

Luke 3:15-22

“The Baptism of Our Lord”

January 10, 2016

Fear is a tool of the evil one to hurt or destroy our faith. Yes, we are told to fear and love God above all things, but fear of God is to be in awe of God not to be afraid of God. Anger is another emotion that satan can use to hurt or destroy our faith. Fear and anger are not wrong nor are the other emotions we feel wrong. For emotions are the expression of what is going on inside of us. Our emotions can warn us when things are not right. Our emotions can warn us of danger. Our emotions can tell us that things are good. Our emotions can tell us that we have said or done a good thing. Emotions are like a weather vane showing us the direction of the wind.

However, emotions can lie to us. We can feel abandoned even though in faith our God is inside of us. We can feel that God does not love us because of the things going wrong in our lives. We can feel God does not love us because life is going in the wrong direction. Yet, when Christ gave His life for us on the Cross at Calvary, He showed His great love for us. We should not need more evidence of His love for us. Likewise we know He loves us because He offers to spend eternity with us. Would you want to spend eternity with someone you did not love? We can

feel proud of ourselves even though we rightly confess that we are poor miserable sinners. God is asking us to feel humble not proud. Yes, emotions can lie to us.

The book I am reading calls it Mysticism when we depend on our emotions to determine that God loves us. When Jesus was baptized, our Father in heaven said; “You are My Son, whom I love, with You I am well pleased.” At the Transfiguration of the Christ, the Father adds, “Listen to Him.” God gave us His Word that we might listen to it and make it the guide for our lives. Emotions are for our personal use, but God’s Word is for our soul that we may grow and mature in the faith that He has called us to. God’s Word is for the soul that we may end this life in the hope of eternal life that our God has blessed us with.

Today Jesus begins His three year ministry that leads to His death on the Cross at Calvary. Epiphany is the season when we celebrate that God became man in Jesus Christ. Epiphany stands between Christmas, the birth of Jesus, and Easter, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Epiphany always ends with the Transfiguration where we are told by the Father to listen to His Son because His Word is the word of eternal life.

Today we see Jesus baptized. In baptism our sins are washed away and for those who do not already have the faith, God gives the gift of faith. Only Jesus did not have to have His sins washed away because as God, He was the sinless one.

Rather into the water Jesus carried the sins of us all and there He repented of our sins. Nor was the baptism of John like our baptism. John's Baptism was a water only baptism. In our baptism, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. In our baptism we receive other spiritual gifts as well. In John's baptism they repented of their sins and received God's undeserved grace and mercy through the Old Covenant given by God to the people of Israel through Moses. In our baptism we repent of our sins and receive the forgiveness of our sins through the New Covenant given to us through the Cross at Calvary.

"Listen to Him" we are told. Prayer is talking to God. God responds to our prayer by speaking to us through His Word. I was tempted to buy a lottery ticket this week. Yet, God's Word told me to be content in every and all circumstances. Likewise I thought of all the temptations that come with having that much money and I resisted. I condemn no one who bought a ticket, but I encourage you to listen to God's Word as well. In prayer, through God's Word, we learn to be content in every and all circumstances we find in life. If you win a lot of money, like our emotions, satan will use money to destroy our souls. Live in His undeserved grace and mercy through the Cross at Calvary rather than be drawn into this world and its illusion of hope that only fades away. Amen