

ST. BARNABAS CHURCH, SWANLAND - SMALL GROUP NOTES

Sharing Christ through friendship

The Baptism of Christ (1st Sunday after Epiphany) - w/beg 7 January 2018

Readings: Mark 1:9-13; Acts 19:1-7 – Overwhelmed by God

Welcome/ icebreaker	Have you ever had an overwhelming experience which has caused you to change your mind or behaviour about something in your life?
Worship	Use songs that focus on God's unconditional love for us eg 298 I'm accepted; 433 O Lord your tenderness; 710 Father God; 780 How deep the Father's love; 976 Overwhelmed by love; 1188 Befriended.
Word (refs.↓)	
Mark 1:9-13 v.10	v.9 Look at v.4. If Jesus was without sin, why was he baptised? 2 Cor. 5:21 and Hebrews 4:15 teach that Jesus was without sin: why then was Jesus baptised by John? Does Matt. 3:13-15 help here? How did Jesus' baptism 'fulfil all righteousness'? Was Jesus baptism more a public statement, or was it more a personal matter? Is baptism ever 'just' personal? - or 'just' public? – or is it always both? (NB at St Barnabas there is no such thing as a 'private baptism'.) Why does this matter?
Mark 1:9-13	vv.10-11 Three events are recorded here (<i>compare the accounts in Matthew, Luke and John</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The heavens opened dramatically – divine revelation • The Spirit descended on Jesus as a dove (Luke says 'in bodily form') – a <i>gentle</i> empowerment • A voice spoke from heaven – assurance of God's call on Jesus' life Who do you think saw/ heard all this? John? Jesus? The crowd? Who benefited most from it? Compare v.11 with Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1. How do these Old Testament passages help us understand the Father's words to Jesus? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the words spoken to Jesus here apply to <u>you</u>, as a beloved son/daughter of God? Is it true that "God likes us even if he doesn't always like what we do"? Or does he love us no matter what, without necessarily liking us? • How easy do you find it to believe the truth that God loves you, no matter what? Is this also true for other people – including those who are not yet Christians? How might this change the way you think about some people?
Acts 19:1-7	What does this passage teach us about the role of the Holy Spirit in relation to water baptism ('the baptism of John')? Is there a difference between 'having' the Spirit (at conversion, symbolised by baptism) and 'receiving' the Spirit (the experience of 'baptism in the Spirit')? How is this different from what happened to Jesus at his baptism?
Witness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pray – for your mission link(s) and for your group this New Year gets under way; for opportunities to serve and witness in the coming months and for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit for ministry. ➤ This week, how might you share with someone that they are God's precious son or daughter – including those who are not believers. In what ways could you encourage them to be open to the love of God for them? ➤ Begin planning something for your group to which you can invite family/ friends/ neighbours who are not yet Christians (NB half term is 10-18 Feb).