

SERMON NOTES Sunday 15th January 2023

sunnysidechurch

Theme: **The Baptism of Jesus**

Passages: **John 1.29-42, Isaiah 49.1-7.**

Some of the main themes from the sermon

Names

Names are important. A person's name is always closely identified with who they are. In many cultures names tell you important truths about a person.

Names in Jesus' baptism

In John's Gospel we aren't given an account of Jesus' baptism, as we are in the other three gospels. Instead, John the Baptist gives his testimony to the Jewish leaders about what happened when he baptised Jesus (John 1.29-34). Jesus has already been identified as 'The Word (who) became flesh and made his dwelling among us' (John 1.14) and now John the Baptist sees Jesus and says, 'Look, the **Lamb of God**, who takes away the sins of the world!' (John 1.29 and 36). Jesus is also identified by John the Baptist as '**God's Chosen One**' or '**God's Son**', who will Baptize with the Holy Spirit in John 1.34.

Not long after, Jesus is addressed as '**Rabbi**' by John's disciples and identified as **the Messiah** by Andrew in John 1.41.

All in all, that's quite a lot of names in a few short verses.

Names and their meaning

The nuances in the meaning of the different titles given to Jesus are important. They help us to understand who he was and is:

Rabbi means, simply teacher and shows that, at this stage, the disciples don't really understand the real stature of the man they have just met.

Lamb of God brings to mind the Exodus, sacrifice and the Jewish festival of Passover – a theme that John (the Gospel writer rather than the Baptist) will return to.

God's Son and **God's Chosen One** are both huge, breath-taking descriptions, which prepare us for our encounter in John's Gospel with the man who will

baptise us with His Holy Spirit, change our lives and bring us fullness of life, forgiveness and everlasting life.

Growing into your name

There is another naming conversation at the end of this passage, when in v42, Jesus renames Simon as Peter, the Rock. As the Gospel story develops, Peter falteringly grows into his name, via false starts, denials and a final reinstatement at the end of the Gospel, when Jesus finally tells him to 'Feed my sheep' (John 21.17).

Some questions for thought and discussion this week:

- 1. How do you feel about your own Christian name? Would you have chosen it for you?*
- 2. In our Christian journeys we can be drawn to Jesus by different aspects of his person: his teaching, his compassion, his grace under pressure, his forgiveness, his resurrection. Talk about how each of these different facets of who Jesus is matter to you.*
- 3. The prayer of Richard of Chichester includes these lines:
'O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
and follow thee more nearly, day by day.
Amen.'
Spend some time thinking about this and share your thoughts.*
- 4. Read John 20.19-23. Talk about any time in your own life, when you have felt that God was anointing you with his Spirit. This may have been a time of particular closeness to God or to equip you for a particular task...or something else entirely.*
- 5. Spend some time praying that Jesus will make himself better known to you, in the way that he did to John the Baptist and the first disciples.*
- 6. Were there any other issues that the sermon or the passage raised for you?*