

01-28-2018

Message: Jesus Accepts the Divine Calling of His Heavenly Father

Text: Luke 3:21-38

Introduction

- A. Since God's Word in 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us "all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable," you might be wondering what can be profitable about this present section of Luke's gospel, briefly mentioning Jesus's baptism by John and largely consisting of a genealogical list of 77 Hebrew names. Know that I've pondered and prayed over this text, asking God the same question.
- B. When I first became a pastor in 1985, I was as committed then as I am today to withhold nothing profitable from God's people but to proclaim the whole counsel of God; that the way to insure I do this is through expository preaching, working verse by verse, section by section, book by book through the Scriptures. But I initially made the mistake of preaching through every passage of Scripture, even when I personally did not sufficiently understand its profitability. I have learned to not attempt preaching from a text unless God gives me something to proclaim on His behalf, unless/until God uses something within a text to "hook my heart," to strike me with wonder, conviction, direction, hope, appreciation, joy, or love for Him.
- C. By last Sunday night into the first of Monday morning I still was uncertain of what God wanted to speak to us through this text. I told Bethanie, "You might need to run the bulletins without listing a specific text or title." But later after further study, pondering, praying, my heart was hooked by when I realized what Christ was doing in coming to be baptized by John.

I. In coming to John for baptism, Jesus accepts God's appointment and calling to fulfill God's salvific mission.

- A. In the first two chapters of Luke's gospel, Jesus's divine appointment to fulfill God's mission of salvation is announced in anticipation of His ministry.

- 1. As the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary ...

Luke 1:31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and **you shall name Him Jesus**.³² "He will be great and will be called the **Son of the Most High**; and **the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David**,³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

- 2. As Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied ...

Luke 1:68 "Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel, for **He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people**,⁶⁹ and **has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the**

house of David His servant--⁷⁰ As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old--⁷¹ **Salvation** FROM OUR ENEMIES, and FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US;⁷² to show mercy toward our fathers, and **to remember His holy covenant,**⁷³ **the oath which He swore to Abraham** our father,⁷⁴ to grant us that we, **being rescued** from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear,

3. As the angel proclaimed to the shepherds at Christ's birth ...

Luke 2:10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people;¹¹ for today in the city of David **there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**

4. Simeon, upon seeing the infant Jesus in the temple, with the Holy Spirit upon him, blessed God and said of Jesus's divinely appointed mission ...

Luke 2:30 "... my eyes have seen **Your salvation,**³¹ which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,³² A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, and the glory of Your people Israel." ..., "Behold, this *Child* is **appointed** for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed--³⁵ and a sword will pierce even your own soul-- to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

5. As Jesus grew He grew in His understanding of being appointed to carry out His heavenly Father's redemptive purposes for the world (Luke 2:40). Even by the age of 12 He understood the priority God's divine calling on His life. When He remained behind in God's temple after his parents began returning to Nazareth after a Passover feast, we read in Luke 2 ...

Luke 2:40 **The Child continued to grow** and become strong, **increasing in wisdom;** and the grace of God was upon Him.

Luke 2:45 When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him.⁴⁶ Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.⁴⁷ And **all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.**⁴⁸ When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You."⁴⁹ And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? **Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?**"

- B. Yet it is one thing to be designated for a divine mission and calling, it is another to accept and embrace God's divine mission and calling upon our lives. That is what is so striking about what Jesus does here.

1. He identified with all the people submitting to John's baptism, confessing their need for purification and forgiveness of their sins.

Luke 3:3 And he (John) came into all the district around the Jordan, **preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins**; ...²¹ Now **when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized**, and while He was praying, heaven was opened,

Matthew 3:6 and **they were being baptized** by him in the Jordan River, **as they confessed their sins**.

- a. Unlike all other people, Jesus had no sin and no need for repentance. This is why John the Baptist responded as he did when Jesus came to him for baptism as Matthew records.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, **yet without sin**.

Matthew 3:13 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan *coming* to John, to be baptized by him.¹⁴ But **John tried to prevent Him**, saying, **"I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?"**

- b. But in identifying though baptism with all those who were repenting of their sin, Jesus was remarkably accepting His God-appointed mission to be crushed as a guilt offering for their forgiveness and reconciliation to God, to represent them before the Father.

2 Corinthians 5:20 ... we beg you on behalf of Christ, **be reconciled to God**.²¹ **He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him**.

- c. This is why Jesus responded to John that His identifying with sinners in this way was the fulfilling of His and His Father's righteousness. It was righteous for Jesus to obey His Father's will, and righteous for God to provide His Son for our salvation as He promised.

Matthew 3:15 But Jesus answering said to him, **"Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness"**. Then he permitted Him.

John 6:38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, **but the will of Him who sent Me**.

Isaiah 53:11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see *it and* be satisfied; By His knowledge **the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities**.

Psalms 98:2 **The LORD has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness** in the sight of the nations.³ **He has remembered His**

lovingkindness and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; **All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.**

Luke 1:54 "**He has given help to Israel** His servant, **in remembrance of His mercy,**⁵⁵ **as He spoke to our fathers,** to Abraham and his descendants forever."

Romans 3:24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;²⁵ whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* **to demonstrate His righteousness** (dikaiosune), because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;²⁶ **for the demonstration, of His righteousness at the present time,** so that He would be **just** (dikaios = righteous) and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

2. What makes Jesus's accepting the mission God has designated Him to fulfill is that He knew how much it would cost Him in this life. He knew He was God's suffering Servant as Isaiah prophesied.

Isaiah 52:14 Just as many were astonished at you, *My people*, so **His appearance was marred more than any man** and His form more than the sons of men. ... 53:3 **He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;** ...⁵ But **He was pierced through** for our transgressions, **He was crushed** for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But **the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.**

- a. The fact that as the pre-incarnate divine Son He planned and appointed this mission for Himself with the Father and Spirit in no way lessened His agony as the God-Man. He had a real mortal body with real human emotions and physiology. He in fact knew better than anyone what the horror of bearing divine wrath for sin would involve.

Luke 22:42 saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." ...⁴⁴ **And being in agony** He was praying very fervently; and **His sweat became like drops of blood,** falling down upon the ground.

Hebrews 5:7 In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications **with loud crying and tears** to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.

- b. And yet He willingly accepted God's appointment to fulfill God's redemptive mission for the world. Being baptized, He was praying to His Father, perhaps asking for grace and strength, certainly with the attitude His mother Mary displayed, an attitude He took all the way to the cross.

Luke 3:21 Now when all the people were baptized, **Jesus was also baptized,** and while **He was praying,** heaven was opened,

Luke 1:38 And Mary said, "**Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.**"

Luke 23:46 And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "**Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT.**" Having said this, He breathed His last.

II. God commissions and confirms Jesus as His Messianic agent of redemption and reconciliation for the life of the world.

Luke 3:21 Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened,²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

- A. After His baptism, as He was praying to His heavenly Father, the Father responded - heaven was open. God was about to commission/appoint and equip Jesus for the ministry to which God called Him.
- B. The Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove.

Luke 3:22 and **the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove,** and a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

- 1. During the Old Covenant era, when God's kings and priests were appointed, they were anointed with oil.

Exodus 30:25 "You shall make of these **a holy anointing oil,** a perfume mixture, ...³⁰
"You shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister as priests to Me.

1 Samuel 16:13 Then **Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him** in the midst of his brothers; **and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David** from that day forward.

- 2. God sent His Spirit upon Jesus to empower and set Him apart for service. That Jesus was conscious of the Spirit's anointing as God's commissioning him for His redemptive ministry as Servant of the Lord is clear from Jesus's attributing Isaiah 61 to Himself while speaking in the synagogue of Nazareth.

Luke 4:17 And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written,¹⁸ **"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS**

UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,¹⁹ **TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.**" ...²¹

And He began to say to them, "**Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.**"

Isaiah 42:1 "**Behold, My Servant**, whom I uphold; My chosen one ***in whom My soul delights.*** **I have put My Spirit upon Him;** He will bring forth justice to the nations. ...⁶ "I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and **I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations,**⁷ to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison.

- C. God's audibly speaks His confirmation that the ministry Jesus received does in fact come from the Father, echoing Isaiah 42 and Psalm 2, a messianic psalm of coronation of God's Messiah. In doing so God provides irrefutable confirmation that Jesus is God's Messiah/King, anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be God's agent of redemption. There is no other name under heaven whereby we must be saved.

Luke 3:22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, **and a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."**

Psalm 2:6 "But as for Me, **I have installed My King** upon Zion, My holy mountain."⁷ "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, '**You are My Son,** Today I have begotten You.'⁸ 'Ask of Me, and **I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession.**

- D. The mention of His age might be further confirmation of Jesus's divine appointment, since Jewish males began temple service at age 30.

Luke 3:23 **When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age,**

Numbers 4:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,² "Take a census of the descendants of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, by their families, by their fathers' households,³ **from thirty years and upward,** even to fifty years old, **all who enter the service to do the work in the tent of meeting.**

- E. The genealogy of Jesus confirms that He will fulfill God's redemptive mission for both Israel and the nations, being the son of David, Abraham, Adam (man), the son of God.

Luke 3:23 When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Eli, ... the **son of David,** ... the **son of Abraham,** ... the **son of Adam,** the **son of God.**

Application

- A. God has given testimony that Jesus is His divinely appointed agent of redemption and reconciliation for the world. Those who embrace Jesus as God's King and Savior will have their sins forgiven and be delivered from God's coming wrath. Those who by indifference or open hostility reject Jesus will bear their own sins and suffer eternal wrath when Jesus returns in His Father's glory. Which are you?
- B. The Lord asks us believers to consider how Jesus was faithful to His heavenly calling, that we might continually embrace and imitate Him in fulfillment of our heavenly calling.

Hebrews 3:1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession; ² **He was faithful to Him who appointed Him.**

1. As the Father sent His Spirit to empower and commission Jesus, so the resurrected Christ has sent His Spirit upon His disciples to empower and set us apart for service. We are not on our own.

Luke 24:46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ "You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ "And **behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.**"

Acts 1:4 Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," *He said*, "you heard of from Me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ... ⁸ but **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.**"

2. So by the grace and power of Christ, fulfill the calling by which Christ has called us ...
 - a. As Christ's disciples in general.

Ephesians 4:1 ... **walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,** ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³ being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

- b. As disciples whom Christ has called specifically as shepherds, deacons, spouses, parents, children, single, widowed, employers, employees, students, etc. Fulfill all righteousness in all that the Lord has called us.