

Let not the moment pass!

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 12 January 2025

Preacher: Rev Michael MacDonald

- [0 : 0 0] I want to thank Alina for your welcome reading it and your introduction. But you can only do so much because you don't know me all that well. And I've written a couple of introductions here for myself.
- I'm going to move. Can I turn this microphone off? Is it off? That's fine. Okay. It just needs to be so likely for this one, I think. I'll lower it down. There we are. Okay.
- There's a lot of people here who would turn around and say, I couldn't introduce that man. I knew him as a wee boy. I used to see him at his parents' house when I visited there to get some sewing done. Well, there's folks in the congregation today who would be able to say, well, I used to work with that man.
- He was stationed in Goldsby at the time, and I was stationed in Dora. We were police officers together. We also got to submit this together, but we'll not talk about that.
- We fast forward quite a number of years, and you might introduce me as the Church of Scotland Minister, who was minister at Honest Palace Church, having the church in the West End, all of all this.
- [1 : 1 5] There's a wee caveat to add to that, by the way. You need to put in brackets after that, we're tired. We're tired. Okay. Of course, you might introduce me in different ways.
- For whichever introduction you use, I would describe part of who I am. Unlike Mark. Mark, in his introduction to Jesus, describes entirely who he is.
- And we're going to look at that this morning. Not just because it's a season of epiphany. But I'll do that part again, and I have to stop doing that.
- So they never pronounce it correctly. That it reminds us. It takes us back to the very beginning of our walk with God. To be assured that we have that realization of who it is that we have placed our trust in, or who we're seeking to place our trust in.
- To be assured that all that the Word contains of our Jesus is true. And everything that we are, and everything that we value, we can safely place in his hands.
- [2 : 2 4] Because he is who Mark describes him to be. Now he and have, as it were, four witnesses. The first witness is the prophets.
- And that is fulfilled by John the Baptist, who comes in fulfillment of that prophecy that we find in Isaiah, but also in Micah as well. I will send a messenger before your face who will prepare your way.
- I don't know what it's like, but although I'm retired, I still go to worship. And I still listen to the Word of God, and of course we read the Word of God at home.
- But what must it have been like for the people of Israel, who for 400 years had not heard from God? God had not spoken through a prophet for 400 years.
- And we have here, recorded by Mark, this beautiful event. The time of fulfillment has come. God has set in time the place and the era when Jesus would come.
- [3 : 4 8] And he authenticates that by sending John the Baptist, someone who had prophesied about 400 years before. And in so doing so, he speaks to the Jews.

The Jews who valued God's Word in the Old Testament. The Jews who were still looking for a Messiah. And we might tend to think, well, Jesus must have been the Messiah.

No one else was making that kind of claims. But I think if we look back in history, and here my theological rustiness is beginning to show, if you look back in history, there will be others who claim to be Messiah.

In other words, king over Israel, who were not. Let me bring it up to date. If you choose to go to a new place on holiday, or if you're looking for someone to be a trade person in your home, what is it to do?

Well, you might look for somebody who's already been there. Or you might look for somebody who's already engaged this trademan. That's how I have somebody working in my house recently.

[5 : 08] Somebody that didn't work for somebody else. And their work has been spoken highly also. They came to this work of mine. Or if you don't know somebody who's been there, or who's employed this person, you might look for references or reviews on the internet.

And of course, you have to be careful there, because not all of these are correct or authentic. Some unruly or untrustworthy people put things up about themselves entirely untrue.

And so, let's say, this is what Mark is doing here. Mark is recording for the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. They can trust that this is who Jesus is.

It's almost like a public announcement. It is a public announcement. And to those that have ears to hear, recognize that the person who John is talking about is the Messiah.

And then we come to the baptism. The obedience of Jesus to his Father's will showing the real humility of Christ.

[6 : 22] The demonstration of Jesus' grace. Well, let's remind ourselves, first of all, what baptism, John's baptism, was all about.

Baptism wasn't for the Jews. They already had a covenant with God. That covenant with God was still in Abraham, because they were sons or daughters of Abraham.

A covenant was made there. God had made a promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And if they were a Jew by birth, they believed that they had this covenant relationship with God.

Now, baptism originally were for the pagans. In other words, for those who didn't believe in an individual God, unlike today, where we might find lots of people who don't believe in God at all, back in the day that this was written, a Jew would be very hard-pushed to find somebody who didn't believe in not just one God but a multiplicity of gods.

Because there had to be a God for the harvest. There had to be a God for the weather. There had to be a God for this and a God for that. And they all had to be satisfied and appeased.

[7 : 38] And this baptism here that John is offering in the River Jordan or what baptism is, is to show that you have come away from that original thought of believing in the multiplicity of gods or, in our case, of not believing in God at all and turning and facing the other direction, in other words, from west to east or from north to south or whichever point of the compass you choose to use.

In other words, your viewpoint has completely changed. You've been transformed. You've come to believe in God. And that was this baptism was for.

And of course, the submersion in the water was to wash away the old and the coming out out of the water was to signify the new birth or the birth of the new person.

and at this stage here and Mark introduces Jesus to his readers and would remind us of who Jesus is today because I'm sure everyone sitting here knows who Jesus is, at least by name, at least in this head knowledge here, perhaps it hasn't quite reached here yet and is still to do that and we're still working that out.

still working that out. Jesus could have played the card this doesn't apply to me card because Jesus is God.

[9 : 09] He's always believing God. He is God. Jesus is without sin. He's never sinned. And so if you turn around and say, no, I'll pass this one by because it doesn't apply to me.

I'm above all that. And there's many occasions that we read in the New Testament where Jesus should have applied that card but that doesn't apply to me.

I don't need to be hungry. I don't need to be cold. I don't need to be thirsty. I don't need to be lonely. I don't need to do these things.

But Jesus does them all. He does them all. He wears our clothes. He walks our walk. He shares our sorrows.

He rejoices in the things and good things that we rejoice in. He does sorrows with us as well. And so that's how we know that we have a high priest that we can trust.

[10 : 16] Written in the book of Hebrews where we have a great country high priest who can sympathize with all our needs and empathize with all our needs. Why? Because he works in the flesh.

He works in the flesh. He works in the flesh. And he understands what temptation is. He understands what hunger is. He understands what loneliness is. and he understands and wants.

And so when we are in any of these places we have a Jesus, a God who can empathize and walk with us. Humility.

A hallmark of Jesus and called to be a hallmark obviously of his or the followers of Jesus as we are. and so two things happen to Jesus at his baptism.

I'm not necessarily taking them in order although perhaps I have. The first is that we have been embodied in the form of the dead.

[11 : 24] The Holy Spirit comes and descends upon Jesus and inhabits him and stays there and never leaves. And I think probably the thought I've always had on my mature Christian life at least is to think to myself well surely Jesus had the Holy Spirit all the time.

He's not always. Surely it was with him all the time. Maybe that's too deep a theological question for a Sunday morning.

Maybe share it over a cup of tea with folks and then all afterwards. But whatever the case the answer to that question is we'll leave that on a sigh. When Jesus was down into the water in obedience to his father much to the condemnation of John if you read in one of the other gospels John tries to diffuse the baptism and said I need to be baptized by you.

But Jesus says let these things be done. And so John does. It's a full of righteousness he says. and in so doing obedience brings its only reward and so the death comes down or the Holy Spirit comes down in the form of a death and Jesus is filled with a Holy Spirit.

There is a theological Christian principle here obedience and obedience in the small things of God brings its own rewards and being able thus when we're entrusted with the bigger things of God to be entrusted with them as well because obedience brings its own reward.

[13:17] God is it's how God works and as you say to yourself I'm not sure about that Michael I would ask you to look at two things look at the scriptures Abraham believed God and as you counted to him as righteousness obedience look at your own life and I'm not saying that your life hasn't been touched with hard things I'm sure there's not anybody sitting here today who hasn't experienced the difficult things of life or perhaps it's even going through that just now but obedience brings its own reward God is working out his purposes in your life and mine does that make it any easier no it's difficult it was through these places at the time I'm not pretending that it isn't but God is there with us obedience bringing a children reward and then you go this wonderful affirmation at the end haven't you the words of a father just son and it does remind us of the relationship within the

God and it does and we speak about the father son and holy spirit and I'm definitely far too lucky to be talking about the trinity today not going to get into that at all but let's just think about that relationship that is there the father sends the son and both give the holy spirit and here we have the words of a father to a son the father says to the son you are my son there's an affirmation here Jesus doesn't need to be told that but the world around about him needs to know that when Jesus ascended the mount of transfiguration and the three disciples that were with him they have the very same words spoken there of the mount of transfiguration this is my son with whom I am well pleased listen to him listen to him there's a portion of that I left out whom I love whom I love

I wonder especially the man around here setting you today did your father ever tell you that he loved you a good question said as fathers today we tell our sons or we'll tell our daughters okay we'll tell our daughters but we'll tell our sons it's actually quite moving for me because when I had that thought when I was preparing for today I'm trying to remember a time when my father ever said that to me a real thought we said lots of things he said your bedrooms are tidy he said you're not working hard enough he said you've got far too much struggle in that accelerator when I wanted to drive or he showed that he loved me did you ever see it sometimes it's just as important to say that we love our sons and lastly with whom

I am well pleased again just a affirmation you've done the right thing you're walking the correct path you're listening to my voice you're fulfilling your ministry of what you were sent to do what you were called to do what you were ordained to do so long ago so four witnesses four witnesses I'm going to name a five it's not in the New Testament I will remind ourselves of the four we had already first the fulfillment of prophecy and the spoken words of John the Baptist or Jesus his humility of going for baptism and the physical presence of the Holy Spirit can lay down as a dad and the affirmation of the

Father's voice but this reminding ourselves keeping fresh in our mind and in our hearts voice that the one that is doing all this is the same one that was spoken about in the psalm that he made for us this morning the voice that commands the seed to be still the voice that commanded creation into being the voice that still small voice that spoke to the prophet hiding in the cave the same God as the God who humbles himself left the very throne of heaven to be your saviour in mind one last story to finish with many years ago I heard a story of a family who were out for a walk beautiful place just enjoying nature and as they're out and about they don't realise that the wee boy that's with them has wandered off and of course there comes a point of realisation that where is he he's not with us and they go looking for him under by the sea and there's quite high cliffs and they spot the wee boy standing looking out to sea not far from the edge of the earth and the father is with a predicament do I shout at him do I tell him off do I run towards him to grab him before something terrible happens what do I do he said the father in great wisdom said quietly we'll call him

[19 : 55] Tony Tony Tony Tony and he kept calling the wee boy his name until the boy turned around to look at him and then he just opened his arms and the wee boy ran to his father God is a bit like that you know watching over you and me willing for us to turn aside from where we stayed to and looking for us to come back he doesn't shout in that sense he just calls a still small voice for God did you see the dog today as he rambles on did you see the dog I have a photograph of it on my phone it's not a great photo I'm not claiming anything about how good a photograph it is because I just stick it on a certain board and it does it all for me it's absolutely stunning and when

I got home from walking the dog I went in and I called to Mary and said you know did you see the dog today she said no I haven't opened the window yet I won't tell you that she's still there she said I haven't opened the curtains yet so she did the moment had passed the dog is beautiful it's not the moment passed that God is speaking to us today it's not the moment passed it's just as beautiful a moment when we have God speaking to us on these occasions Amen