



Theme: Jesus, Kindness, and the Kingdom of God **“Baptized and Beloved”**

Weekly Memory Verse:

¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.” – Matthew 3:17

Monday, June 6 – Read Exodus 19:6 and 1 Peter 2:5-10. The dominant medieval church said professional clergy were superior, both spiritually and legally, to all other Christians. Based on the Bible’s teaching, the “Reformation” movement firmly rejected that idea. God gave the keys for the Kingdom of God, first received in baptism, to all believers. Martin Luther referred to such forgiven sinners as “the priesthood of all believers,” a holy priesthood mentioned in 1 Peter 2:5, that was not reserved for a special class of people with credentials named pastors or priests.

🏔️ Peter drew from [Exodus 19:5-6](#) which said all Israelites were a “holy priesthood” and [Hosea 1:10 and 2:23](#) telling us the Israelites after the exile would be God’s people, though for a time they’d chosen not to be. Have you ever seen yourself as a member of “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people who are God’s own possession”? How can that deepen your sense of mission and purpose in life?


🏔️ Many Bible scholars believe 1 Peter was adapted from instruction given to new converts at their baptism. How, if at all, do you remind yourself of your confirmation, reaffirmation, baptism, or other time when you first “owned” your faith in Jesus? To learn more about baptism, for yourself or someone else, [click here](#). How do you purposely let your identity as a Christ-follower shape your daily life?


Prayer: *Lord God, though I often fail you, you call me “chosen,” “holy,” part of a “royal priesthood.” Guide me each day to more fully live into the amazing titles with which you honor me. Amen.*

Tuesday, June 7 – Read Matthew 3:13-17 and 4:1-11. The letter to the Hebrews 4:15 said Jesus “was tempted in every way that we are, except without sin.” The temptations Matthew (and [Luke 4:1-13](#)) reported involved doubt about whether he really was God’s beloved son, and if so, what that meant. Could/should he use his powers for his own benefit or stay on a path of service and self-giving? The temptations tugged Jesus to do things that would make his life easier by matching popular hopes about what the Messiah would do. Jesus, loyal to God’s way, didn’t

(Meditation Moments – June 4-5, 2022 – For more, go to www.summitdurango.org)


“play to the crowd,” even though that deprived him of applause that might help push away questions or doubts about whether this was truly what God’s Son should be doing. Nor should we think this was a one-time test. Luke 4:13 ended his account by saying, “The devil departed from him until the next opportunity”. With Scripture’s principles shaping his response, Jesus overcame the questions and doubts that might have derailed his ministry.


 You never have to choose not to turn stones to bread or avoid throwing yourself off the highest point of the Summit Church sanctuary or Silver Mountain! How are you tempted to use your unique abilities solely for your own benefit, instead of building God’s kingdom by blessing others? How successful are you at resisting temptation and self-doubt? If you don’t like your answer, know that facing inner struggles head-on can defuse them. Ask a gifted counselor or pastor for help.

 Scholar and pastor N. T. Wright in his commentary *Matthew for Everyone* said of the temptations we all face, “They are not simply trying to entice us into committing this or that sin. They are trying to distract us, to turn us aside, from the path of servanthood to which our baptism has commissioned us....as God’s children, we are entitled to use the same defense as the son of God himself. Store scripture in your heart and know how to use it.” How do you intend to deepen your inner supply of biblical understanding in the days ahead so you can remember you are beloved by God?

Prayer: *Jesus, son of God, I face temptations every day. Plant the principles of your word firmly in my heart, that, like you, I might stay on God’s path and resist the lure of going my own way. Amen.*

Wednesday, June 8 – Read 1 Corinthians 12:3-13 and Ephesians 4:1-6. We’re different in many ways. But Paul told his converts that diversity was God’s plan. The members of God’s family of believers are not interchangeable. Like our physical body parts, we are different but work together. What unites us in community is that we all follow one Lord, we’re all led by one Spirit, one baptism, and with all our different backgrounds and gifts, we all form one body—the Body of Christ. Both Corinthians and Ephesians identified that “one Lord” as the foundation of God’s new community.


 It is fact, not opinion, that people from many different backgrounds all love and serve the same Lord—Jesus Christ. It is also fact, not opinion, that those who love and serve the same God do so in many varying ways. How can you subdue forces in your thinking that try to make the differences into walls of separation and mistrust? How can you “make the effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit” by focusing on the One we serve together as a community?


 In your church, your family, your workplace, and your civic community, do you notice the ways that the differences between people bring depth, richness, and strength (even when they may also pose challenges)? How can valuing, honoring, and celebrating the strength that grows from our differences help to keep us from building community-destroying walls of separation?

Prayer: *Lord, keep me growing toward maturity in you. Help me sink the roots of my faith ever more deeply into your eternal wisdom, and to use my gifts in ways that serve your kingdom. Amen.*

Thursday, June 9 – Read Romans 6:1-14. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 5:20, “Where sin increased, grace multiplied even more.” In fact, some tried to discredit Paul by saying, “Great! Let’s keep sinning, so there can be even more grace.” Paul replied, “Absolutely not.” (The Greek


literally meant “May it never be!”) Baptism, he said, identifies us with Jesus’ death. He wrote in Colossians 3:4 to people living in the first century about the same idea: “*You died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*”


 The question in Romans 6:1 was not imaginary, and not just in the first century. For instance, the infamous Russian monk Rasputin rationalized his immoral acts by saying God’s grace needed something to forgive. So, if God forgives, then why should God or I care how I live? What makes it better to choose a life free from attitudes and actions that hinder your relationship with God, others, even yourself over a life of slavery to sin?

 Paul saw baptism as far more than a token act. Those “baptized into Christ” lose their corporate solidarity with the “old self,” which could also be translated “old humanity” aligned with Adam in the Old Testament, to find a new identity with Christ instead. We may still struggle, but Paul said in Christ we can see ourselves as “dead to sin,” as God does. In what ways has Christ’s gift of grace brought you “alive for God in Christ Jesus”?

Prayer: *Jesus, to call you “Lord” is not to say, “Thanks for letting me off the hook.” It is to say, “I want you, not my broken habits or instincts, to rule my life.” Thank you for giving me the promise of a better way to live. Amen.*


Friday, June 10 – Read Mark 1:9-11 and Matthew 3:13-17. Matthew added detail to Mark’s story of Jesus’ baptism. He said that John (who called people to repent and baptized them when they did) tried to *stop* Jesus’ baptism. He recognized Jesus as the sinless savior (who didn’t need baptism’s cleansing), but Jesus said, “This is necessary to fulfill all righteousness.” That seemed to mean that Jesus modeled baptism *for us*. Our baptisms are a sign that we choose to follow Jesus and let him direct our lives.

 Baptism is a type of washing. We come to God tired and defiled and God gives us a fresh start, washing us clean. Jesus did not need that kind of baptism—he was sinless. Yet he humbly asked for baptism anyway. Jesus did what was “necessary” for us, humbling himself and identifying with our humanity, which we read about in [Philippians 2:5-11](#), [Hebrews 2:11-18](#). What does that tell you about how much he values you?

 We sometimes think the Holy Spirit didn’t show up until Pentecost, after Jesus’ resurrection. But Mark and Matthew, saying Jesus saw “the Spirit of God coming down like a dove,” let readers of the baptism story know that God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit were all present, which we also see in [Matthew 28:19-20](#). In what ways has God’s Spirit guided, comforted or encouraged you?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, you knew that I (and all of us) would need the fresh start baptism signifies. Thank you for not skipping that step in your human form, so that I have no excuse to skip it in my walk with you. Amen.*

Saturday, June 11 – Read Mark 1:9-11 again. Mark’s concise, action-oriented gospel gave a simple account of Jesus’ baptism. The reference to the “heaven splitting open” may well have been a subtle way to say that Jesus made the wish expressed to God in [Isaiah 64:1-2](#) a reality. None of the gospels said anyone but Jesus heard the voice at his baptism, unlike the incident in [John 12:27-29](#). This was likely an inner experience of God confirming Jesus’ calling and mission.

 The baptism set the stage for Jesus’ whole ministry. In the words from heaven, discerning readers heard echoes of [Psalm 2:7](#) (a “royal psalm” New Testament Christians applied to Jesus) and [Isaiah 42:1](#), a “servant song” Jesus said shaped his mission. When were you baptized? How has that shaped your life?

(Meditation Moments for June 4-5, 2022 – For more, go to www.summitdurango.org)



Scholar N. T. Wright commented on “heaven splitting open,” in his commentary, *Mark for Everyone*; “It doesn’t mean that Jesus saw a little door ajar miles up in the sky. ‘Heaven’ in the Bible often means God’s dimension behind ordinary reality...A good deal of Christian faith is a matter of learning to live by this different reality even when we can’t see it.” What has helped you learn to live by the reality of God’s dimension behind the ordinary in day-to-day life?

Prayer: *Lord God, many times I’ve wished you’d part the clouds and show me the reality of your person and rule. Help me grasp Mark’s message—that in Jesus that’s exactly what you did. Amen.*