our own way, but we can repent today, even now, to walk in newness of the life we have in Christ Jesus. To be, as He was, empowered by the Holy Spirit of God to walk well-pleasing to Him.

*Father, You blessed us with Your beloved Son with whom You were well-pleased. Thank You for presenting a way of repentance. Not only a new direction, but the power to achieve this way of walking with You. Help each one of us to live fully engaged with Your Spirit, so that we also, will be well-pleasing to You. Then may we, like Christ, be ones that reveal Your glory to those around us. Thank You that repentance is possible! Strengthen each one to walk in the newness of life You provide in Christ Jesus, in whose name we are able to approach Your holy throne. Amen.*