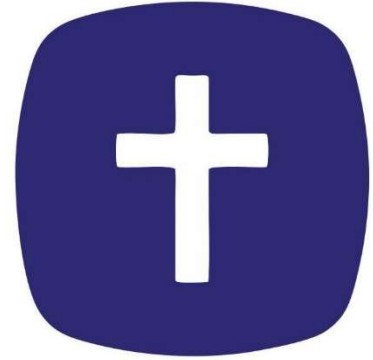


SMALL GROUP AND SUNDAY SERMON SERIES

Week 1
Sun 18 February 2024

LENT TO HOLY WEEK



JOURNEY WITH US FROM ASH WED TO HOLY WEEK
14 February 2024 - 30 March 2024

Revised Common Lectionary – Year B:

Ash Wednesday: 14 February

Week 1: Sunday 18 Feb - Lent

Week 2: Sunday 25 Feb - Lent

Week 3: Sunday 3 March - Lent

Week 4: Sunday 10 March - Lent

Week 5: Sunday 17 March - Lent

Week 6: Sunday 24 March - Palm Sunday

Holy Week: 25 March to 30 March



Week 1:

Sunday 18 February – Lent The Baptism and testing of Jesus

PONDER, PICTURE, AND PERSONALISE GOD’S WORD

| Lent Year C | First reading | Psalm | Second reading | Gospel |
|--------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1st Sunday in Lent | Genesis 9:8-17 | Psalm 25:1-10 | 1 Peter 3:18-22 | Mark 1:9-15 |



Mark 1:9-15
New International Version

The Baptism and Testing of Jesus

⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” ¹² At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, ¹³ and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

Lent to Holy Week

Jesus Announces the Good News

¹⁴After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”



WORSHIP SONG: Chris Tomlin – Indescribable

<https://youtu.be/5lIVfkY5q54?si=okD0m-pEpDo5ces0>

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

Written by: Rev Kamogelo Monoametsi

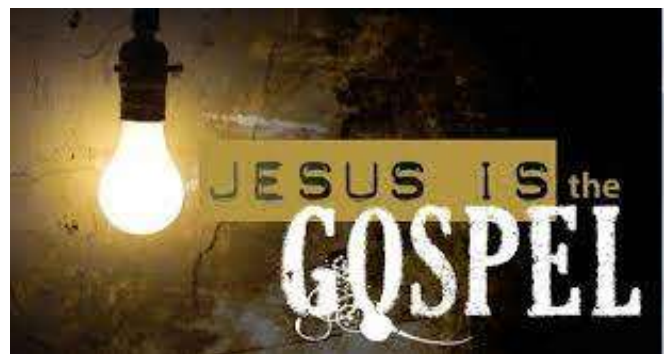
Biblical Scholar Ched Myers writes about the symbiotic relationship between three sections of Mark’s gospel which he calls “pillars” of Mark’s apocalyptic Gospel. I see these three revelatory events—Mark’s baptism of Jesus, transfiguration of Jesus, and crucifixion of Jesus—as foundational for Mark’s way of understanding how “the gospel of Jesus Christ” (Mark 1:1) relates to Jesus’ own preaching of the “gospel of God” (Mark 1:14) in announcing God’s apocalyptic reign. In short, Jesus is the gospel, yet that gospel has as its horizon **God’s purposes in the advent of God’s reign**. We begin by noting Myers’ three pillars and their parallel elements:

| | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| BAPTISM (1:9–11) | TRANSFIGURATION (9:2–9) | CRUCIFIXION (15:33–39) |
| Heavens rent | Garments turn white | Sanctuary veil rent |
| Dove descends | Cloud descends | Darkness spreads |
| Voice from heaven | Voice from cloud | Jesus’ great voice |
| “You are my Son, beloved” | “This is my son, beloved” | “Truly this man was Son of God” |
| John the Baptist as Elijah | Moses appears with Elijah | “Is he calling Elijah?” |

The first shock of the allegorical aspect of this ‘pericopae’ is how the author introduces the contrast with the sensitivity of divine presence, there is the simple allusion to Jesus hometown, Nazareth of Galilee. The contrast could hardly be greater reflected by the words of Nathanael in John 1:46 “Nazareth can anything good come there?”

The second shock is that the one who was understood to be sinless, should submit to a rite directly related to repentance and cleansing, is a sure sign of the authenticity of the event. Virtually, in baptism, Jesus shares utter obedience that is expected from God’s people, he shares what his ministry is about so that people can receive forgiveness from God and new life. In Baptism, he shares the circumstances in which people become aware of their needs, precisely to meet those needs.

The Baptism of Jesus should not be read independently from the other two sections in Mark’s gospel. Noting the key elements and ingredients that constituted the identity of Christ through baptism, his baptism offered a sense of belonging, affirmation of his ministry, affirmation of God’s vision in his life, assurance of God’s presence throughout the looming shadows of the cross.



Life Application

The world we are part of has the greatest potential to give people an identity, whether it is social, spiritual, or cultural identity. Distinctively, baptism affirms our human identity, it offers deep insight into God’s spiritual realm, and ushers us into a family of love, grace, peace, and hope. Through baptism we become children of God’s kingdom, we are no longer ruled and controlled by other kingdoms because our ‘being’ is offered into God’s kingdom. Kin-dom identity is an indispensable mark that shows where we belong, to whom we belong and how we are expected live our lives. We become citizens of God’s kingdom through baptism. If we immerse ourselves in the story of our baptism and Christ baptism, we will discover how much we are loved, cared for and anchored. We ought not to run around with void of love, we should be content, because we have been affirmed, embraced, and given an identity.

Lent to Holy Week

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS :

1. How has your baptism contributed to your Christian Identity?
2. Discuss the statement *“This is my Son whom I love. Listen to him”*. What does this mean for you and your relationship with the Christ?
3. Would you encourage friends, colleagues, and families close to you to baptize their children? And what would be your reasons?



DAILY MEMORY VERSE AND PRAYER:

“I have never met a mature, fruitful, strong, spiritual discerning Christian who is not full of scripture, devoted to regular meditation on Scripture, and given to storing it in the heart through Bible memorization” – John Piper.

“Prayer is the way you walk by the Spirit. Prayer is the way you walk by faith. In other words, it’s the breath of the Christian life all day long” – John Piper.

MONDAY, February 19, 2024: [Psalm 77](#); [Job 4:1-21](#); [Ephesians 2:1-10](#)

Memory Verse: Psalm 77: 16 *“The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you and writhed, the very depths were convulsed”*

Prayer: God of the waters, flowing rivers, roaring sea your presence is felt in every drop of water that falls on us. We pray that your purity cleanses and renews us. **Amen.**

TUESDAY, February 20, 2024: [Psalm 77](#); [Job 5:8-27](#); [1 Peter 3:8-18a](#)

Memory Verse: Job 5: 10 *“He bestows rain on the earth; he sends water upon the countryside”*

Prayer: Loving God you bless humanity with the gift of rain, and through it you nurture your creation, but also cleanses creation from being polluted. As rain falls on all of us, may your blessings be bestowed upon us like rain. **Amen.**

WEDNESDAY, February 21, 2024: [Psalm 77](#); [Proverbs 30:1-9](#); [Matthew 4:1-11](#)

Memory Verse: Prov 30: 5 *“Every word is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him”*.

Prayer: God of many generations Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, John Wesley, and Charles Pamla your word has guided our ancestors in difficult paths of life. We trust in the promises of your word, guide us Lord, shield us God, and let your flawless word be our light. **Amen.**

THURSDAY, February 22, 2024: [Psalm 22:23-31](#); [Genesis 15:1-6, 12-18](#); [Romans 3:21-31](#)

Memory Verse: Psalm 22: 37 *“All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him”*

Prayer: God of creation, God who is creation, God who sustains creation we humble ourselves to you asking for your intervention in our lives, the lives of our children, families, and nations. It is our prayer that the whole world seeks your face. **Amen.**

FRIDAY, February 23, 2024: [Psalm 22:23-31](#); [Genesis 16:1-6](#); [Romans 4:1-12](#)

Memory Verse: Genesis 16: 11 *“You shall name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard of your misery”*

Prayer: Almighty God, our parent your love has protected us from many dangerous situations of life. Listen to the cries of your people, those in poverty, unemployment, marriage problems and social ills. **Amen.**

SATURDAY, February 24, 2024: [Psalm 22:23-31](#); [Genesis 16:7-15](#); [Mark 8:27-30](#)

Memory Verse: Mark 8: 29 *“But what about you? He asked. Who do you say I am? Peter answered, “You are the Christ”*.

Prayer: God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, holy trinity we acknowledge your power and strength that has rescued us from snares and dangers of life. Loving Lord you are the Christ. Teach us not to doubt your presence, your work in our lives and intervention in our communities. **Amen.**



Time

BY JENNY BLAKE – CHILDREN'S PASTOR
jennyb@bmc.org.za

Week 1 Bible Passage: Mark 1:9-15

Introduction: Today, we're going to learn about a special time in Jesus' life when He was baptized and faced temptation.

Opening Prayer: Dear God, thank you for this time together to learn about Jesus and His love for us. Help us to understand Your word and grow closer to You. Amen.

Bible Reading: Read Mark 1:9-15 together as a family.

Discussion:

1. Baptism of Jesus (Mark 1:9-11):
 - Ask: What do you think baptism is? (Baptism is a symbolic act in which a person is briefly dunked under water to represent their old life being washed away and emerging as a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).)
 - Ask: Why do you think Jesus chose to be baptized by John?
 - Explain: Jesus' baptism was a way for Him to show that He was starting His ministry and doing what God wanted Him to do. It was also a way for Him to identify with us, to show that He understands us and wants to be with us.
2. Temptation in the Wilderness (Mark 1:12-13):
 - Ask: What do you think it means to be tempted?
 - Ask: What do you think it means that Jesus was tempted in the wilderness?
 - Explain: After Jesus was baptized, He went into the wilderness for 40 days. During that time, Satan tried to tempt Him to do things that were not right. But Jesus stayed strong and did not give in to temptation. He showed us that we can resist temptation too by relying on God's strength.

Activities:

1. Act Out the Story:
 - Encourage your children to act out the scenes from the story of Jesus' baptism and temptation. Let them take turns being Jesus, John the Baptist, and the devil.
2. Prayer Time:
 - Take a moment to pray together as a family. Thank God for Jesus' example of obedience and strength in the face of temptation. Ask Him to help you resist temptation in your own lives.

Closing: Remember, just like Jesus, we might face temptations in our lives too. But we can always turn to God for help and strength. Let's try to follow Jesus' example and make choices that honor God in everything we do.

Closing Prayer: Dear God, thank you for teaching us through the example of Jesus. Help us to remember His strength and courage when we face difficult times. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Conclusion: Through Jesus' baptism and temptation, we learn about His obedience to God and His ability to resist temptation. As a family, let's strive to follow His example and rely on God's strength in all that we do. Amen.

Intentionally transforming people in loving community!

Small groups (Classes/Home groups/Connect groups) are the ideal place for you to:

Connect with others in life-giving fellowship, learn more about yourself and God, grow in your relationship with God, hold each other accountable for your walk with Jesus, live out your spiritual gifts supported by friends, make an impact whilst living out your God-given purpose. We believe that life happens in community!

Contact NADJA to join a small group near you! nadjaa@bmc.org.za / 011463 2333