

Year B 1st Sunday in Lent – Feb 18 2024 (Monarto & Holy Cross)

The Gospel: Mark 1:9-15

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Today Mark describes Jesus baptism.

Why did Jesus get baptised?

We know "he sinned not".

We're baptised to have our sins washed away – what about Jesus?

Even John the Baptist who baptised Jesus had issues.

Jesus got to the river Jordan and wanted John to baptize him. John objected, "I'm the one who needs to be baptized, not you!"

John thought that Jesus' baptism and his own baptism were worlds apart:

– not on the same track

- not side by side.

I wonder if Jesus sees his baptism and our baptism as – on the same track - SIDE BE SIDE?

Can we even imagine Jesus a sinner needing baptism?

What does Paul say?

God made Jesus who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor 5)

And Isaiah:

...the [Father] was pleased to crush Him, [and pleased] to put him to grief, [because] He [Jesus] will bear the sins of all people." **Isaiah 53:10–11**

That sad hymn 55 "O dearest Jesus" which we'll sing during lent says God is 'committed' – as in he has committed a crime and is charged and should be punished.

Jesus' baptism and our baptism are **side by side**.

The sin that condemned us is exactly the same sin that condemned Jesus.

- Jesus was destined to take on the sin of the world the day he was born.
- He did this publicly, and officially on the day of his baptism, and ultimately on the day of the cross, when he cried, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me."

God abandons his son because he carries the sin of the world.

God has nothing to do with sin.

Let's be very clear.

Paul and Isaiah did not say Jesus was a sinner, rather they say he took on our sin – he carried our sin – he became the sin of the world.

On his baptism day he identified 100% with the sin of the world.

*Isaiah 53, “**He was numbered with every sinner**”* Isa 53

He came on track with us - side by side with us.

By the way, if you want to know about your sin where do you look?

Who would point us to sin? The Devil??

Sounds logical but maybe not?

The Devil makes us believe that what's wrong is right – and what's evil is good.

We even convince ourselves that we're OK, it's not all that bad.

It's the Holy Spirit who convinces us the truth about our sin.

What we think is not so bad – the Holy Spirit reminds us that it is sin worthy of death – the wages of sin is death.

If you want to know the depth of your sins just look at Jesus on the cross – stricken, smitten and afflicted – there is the depth of your sin, and my sin.

The crown of thorns, the thirst, the spear, the mocking, the sign, the nakedness, the humility that's our sin.

The long, agonising, death tells us about us the consequence of our sin.

The last days of Jesus life - from sweating blood to the loneliness and pain of the cross says something about our life of sin.

When we see the cross we see our sin on Jesus.

Jesus and sin? It hardly makes sense.

The Devil tells me I'm not a bad bloke.

The cross tells me Jesus carried my sin.

Are we still on track.

So long as we see our sin on Jesus back then we can hold tight to the complex truth “he sinned not” – and yet he died a sinner

If we see our sin on Jesus back then we agree with the Roman centurion: “when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, ‘this man was certainly innocent.’” **Luke 23:47**

Are we still on track?

As Jesus was baptised God said, ‘this is my beloved Son with whom he is well pleased’.

The Father says the same thing to us – you are my beloved daughter, son, heir, with whom I am well pleased.

Are we still on track?

Whatever we receive as a result of our sin – Jesus receives.

Whatever Jesus receives as a result of his baptism – we receive.

This is Jesus prayer:

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. John 17

Are we still on track?

Side by side – up and down – through desert and bush – he will always be alongside us.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will be with you.

I won't take suffering and death away – I'll be alongside you through it.

Are we on track?

In baptism Jesus gave us a prayer – we call it “The Lord’s Prayer” – it’s not the Lord’s Prayer.

In every language in the world – apart from English - the Lord’s Prayer is called the “Our Father” (German Unser Vater, in Finnish Isa Maiden, in Arranda, Kaarta Nunakarra)

The most important word in “the Lord’s Prayer” is the very first word – “our”.

Jesus begins the prayer with “Our father” – that one word “our” makes Jesus your brother and makes his Father your Father.

Are we on track?

In baptism we carry the peace of God – the peace dove with us – the dove that survived the flood – was at Jesus baptism – it was to accident.

Are we on track?

Are you one who asked why Jesus had to be baptised?

Please know the answer so you can tell others.

If he took on our sin – he had to be baptised.

If there ever was a bloke who needed to be baptised it was Jesus.

Are we on track?

Do you ever watch that SBS train journey thing – a bit boring – I love it I know every hill and bend – I know Malcolm the driver who you see from time to time.

It's such a strange show mostly you see the two tracks side by side.

Imagine through Baptism you and Jesus are one – side by side through life into eternity.

They asked Malcolm how many times the train had derailed.

He said, "I'm not sure it's hard to keep track."

Are you on track – Jesus was baptised for you and me.

It's only when you realise, he took the sin of the world on himself that you can believe, Jesus needed to be baptism more than anybody.

When you hear God's words of love at Jesus baptism be prepared to hear of God's words of love for you.

Do you know somebody who has never heard God's word of love?

Are you on track? Amen.

Lord reminds us of our union with Jesus through our Baptism. Remind us of our forgiveness through Jesus baptism. Remind us of our union with all the glory of heaven through Jesus baptism. Amen.