

011724 English Sermon "With you I am well pleased" Mark 1:4-11

1. In today's Scripture, we read that Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River and began his public ministry. When he was coming up out of water after being baptized, the voice from the heavens said, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." But there is something to think about here. In fact, Jesus didn't start any ministry yet. He was just about to start his public ministry. Nevertheless, God the Father said, "I am well pleased" with God the Son! If so, why did God the Father say, "I am well pleased" even before Jesus started his public ministry?

I have read an interesting interpretation of this passage once. The reason God said "I am well pleased" was because Jesus had a very close relationship with God the Father during his 30 years of life before starting his public ministry. I think it makes sense. Because even in the three years of Jesus' public life, he never ended the intimate and deep fellowship with God the Father.

If you think about it carefully, it is not that there is no need for communication and fellowship because God is the Trinity, but rather, because God is one, God always communicates! This is what it must be like for us to experience Emmanuel God. I'm not talking about seeking God only when you need him or when you feel like it, but rather seeking God and coming to God no matter what situation or situation you are in.

Jesus lived on this earth for 33 years. Among them, he did ministry for only three years (or three and a half years). The public ministry in Jesus' life is roughly an eleventh. Because Jesus had already lived 90% of his life in close

fellowship with God the Father, he was able to fully handle public ministry, which was 10% of his life.

So what about you and me? Maybe it's the opposite? Don't we spend 90% of our time doing work, and 10% of our time, communing with God, and living a holy life? Maybe, is it that not even 10% our lives are used for fellowship with God? If God the Father said "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased," not because of some grand and great ministry, but because of his close fellowship with God, his holy life, and God loved and praised Jesus so much, we must look back on our journey of faith!

2. Remember that Jesus was baptized Himself. After Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected, He spent 40 days on earth before ascension. The Bible records that the resurrected Lord appeared 10 times to women, disciples, and believers before his ascension to heaven. As He ascended, He said to His disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

Jesus' command was literally kept in the early church. Acts 2:41 says, "So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added." The early Christians practiced baptism as Jesus commanded, it marked the personal oneness with Jesus, it marked the entrance into the Christian family, and it provided an opportunity for a public confession of faith.

We are saved by our faith in Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, baptism was an important communal ritual to confess one's individual sins and profess that

Jesus Christ is their own Savior in front of the brothers and sisters of faith. It was the time to confirm your faith before fellow believers, and for the believers to confirm your faith.

In this respect, baptism is important because it is the act of officially announcing your faith in Christ, your commitment to follow him, and your will to participate in the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ. It is also a ritual that promises support from the community that witnesses it.

In 1 Corinthians 10, the apostle Paul explained baptism in light of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea in their exodus. The Israelites, who were slaves in Egypt, left Egypt by the guidance of God and crossed the Red Sea. The Israelites walked across the Red Sea, which God had divided through His power. After they crossed, the Red Sea was reunited.

1 Corinthians 10:1-2 says, "For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

Despite the lack of any ceremonial acts, the Bible defines the crossing of the Red Sea as "baptism" because the crossing had the essential meaning of baptism. To the Israelites, the Red Sea crossing meant a complete break with Egypt, a clear separation of life between two sides of the sea. The life on this side of the Red Sea, the life in Egypt, was a slave life of sin and death. However, the life beyond the Red Sea was eternal truth and life that aimed at the kingdom of God. The essential meaning of baptism is a departure from the old life that only ends in death, and a new beginning towards God who gives eternal life.

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, we can learn an important lesson here. Even today, do you think God is pleased with you only when you do great things and make great achievements? No! It's good to do great work and accomplishments, but what's more important than that is, there must be a "life of faith" that maintains a close relationship with God every day! Remember Jesus' baptism, and remember your own baptism (if you have already been baptized). I hope and pray that in 2024, you will live a life of always rejoicing, praying without ceasing, and being thankful for everything in Christ. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you, your family, your business, your studies, and with the lives of your children. To Christ be thanks and praise. Amen.