

SERMON: *“Son of Adam, Son of God”*

Rev. Geoff Ross, Sunday, January 9, 2022, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church

Well it’s 2022 – the start of the 3rd year of the COVID19 pandemic – and the Groundhog Day/deja-vu/sinking feeling at the bottom of our stomachs/back of our heads/in our hearts is now proclaiming loudly that we “don’t know what’s going to happen next,” and it makes us anxious and afraid – because, well, none of us expected anything like this to happen/let alone last this long. Worse than any Christmas present disappointment/sure-thing-gone-bad flop, as this pandemic has gone on we’ve been schooled about how little we are in control – and how easily it was for microscopic virus to bring the world to a grinding halt. So much for our plans/hopes/expectations!

[“Expectation/s:”Noun/a strong belief that something will happen/be in the future/a belief that someone will/should achieve something. To have an expectation/to believe/assume/hope that what you anticipate will happen will – like expecting a promised outcome to happen/come true. Based mainly on hopes/guesses/assumptions – past experiences/practice/outcomes – but don’t always happen!]

It’s one thing to trust God/feel close to God/believe God cares for us when life is good/stable/secure/safe; but... what about when things go south/sideways? What happens to all of your/our/my expectations?/about how things should be/go/end up – you know, in the ‘old world’ before the *“winds blew/mountains shook/world changed forever.”* (Ps 46:2-3) What happens to our faith in the face of all this fearful/uncertain change/then? How do we hold/go on?/have hope(expectations)/faith in a world that isn’t constant/expected to last?/to live in the present between a past that has gone and an undefined future?

This is the context of the Isaiah reading (one of my favourites!) that the Lectionary lists as the Old Testament reading. In the 43rd chapter/Isaiah speaks to the People of God/us in this in-between time/land – between a known/familiar past and an unknown/unfamiliar future – except worse: everything they knew was gone/destroyed/dead along with their sense of control/God’s presence/protection. In the midst of living in fear/without hope/expectation/of surviving – God finally speaks; *“Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God;”* (Isaiah 40:1) and then in our reading: *“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. I will be with you.”* (Isaiah 43:1,2)

*[“Do not be afraid!”/equivalent 365 x’s in the Bible! Genesis to Revelation/message is one of comfort/announcement of reassurance that we do not have anything to fear/God is with-us/steadfast/providing for/protecting us/caring for/loves us – even carries us/knows our names! Because we are “precious in [God’s] sight, and honored, and [God] love/s you/[us/me/you]”! (Isaiah 43:4) **Only time in bible god directly says this!**]*

And this brings us to the event that we celebrate today: the baptism of the Lord! When I baptize someone I call them by their names: I place the water on their head and say the words, *“Faith Marissa, I baptize you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”* (Last baptism/Nov 2019!) I do this because, while names are important, we believe that God also calls us/you/me by name too, and joins our name to His forever. And while we don’t know what the future holds for us – what issues/trails/overwhelming waters/fires of pain/suffering we will face –

we know that the God who created/formed us knows/redeems/will be with us AND will call us each by name!

Our Luke reading opens with the statement that *“the people were filled with expectation”* and questions in their hearts/minds about the news they heard about a *“Messiah.”* Questions imply doubt/uncertainty/wariness – much like ours, but Luke isn’t ready to provide us with easy answers. Luke’s brief account gives us a bit of John’s preaching the (frightening/comforting?) promise that the ‘One to Come will baptize with the Holy Spirit/fire.’ It doesn’t record the moment when John baptizes Jesus, but says Jesus was baptized *“when all the people were baptized.”* Then we’re told that, during a prayer, *“heaven was opened”* and the *“Holy Spirit descended upon [Jesus] ...like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”* God naming Jesus *“My Son!”* – telling Him He’s known/loved. But, that’s not all!

After God’s blessing, Jesus *“Began His work/ministry.”* Luke then immediately offers us an earthly genealogy with 77 generations tracing His paternal lineage through David/Abraham/Adam intentionally presenting Jesus as a child of earth/a *“son of Adam.”* This is Luke’s way of saying that Jesus IS Emmanuel – God with-us – who came to be one of-us! But He isn’t. This *“son of Adam”* is also declared the *“Son of God”* – both fully human/fully divine; leaving us with a dual/parallel – often conflicting – set of expectations between our earthly/fallen world and God’s. Luke’s rendering of Jesus’ baptism immediately sets up the tension of these expectations. As we start the season of Epiphany, no matter what state this/our world/lives are in, Luke’s message is Good News; with Jesus’ baptism/start of His ministry, God’s message is clear: through His Son – both Sovereign/Servant, here to lead/serve – God’s kingdom is here/now for those – you/me/us – all of whom God calls His own/loves/calls by name. Amen.