

"Chosen"
August 26, 2018



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Matthew 3:11-12; Matthew 3:13-15,
Ephesians 4:3-5, ACTS 8:26-31, Isaiah 53

DAY 1

Read Matthew 3:11-12

- **What was the urgency in John the Baptist's message?**

As he spoke he reminded the people there was someone coming who was much more important than he.

- **How was he preparing people for Jesus' coming?**

Spend time today and reflect on the importance of John's message of repentance.

- **What does repentance mean to you? Why does God want us to repent? What happens when we do?**

DAY 2

Read Matthew 3:13-15

- **Imagine what was going on inside of John when Jesus appeared on the scene. How do you think he felt?**

The Hebrews were well aware of baptism. They saw it as a means to "cleanse proselytes" who were coming from other

religions into Judaism. When a proselyte was placed into the water it ritually "cleaned" them and made them pure as they became aware of their sinfulness and need to repent.

- **Why did those who were part of Judaism see the need to be baptized?**

When Jesus arrives John recognizes him to be the Messiah. Jesus is God with skin on and certainly one without sin or in need to repent.

- **Why did Jesus instruct John to baptize him?**
- **What did it mean to the world that Jesus was "going into the waters of baptism?"**

DAY 3

In the United Methodist Church we view baptism as a "sacrament in the church." Pastor Bob explained that in a sacrament, it is God who acts, not the person who is receiving it, nor the person who is administering the sacrament; it's all God. Baptism is a means of God's grace; it's like a present God wants us all to have and once we receive it, it never loses its luster or value. In the UMC, we baptize babies, youth, and adults because we believe God wants us all to have His amazing grace.

- **If you have been baptized, what does this mean to you?**

Many of us were baptized as children. As we mature in age and grow in faith we have the chance to recall what it meant when the sacrament was given to us.

- **What does it mean to you that God wants you to experience his awesome grace?**

Grace is God's love poured out for all of us. It's a way of God letting us know just how valuable we are to Him. The unique thing about God's grace is it cannot be earned or bought; it's all about God giving it to us as a gift.

- **How does it make you feel knowing God loves you so much that you don't have to do anything to earn his love?**

Read [Ephesians 4:3-5](#). This is why we believe baptism is a one-time gift. To receive it over and over would literally mean God made a mistake and it must be "re-done."

- **What does it mean to you knowing if you have been baptized it is a one-time occurrence?**

DAY 4

Read [ACTS 8:26-31](#)

This story is significant. The Eunuch was one who likely was not a follower of God, but finds himself reading the story of the prophet Isaiah. He is reading what we know to be Isaiah 53 (The suffering servant).

- **If he was following a false god, why do you think he was reading about the "One True God?"**

Prevenient Grace is God's grace that precedes our knowing him. Just because we may not know God doesn't mean God doesn't know us. The Bible is clear; God knows all of us.

- **As you read this story, what comes to mind about God's grace towards the Eunuch? What does he discover?**

Philip is a follower of Jesus and is instructed to go and minister to the Eunuch. He begins to share the good news of Jesus and that Christ died for all people and all sin.

- **What happens to the Eunuch?**

Pastor Bob introduced a phrase that describes the Eunuch. He said the Eunuch was a "COGPOW" which means "Child of God, Person of Worth." This was significant because it helped the Eunuch know despite his condition and likely being ostracized among the community, God loved him.

- **What happened the day you understood you were a COGPOW? How was your life changed?**

DAY 5

Read Isaiah 53

One of the most profound statements we can embrace contains these words, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

- **What does it mean to you to know Jesus died for your sins?**

When reading the Isaiah 53 passage we catch a glimpse of what was to come; Jesus would suffer for us and "by his wounds we are healed." When we are baptized we recognize we are no longer ourselves, but we are God's.

- **How do you live everyday knowing that truth?**

We often allow life's complicated busyness and trials to jade us and perhaps we sometimes forget what God has done for us. In the United Methodist Church we value the opportunity to "remember." We cannot be re-baptized, but we can go back to the waters and remember what God has done for us when we were baptized. September 9 will be a time to do this as we gather at Sand Key Beach in Clearwater. [Visit our website](#) for more about the event.

Think about how you will participate in this time and rekindle your own commitment to being a baptized Christian in Christ.

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