

Come Follow Me
Elo Viz production
Week 5
Matthew 3, Mark 1, Luke 3

So there are so many great doctrines in these chapters. And the one thing that keeps coming to my mind and that which is also discussed in all 3 chapters is the doctrine of baptism. Referring of course to when Jesus was baptized at the hand of John the baptist.

John was bold in his conviction, calling those to repentance that stood to condemn him a Generation of Vipers and also giving the imagery of an Ax laid at the root of the tree, ready to cut down those that dont bring forth good fruit. (Luke 3: 7,9)

Those that had ears to hear asked John, "What shall we do then?" (Luke 3:10)

"He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two **coats**, let him **impart** to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

Do violence to no man, neither accuse *any* **falsely**; and be **content** with your **wages**." (Luke 3:11-14)

I can't help but notice the similarities in John's explanation of the baptismal covenant and that of Alma's. After escaping the snares of King Noah and preaching that which he learned from Abinadi, Alma took his little group of followers to the waters of Mormon and this is what he taught:

8 And it came to pass that he said unto them: Behold, here are the waters of Mormon (for thus were they called) and now, as ye are **desirous** to come into the **fold** of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;

9 Yea, and are **willing** to mourn with those that **mourn**; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as **witnesses** of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the **first resurrection**, that ye may have eternal life—

10 Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being **baptized** in the **name** of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a **covenant** with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?

11 And now when the people had heard these words, they clapped their hands for joy, and exclaimed: This is the desire of our hearts." (Mosiah 18:7-11)

Many years ago I had an experience that changed my life. It was a day that I think about often because it was a challenge of my faith and I failed miserably.

It was exactly four years ago and I was studying the doctrine of the baptismal covenant. I read these very words of Alma and thought: "Yea, I think I am a disciple of Christ. I think that if I was asked to do these things that he listed that I would pass the test." That morning I prayed. "God, I want to be one of your disciples, please give me an opportunity today to help someone in need, or to comfort someone who needs comfort." I felt good as I got up and went to work ready to make a difference.

As usually happens when I got to work my lists of tasks grew longer than anticipated. I had a lot to squeeze into one day. I began to work hard and fast to get it all done before the end of the day.

At one point I was outside in the parking lot dealing with a few things and out of nowhere this guy appeared behind me. It was unusually cold for this time of year in Utah and the first thing I noticed was that this man was not dressed for the weather. What is he doing I thought? I had on a thick warm coat and the sharp wind still chilled me to the bone. This man was only wearing a light jacket. He was unkempt and looked a bit homely, I would describe him best as a weary traveler, possibly even homeless. The most unusual thing I noticed was that he didn't have any shoes on. His feet were bare and I could see large sores from his miles on journeying.

He didn't say anything for what seems like a long while as I noticed all these things and my mind was able to take them all in. In reality it was only a few seconds. When He spoke His voice was soft yet piercing. "I don't live far from here" he said, "would you be willing to give me a ride to my house?" A bit startled by his request, my mind began to recall all the things that I had to get done today, and lots of justifiable truths gave me ample reasons to turn this man down. I quickly responded with "I'm sorry, I can't help you". His second request came swiftly as He took a small step towards me as if he sensed me backing away. Again I refused to assist in his request. The third time he offered to pay me if I were to assist him in getting to his house. Now somewhat boldened by his inability to accept my answer I raised my voice a bit and explained "I'm at work and I have a lot to get done, I'm sure there is someone that can help you but I am not that person." I quickly turned away from him and walked back into the building. "How dare he ask me to leave work to give him a ride home." I thought. "Who would ask a complete stranger to do something like that?" At the moment of the door closing behind me in my office the words of my prayer from that morning echoed in my mind as a rebuke to my prideful thoughts. "God, I want to be one of your disciples, please give me an opportunity today to help someone in need, or to comfort someone who needs comfort." Like a dagger to my heart I realized what I had just done. And in that very moment I felt the blessing that God had intended on giving me slip right through my prideful hands. In an effort to right my wrongs and fix my sin I raced back out to the parking lot. It had only been a few minutes. He was on foot. He couldn't have gone far. In a frenzied panic I raced from one side of the lot to the other. Standing on top of tires to try and find him. At each corner I searched down the street to see which direction he went... he was gone... and so was my pride.

This experience did feel like Peter's experience when he was asked by the Savior: "Peter, do you love me?" To which he responded: Yea Lord, Thou knowest that I love thee. As you recall Peter was asked three times and all three times he affirmed that his love for the Savior was unshakable. And it could have been, at least up till the time when his surroundings gave him the change to deny the Savior three times as well. These tests and experiences can come to any who are honest seekers of truth. Those that truly do want to be as God created them to be.

Needless to say I didn't get much done that day as I sat in my office weeping and just staring out the window. I had a lot to learn, I believe that I still do. I realized that even though I thought that I was a disciple of Christ, I didn't truly understand what that meant. Perhaps I still don't. But one thing that I do know for certain is that God does hear and answer prayers. And that if I am going to ask for something to teach me to be more like Him, I better be good and ready to respond because that call will come and it will usually not be what you expected.

I love the words of Micah regarding the doctrine of sacrifice when he says:

“6 ¶ Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, *and* bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?

7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my *firstborn* *for* my transgression, the fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul?

8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the Lord *require* of thee, but to do *justly*, and to love *mercy*, and to *walk humbly* with thy God?” (Micah 6:6-8)

The point to all of this is that we are not just a covenant making people, we are more importantly a covenant keeping people!

When we interact with those that we don't know, what is their impression of us? After you meet someone for the first time do you think they will walk away from that introduction with a little more faith, believing there are good people in this world? Or will we continue to feed them the same proof that the news provides that only bad things happen and we are surrounded by bad people.

A friend of mine and I met this young man the other day who was having some car troubles. He had broken down on a property we were clearing out. He was there trying to get it started. And my friend decided that he needed to be stern and let this young man know that he had till Friday to get the car off the property or we were going to have it impounded. He was very abrupt and not sympathetic at all. I did what I could to help this young man and then went in and had a talk with my friend. I said “what was that? Do you think that if that young man found out you were a member of the church, a disciple of Christ, and a priesthood holder that he would want anything to do with the restored gospel of Jesus Christ?”

We get one shot to make a lasting impression. One opportunity to let the light of Christ shine within our eyes and to show them what Jesus would do in every situation we find ourselves in.

At the judgment bar of God do you think He will say: Well, you did your job at work. You cleared out that property, it doesn't matter how you treated others as long as you did your job?

I don't believe that will be the case. In order to experience real Joy and peace in this life we need to have an Eternal perspective. God doesn't care about the sacrifice of a thousand rams, or the oil of ten thousand rivers. All that He requires is to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humble with thy God. Of this important truth I testify.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.