

SERMON

Luke 3:15-17,21,22

Revealed for the World

Nunawading and Waverley, 9-2-21

Dear friends in Christ,

The baptism of Jesus was the beginning of his public ministry, the moment when he was revealed to the world. Jesus had been living amongst the people for 30 years but they were not aware of his true identity. The time had come in the Father's great plan of salvation, to uncover the true purpose of Jesus' existence. The word reveal can also have the sense of being given. In revealing his Son, the Father gave him to the World, hence our theme: Revealed for the World.

Though we are talking about Christ, we are also in view here. His preparation, entailing an obedient life under God, of worship and learning the Scriptures, love of his parents and family, assisting in the carpenter's shop, and training as a rabbi, all this activity was given over to you. He brought the righteousness of God to us, holiness, perfection under the law, and complete innocence. The Queen has many public duties but her life is her own. It is very hard to conceive of a life wholly given over to the world and to you and me.

John prepared the people for the coming of the Messiah and prophesied about his nearness. He said that he would outrank him considerably, so much so that John would **not consider himself worthy** of being his slave and doing the menial task of **removing his sandals**. The Messiah's much higher status would enable him to **baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire**. Fire can mean both judgement and grace; judgement against **the chaff** but salvation for those who were seeking the Lord, trust in his redeeming love and reorient their lives around him.

Revealing Jesus to the world comprised of **the descending of the Holy Spirit** and **the voice of God the Father**. Like John, Jesus

would have had the Holy Spirit from conception onwards but for Jesus, the Holy Spirit took on a visible form, **as a dove**. All this was preceded by **the heavens being opened**, what is called a theophany, that is, the revelation of God, a glimpse of God's majestic lordship over the universe. But God comes upon Jesus in the person of the Holy Spirit in a physical way as I have said, and this makes him unique. Jesus was not anointed with oil, as prophets, priests and kings were but was anointed with the bodily presence of God from heaven in the Holy Spirit. What he said and what he did from that point on were clearly from God himself and accomplished by God in Christ, especially in his activity to save us.

Jesus is not only God's Son but God's **beloved Son**. An exclusive love rested on Jesus from God himself. God loves all people but a unique and singular love is reserved for this Son. Up to this point in Jesus' life, he has done all things so well, matured in wisdom and understanding of the Lord, in compassion and obedience and is ready to give his life to serve all humanity. The Father rightfully said, **I am very pleased with you**. No human being in all of history has earned this affirmation.

Now, the mission of God could go forward so that humanity can be saved, a baptism of the Holy Spirit could be granted to all through Christ, and heaven opened for all. As followers of Christ, you have participated in the waters of baptism just as Jesus did. In being immersed in water, the Father has changed your identity as an adopted child of God. Today you woke up and I hope the first thing that came to you was an awareness of who you really are in Jesus. When you go about your daily tasks, your whole existence is now founded in Jesus for he has claimed you in baptism as his own. You are a true follower of Jesus; indeed, by baptism you have a true union with Christ and like a married couple, all that is weak and sinful is given to him and all that he possesses, a place at the Father's side, a transformed life through the resurrection etc are given to you. You have a new heart and a new life as Paul says in Romans 6. Baptism buried the old life with Jesus in the

tomb and his new life was given to you when he rose from the dead.

At the moment of your spiritual rebirth at the font, the Father looked on you with delight, as a mother stares at her new-born, and he declared to you what he said to his Son: **this is my beloved with whom I am well-pleased.** The Father has revealed Jesus to the world and, thankfully, to you and me.