

8th March, 2015.

Sermon: The Baptismal Journey

Reading: Mark 1: 4 - 11

Comment before Video

At this stage in the service, we usually have a sermon but today, I decided to do something different. Instead of me telling you my thoughts on a particular reading from Scripture, I'm going to show you a video clip. It's quite reflective which gives each of us the opportunity as individuals to apply what we are hearing to our own lives and our own situations.

The video clip is called Stones. It's about a man's journey. Each stone represents someone or something in his life and in the clip, he quotes a verse from the Bible reading we had this morning. You are my Son, whom I love with you I am well pleased.

Video Called Stones

Reflection

There were several phrases jumped out at me as I listened to that video clip.

You learn to settle for what you've got.

You deny yourself the right to hope.

I want a love that gives, gives to me.

I want a love that accepts me.
If I let go, will you protect me?
If I let go, will you give me new life?
Will you let me be your Son in whom you are well pleased?

And having let go and having realised that he now knows a love that accepts him, the love of God, the man says:

I'll walk differently now.

I'll know where to take the stones.

I'll know where to leave them next time.

Baptism is a stage on our journey through life. It happens in childhood as it will today for Orla. It can happen later in life as it will today for Fiona.

Whenever someone is baptised, it is an acknowledgement of what God has done for us in Christ and of how God sees us. He accepts us as we are. We are His children with whom He is well pleased.

Fiona understands that message but may need encouragement to keep going when life crowds in upon her while Orla needs to be taught that message as she grows in years.

We are commanded to make disciples, to encourage each other as we follow the example of Jesus and as we walk in His footsteps through life. The promise Jesus makes to us as we do that is: **I will be with you always, to the end of time.**

In the Book of Acts we are told that whole households were baptised. The promise of Jesus is to you and to your children.

Jesus said: Let the children come to me and do not try to stop them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you: whoever does not accept the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.

I spoke to the children earlier about sharing. Baptism is about sharing. We share in Fiona and Stuart's happiness. We share in the joy that Orla brings to all of us. We share in the love that God has for them and for each one of us. We don't keep it for ourselves. We share it and we share in it with each other. Baptism is also about a commitment.

Fiona will make a commitment to God about the direction in which she would like her life to go and Stuart and Fiona will make a commitment to God to direct Orla's life along that same path.

That same commitment was made by Stuart's parents a few years back, I think, in this same Church. The rest of us will also make a commitment today, a commitment to support each other and to encourage each other in our faith. We also make a commitment to remind each other that we can take our burdens to God and let

them go. We also commit to reminding each other that we are God's children, that He loves us and that He delights in us.