



February 5th, 2006

Bible Study

Mathew Ch. 3 > Ready to Take on the World

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How many times has this happened to you: You walk into class or work, you get your first assignment or project, and you tell yourself “I was NOT ready for this”?

This scenario occurs in every person’s life, getting blind-sided by something that has to get done, and you only have limited time. You panic.

It’s a question of being prepared. Now imagine what Jesus Christ had to go through.

Prior to the events of St. Matthew, Chapter 3, which narrates the Lord’s baptism, not much is known about Jesus’ adolescent and adult life. We know that he worked as a carpenter under Joseph’s tutelage, but historians and theologians also point out a limited ministry that Jesus was carrying out, through teachings and even healing the sick. However, in these early years of his ministry, Jesus was shunned because of who he was... a carpenter from a poor, common, family. This stereotype did not help Jesus’ credibility, as he himself says in Mark 6:4, “Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.” Jesus was respected as a carpenter, but not as a scholar of scriptures.

But as the old saying goes: Tough luck.

His heavenly Father sent him to this world to carry out Heaven’s plan, and there was no turning back. So from his youth until his baptism, Jesus Christ prepared himself for the imminent public ministry that would change the world forever. Not only did he commit himself to his carpenter trade, but he also readied himself to spread the Good News with prayer and obedience to his heavenly Father. Jesus’ baptism, although ending one phase in his development, began another.

Several commentaries on St. Matthew, Chapter 3 speak of Jesus “coming in humiliation” to John the Baptist. Although the Son of God, Jesus still presented himself as someone who needed affirmation as the person for the job. The Baptist theologian, John Gill, explains that this baptism provided Jesus a testimony that was from both heaven and John the Baptist, in that he was the Son of God and the one true Messiah, before beginning his public ministry.

“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).



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There is no question that Christ's baptism signaled the commencement of the Lord's preaching ministry, and exemplified the submissive nature of Jesus to his Father's will. If the SINLESS Son of God did not refuse this divine ordinance, why should people today neglect baptism, which is declared to be "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38)? Granted, the reasons for Jesus being baptized versus our reasons are very different. He was sinless, and we are not. But we must recognize that Jesus desired to do his Father's will. As the modern Christian author Wayne Jackson writes,

"Christ demonstrated by his baptism, therefore, on the very first day of his public ministry, that he was committed to doing his Father's will. In this regard, as in all others, he is our perfect model."

Preparing ourselves with the right tools for the tasks ahead is a never-ending process, and a big part of that preparation is a "self-cleaning", declaring ourselves sinful and not all that knowledgeable. John the Baptist tells the Pharisees and Sadducees before Jesus had arrived to "produce fruit in keeping with repentance" (Matthew 3:8), as in "bear fruit" worthy of repentance. And what is repentance? It is a change in mind towards something, a reformation of life. That is the daily fruit we must produce, the fruit of RENEWAL.

I'm asking you to extend the concept of baptism to your everyday battles at work, school, home or church. Each day you MUST renew yourselves, by learning from the mistakes of the past, ultimately becoming a person equipped to face any challenges ahead. You do this not just for your own sake, but for the sake of others, and unto His Glory. Don't get stuck. Be ever-evolving in the Christian faith. **It is your daily baptism, in the figurative sense, but your daily renewal literally.** It is how you prepare for anything and everything.

Jesus never ran away from the overwhelming plan placed on his shoulders. He prepared himself, never neglecting his trade as a carpenter and his place as the Son of God. He submitted himself to the initiation that was his baptism. Then, and ONLY then, was he truly prepared to face the road ahead.

So how ready are we?