

**University Heights Church
of Christ**
445 Columbia Ave.,
Lexington, KY 40508
(859) 255-6257
www.uheightschurch.com

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday

Bible Study: 9:45 AM
Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 PM (This is
immediately followed by a
short worship period)

First Friday of Each Month

Singing: 7:30 PM

LEADERSHIP

Elders

Garry Banks, David Collins,
John Thompson

Evangelist

Adam Litmer

Deacons

Troy Antle, Richard Brundige,
Matt Thompson, Adam
Litmer, Bill Morelan, Jim
Parsons, Pat Seabolt, Adam
Daniels, Jamie Powell

This and That

-Early last week I received a call from a preacher I know. He mentioned that a woman he and his wife have been studying with was baptized just a short time before. Our new sister is 64 years old and, despite having been set in her ways and patterns of thinking for many years, the gospel message pierced through all of it and changed her. They're still out there, brethren. Let's stay busy searching for them.

-Ladies who teach children's classes, do you have any idea how encouraging it is to me to see you come in on weekdays or arrive early on regular worship days to set up your classrooms? With three kids of my own I know how challenging it is to keep their attention focused on something for more than a couple of minutes. You ladies do a tremendous job and you take it seriously. Thanks for your hard work and example!

-I watched a ballgame the other day with a group of Christians who were fans of one of the teams. I heard a number of things said that quite simply have no business coming from the mouths of saints. Many of us are sports fans. Let's enjoy the game and cheer on our team. More importantly, let's remember that we're Christians before fans. Let us make sure that our walk remains worthy (Ephesians 4:1), even when "our team" is playing.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Jeff Howerton, Rhonda Boyd, Paul Atkisson, Barbara Matheny, David Morrow, Debbie Parker, Vina Krissow, John Bennett, Robert Brundige, Donald Dawson, Gail Stein, Sandy Childress, Susie Burton, Jacob Profit, Valerie and Barry Boyd, Wilma Lawson, Jannett's mother and stepfather, Sandy Driver, Erlene Young, Doris Baker, Lyn Kincaid, Bernard Larch

University Heights Messenger

Volume 6--Number 52

December 7, 2014

You Are My Beloved Son; With You I Am Well Pleased

Mark 1:9-11

Adam Litmer

I have long been fascinated by the baptism of Jesus. Everything about it is striking from John humbly seeking to cast Jesus in the role of baptizer (Matthew 3:14), to our Lord's response to John's statement (Matthew 3:15), to the heavens being torn open, to the descending of the Spirit, to the voice of the Father speaking to His Son. There are many scenes described in the gospels that modern Christians would love to have been present to witness. This scene stands near the top of my list.

Mark, in his typical fashion, shows us the scene in just a few words before quickly moving to the events immediately following our Lord's baptism. However, the little Mark does say about the baptism itself is noteworthy.

Bible students know that our Lord's baptism (more specifically, the Spirit descending and resting upon him) was God's sign to John that the Messiah had come and was standing before him (John 1:29-34). Matthew shows us that God spoke *about* Jesus at that time (Matthew 3:17), at least for the sake of John and perhaps any bystanders still present. However, both Mark and Luke (3:22) show us that the Father was primarily addressing Jesus Himself. The entire divine family was present in a very special way at this time. The Son was being baptized, the Spirit came and remained with Him, and the Father audibly expressed His love and pleasure in His Son. What an extraordinary family gathering!

Yet as amazing as it was, I suppose it shouldn't come as a surprise when we consider the circumstances. The fullness of time had finally come. He who had been prophesied about near the very beginning (Genesis 3:15) and countless times throughout the centuries that followed had finally come into the world. John's preparatory work was all but complete and the time had come for the Messiah himself to take up his ministry. Centuries worth of prophecy were coming to fruition. Thus, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were all present in a very special way at the event that, after a period of intense temptation in the wilderness, marked the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

The Father said that He was well pleased with his Son. Why wouldn't He have been? The boy Jesus had *increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man*. (Luke 2:52). If he was about 30 at his baptism (as most believe), then he had reached that point without transgressing the law of God even a single time. The question that came from the lips of the boy Jesus, *Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business* (Luke 3:49b), was the theme of his entire life (John 8:29). Living a life absolutely free from sin, devoted entirely to fulfilling the Father's purposes without a single slip, is staggering. It's something every saint has failed to accomplish. In fact, were every sin we have ever committed written down in detail and set before our eyes I have no doubt the length of the list would shock and shame us. Were Jesus to have such a list it would contain not a single mark. Let that sink in for just a moment. We who have succumbed to sin more times than we can count owe a debt that we cannot begin to repay. Praise be to our sinless Savior who willingly paid it in our stead! While this thought could obviously be pursued further, it is an article for another time.

I often wonder about everything the Lord's baptism meant to Him personally. Without revelation on the matter such questions cannot be answered and it is probably best not to try. Yet for us, I believe we see another example of Jesus sharing the circumstances of man. While he did not need to be baptized to have sins remitted, he came to earth so *that* sins could be remitted. As sins are washed clean in the waters of baptism, it is significant that he who made such cleansing possible preceded us in receiving it. Besides recognizing its significance, let us tread with caution lest we enter the realm of speculation and begin speaking where God has not.

The baptism of Jesus and the events surrounding it are simply extraordinary. From that point on our Lord worked in earnest preaching, teaching, and preparing. But for now, think about that day so long ago when the divine family gathered at the baptism of sinless Jesus. His was a life that pleased the Father in every way. Let us strive to emulate our Savior in this and all things.

The God of Power

John Thompson

The President of the United States is frequently referred to as the most powerful man on earth. Because of this he is envied by others who not only want to be in that position, but who will do virtually anything they can to attain it. Power is lusted after. The wealth, status, ability to utterly control others, and numerous additional self-indulging, self-promoting, and self-aggrandizing components of power are addicting. The most powerful people are never fully satisfied with the power they have; they are always planning out the next power grab.

Powerful people believe they know all there is to know about power, but, in reality, they do not know the first thing about real power and about the God who wields it. Years ago there was a race among powerful nations to be the first to go to the moon. Not only was national pride and prestige involved, but the potential to use the moon for military purposes was a plum ripe for the plucking by the nation powerful enough to be the first to arrive. I wonder how many people involved in that race to the moon gave any thought to the fact that the moon was there by the power of God's word: *And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.*

Did you notice the statement of God's power? *And God said...* That's all it took for there to be, where there had been nothing before, a sun, a moon, and stars, heavenly bodies that man still, to this very day, finds mysterious. Which powerful man has the power to create as God has created? Even if man could produce a thing from nothing, it would be a miracle, an action only possible through the power of God. Truly the psalmist has said, *Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God*, (Psalm 62:11)

Nebuchadnezzar thought he had the power of life and death over Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, but he soon learned otherwise. Jesus had to correct Pilate's perception of his own power. *So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above."* (John 19:10-11) That's one of the major problems with power: having it ultimately distorts virtually all of the powerful person's perceptions and beliefs.

The prophet Jeremiah, in contrasting idols with the one true and living God, said, *It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens. When he utters his voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and he makes the mist rise from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning for the rain, and he brings forth the wind from his storehouses.* (Jeremiah 10:12)

Make a list for yourself of ways in which God's power is manifested. Genesis, chapter 1 is a great place to begin that list. Above all, make sure that God's power to save us from our sins is on that list.