



Third Presbyterian Church

Seeking the Light

Monday Morning Connection
Monday, December 11, 2017

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins...In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." Mark 1: 4, 9-11

Do you remember when you were six years old? Children that age typically enjoy playing, exploring, and spending time with friends. Was this true for Jesus? The Gospel of Mark begins with John the Baptist, followed by the account of Jesus' baptism and the beginning of his ministry at about age 30. Nothing is said about Jesus' birth or childhood or early adult life. Since Mark is the earliest gospel account, these are noteworthy omissions. In this season of Advent it is important to remember how significant God's entry into human history as an infant is. This dependence and vulnerability teach us much about the nature of God. God did not enter history to exert control. It is also noteworthy that God expresses God's pleasure with Jesus, his beloved son, even before Jesus resists temptations in the desert and begins his ministry. As we reflect on the nativity scene, we should consider the fact that God subjected God's self to the same vulnerability we experience. As Jesus grew up, he came to understand that suffering and vulnerability were part of human life, but that these realities did not diminish God's love for him and for all creation, nor the value and purpose of his life. This reminds me of a six year old whom I came to know in a cancer hospital forty-five years ago, as he faced death from leukemia. He told a priest, "I have Jesus Christ inside me." So do we all.

Consider these words from the hymn, "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry": "Then cleansed be every life from sin; make straight the way for God within, and let us all our hearts prepare for Christ to come and enter there."

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