



From Our Vicar

Rev. Wayne Walters

Baptism: From John to Jesus to Us! Luke 3:1-16

Crowds flocked to hear John preach. There was great expectation around his ministry. He boldly rebuked the religious leaders and told soldiers and tax collectors how to straighten out their lives. He baptised all who came in repentance, calling them to live a new life from then on – ‘bearing fruit that befits repentance.’

John denied that he was ‘the Christ’, saying he had come to prepare the way for that one, ‘the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.’ He further clarified, ‘I baptise you with water ... but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.’

John had a clear understanding of the focus and limits of his ministry. His baptism was one of repentance, to prepare people’s hearts to receive God’s chosen One – Jesus. Repentance from sin was also key to the message Jesus brought.

Everyone sins. We tend to justify and excuse our behaviour or minimise the wrong we do by comparing ourselves to others to feel ok about ourselves. Repentance is rather shedding such evasion and naming our sin for what it is. But who dares do this unless there is hope of being released from the guilt of our sins? Baptism represented such hope.

But this baptism by John was only part of the story—a preparation for the baptisms of Jesus. One is the baptism Jesus spoke of concerning his death—a baptism of suffering the agonies of the cross and bearing the sins of the world, a baptism we now share through baptism with water as we are plunged into the death of Christ, and rise washed, cleansed to the new resurrection life of Christ in us! Christ’s death is the grounds of our confidence in the washing away of our sins, and the by which this has been achieved.

Secondly, as John foretold – ‘He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.’ This is the outpoured love of God into our hearts enlivening our very nature to give us the power to live the new life that baptism represents. The Holy Spirit is the sign of our adoption by God as sons and daughters. He makes us alive to God and to his son Jesus and is the key to a life of empowered partnership with the God of the universe in God’s great project of reconciling the world to himself. Have you received this baptism? Why not ask now?

God bless you, *Wayne*