The Legacy of Jesus

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Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. 14 *John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"* 15 *But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.* 16 *And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.* 17 *And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased*." (Matthew 3:13-17)

1. Can We Still Have Hope?

People are often excited for a new year. This new year, however, we had many events that might cause us serious concern. There was a killing of an Iranian general and a retaliatory attack, and days later a Ukrainian plane crash killing 176 people. In Australia, there has been a mega-fire that has engulfed 1.5 million acres of land. Within our United Methodist Church, there is a proposed split. Many people are worried about the future. In such difficult situations, we ask ourselves. Can we still have hope and an optimistic perspective on the future?

2. The Baptism of Jesus

Today's scripture gives us some positive answers. Matthew 3:13-17 talks about the baptism of Jesus. Last Sunday, we discussed the visit of the magi from afar. This morning, we will look at the baptism of Jesus. Do we know how old Jesus was when he was baptized? According to Luke 3:23, "***Jesus was about 30 years old when he began his ministry.***"

Luke 2:41 and the following tells us that Jesus went to Jerusalem with his parents to celebrate the Feast of Passover when he was 12 years old. Do we know what Jesus did between 12 and 30? The Bible does not give us any details. But we assume that Jesus would have worked in his family business as a carpenter in Nazareth to support his family.

Matthew 3:13 says, "***Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him***." Why did Jesus want to be baptized? In Israel, baptism was a symbol of personal repentance. When Jesus came to John, John says to Jesus, *"**I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?**" (verse 14)* Jesus says, *"**Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness**" (verse 15).* The term

“righteousness” means to do the will of God. Jesus sees his baptism as advancing God’s work. Jesus was baptized to fulfill God’s purpose.

The baptism of Jesus has two important meanings. First, Jesus was baptized on behalf of all human beings to confirm God’s forgiveness and acceptance. John the Baptist says to his disciples, “***Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world***” (John 1:29). God’s purpose for Jesus is the salvation of humankind. God sent Jesus to save all human beings.

Second, Jesus was baptized to reveal that he was the Messiah. John 1:7 says, “***He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe***.” This verse tells us that John the Baptist came to this world to introduce that Jesus as the Messiah to the world. Although the people came to John to be baptized as a sign of personal repentance, John baptized Jesus to make a public announcement of Jesus’ Messiahship. The baptism of Jesus was the inauguration of His Messianic ministry.

3. The Descending Holy Spirit & the Voice

The baptism of Jesus has signs confirming the Messiahship of Jesus. Matthew 3:16 tells us that when Jesus was baptized and came out of the water, “***heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him***.” Why does the Holy Spirit descend upon Jesus? To be the Messiah, Jesus needs the Holy Spirit. The coming of the Spirit is predicted in the Book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 42:1 says, “***Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him***.” Why does the Holy Spirit descend upon Jesus? The Holy Spirit confirms and commissions Jesus as God’ servant. John 14:25-26 says, “***the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you***. The Holy Spirit would let Jesus know what the will of God is and help Jesus’ disciples to understand Jesus’ teaching. Another important role of the Holy Spirit is empowering. Right before Jesus ascends, he says to his disciples, “***you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you***” (Acts 1:8). All the miracles Jesus performed were possible because of the power of the Holy Spirit was with Jesus.

After the descending of the Spirit, there was a voice from heaven, saying, “***this is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased***” (verse 17). God’s voice confirms that Jesus was sent by God to do His will as the Messiah.

The baptism of Jesus was the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. It was also an occasion for Jesus to dedicate his life to the Lord. Before he was baptized, Jesus was just an ordinary carpenter. However, after his baptism, Jesus' role and priority changed completely. From this moment on, Jesus would live his entire life according to the will of the Lord.

4. Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem

Jesus' commitment to God's call challenges us to review what it means to be the followers of Jesus. This often happens when Christian pilgrims walk on the Via Dolorosa. The Via Dolorosa is a processional route in the Old City of Jerusalem. "Via Dolorosa" means "Sorrowful Way" in Latin. It is believed that this is the path that Jesus walked on the way to his crucifixion. When Christian pilgrims walk this path, they remember the suffering and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and renew their dedication to the Lord.

Although Jesus walked this path three years after he was baptized, the baptism of Jesus was the beginning of his walk toward Calvary. The baptism of Jesus is an important part of his legacy. Jesus was willing to do anything, including dying on the cross, to fulfill His mission. How could Jesus make such a radical decision? It was because he sensed the presence of the Lord and the power of the Holy Spirit, and trusted the Lord until the end of his life.

5. The Legacy of Jesus

Today's sermon title is "the legacy of Jesus." What did Jesus leave behind? It is probably easier for us to think of what Jesus didn't leave behind. He left "no wife, no child, no house, no clothes, no money, no business, no writings, no hymns, no portrait, no buildings, no confirmed gravesite, and no new religion."

Although there were many things he did not leave behind, Jesus left behind something very important. The legacy of Jesus would be forgiveness of sins, salvation, eternal life, the purpose in life, the power of the Holy Spirit, the presence of God, and the ability to be in peace in crisis.

When Jesus was baptized, Jesus already knew what it would mean to be the Messiah. He did not expect to be king of Israel, but knew that he would be in suffering and dying. Yet he did not run away from being the Messiah. He was willing to lay down his life for our salvation.

These days as we feel that we are in crisis, we may note that there is nothing much we can do. Let us discuss our denomination. Some newspaper reported that there would be split of our denomination. The 16

diverse group leaders within the denomination have agreed to a protocol to split our denomination. However, we need to remember that this is only one of several different proposals. The 862 delegates will evaluate and pray to discern what would be the best for us. I do not know about you, but I do not worry about this at all. If God uses our denomination to share good news of Jesus Christ with non-believers, God would do something that we have never thought about. If we remember the legacy of peace, we can be still and wait for God's guidance.

6. Conclusion

As humans, there are many reasons for us to feel troubled and frightened about the future. However, in John 14:1, Jesus says to his disciples and us, "***Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me***." This is what Jesus tells his disciples before leaving them before he died on the cross.

As long as we have patience and child-like trust in God's faithfulness, we are able to face any situation with the peace of Jesus. Paul says in Philippians 4:7, "***the peace of Jesus which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus***."

7. Application

Jesus came to the Jordan River with the sense of God's call and was baptized. Although Jesus knew that there would be lots of danger, troubles, and sufferings, he continued his journey with the sense of God's purpose, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the presence of the Lord. As followers of Jesus, we live our lives with the legacy of Jesus and pass it on to the future generations.

Psalm 78:4 says, "***We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done***."

May God bless us to be able to be in peace always and pass the legacy of Jesus on to our children and next generations in 2020. Amen.