

## I. Intro.

### A. Today we were asked to bring a symbol from our youth of what prepared us or pointed us toward our later vocation in life

1. *What I have is a wood carving from Bolivia ... It has profiles of 3 faces:*



- a) Face of an alpaca, a common pack animal in the Bolivian mountains
- b) And 2 human faces, a man and a woman from Bolivian indigenous peoples

2. When I was in junior high, I went w/ my parents and younger sister to live in Bolivia, as my parents served with Mennonite Central Committee

- a) I spent my 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade years living in or near Santa Cruz, Bolivia
- b) I consider my time in Bolivia a signpost of sorts in my life: It may not have explicitly said “future minister under formation” for everyone to read ... but Bolivia was pointing me to ministry in Jesus’ name nonetheless

### B. How did Bolivia point the way toward my future ministries?

1. It introduced me to a world of poverty & inequality in the poorest country in South America ... which led to a lifelong interest in issues of justice
2. My Bolivian experience showed me the richness of other languages and cultures in the world, and how God is lord over all these languages and cultures

- a) I saw in person how God could be worshiped by not just European-origin people like the ones I grew up with in Kansas ... but also by indigenous descendants of the Incas or the Chiquitano people.
- b) Some of these tiny Bolivian Mennonite churches where I worshiped had started as a result of Bible studies led by US and Canadian MCCers in the 1960s.
- c) In these rural congregations struggling to survive, my view of the church itself expanded: I saw a people of God very energetic with their voices and bodies, and generous with the little that they had materially

3. Through my time in Bolivia as a youth, God also became bigger to me ... a God who loves all people, but also cares deeply about suffering, poverty & injustice

### **C. No, I didn't instantly become a social worker or pastor right there in Bolivia ...**

- 1. but those experiences pointed the way to the ministries of social work and pastoring that I would later enter.
- 2. And when it came time for me to leave my parents' home, I didn't suddenly just start working with people in a nursing home or pastoring a church ... I still needed some preparation for upcoming ministries ...
- 3. In a certain way the same was true for Jesus

## **II. (Preparation for Jesus' ministries)**

### **A. At about age of 30, Jesus left his parents in Nazareth behind & started showing up on the scene of biblical history**

- 1. But he didn't burst into our Bibles by first performing miracles & drawing instant crowds with his dynamic teaching
  - a) That did indeed happen with Jesus, but only later
  - b) First, some preparation for ministry was needed, even by Jesus
- 2. That preparation came in the first two New Testament scenes where we find the adult Jesus
  - a) His baptism by his cousin John AND
  - b) His temptations by the devil in the wilderness.
- 3. Let's look at those 2 ways that Jesus prepared for his coming ministry, with which most of the text in the four Gospels is concerned

### **B. Some people look at the baptism of Jesus merely as an example for us later followers ... but not necessarily meaningful to Jesus himself**

- 1. But in fact this baptism of Jesus, who did not need a cleansing

from sin, was meaningful and symbolic for his future ministry:

- a) In this baptism, Jesus experienced the Holy Spirit empowering him for his upcoming mission
- b) At his baptism he was set forth and launched by God on his mission as the Messiah ...
- c) In a hidden, low-key kind of way, this was the coronation and inauguration ceremony of King Jesus!

2. What clues do we have of this?

### C. There are 3 of them in Luke 3:22

1. 1<sup>st</sup> we have the divine action of Holy Spirit coming down on him in bodily form like a dove ... means other people noticed it & it wasn't just something from the Gospel writer's imagination

2. Then, we have this publicly heard voice from heaven, with some very significant words: “You are my son, the Beloved; with you I am well-pleased!”

- a) Now these sound like wonderful warm-fuzzy words to any of us ... Who wouldn't like to hear a parent or grand-parent saying, “Good job! I love you & I'm proud of you!”? But this is much more than just a divine hug or pat on the back ...
- b) The voice to Jesus from heaven is actually repeating 2 Old Testament passages, and that's where we get 2 more clues that Jesus' baptism is really his ministry launching ground:

3. That phrase “You are my Son the Beloved” is our 2<sup>nd</sup> clue ... It's not just some mystical statement proving Jesus' divinity ... These words come from Psalm 2, verse 7

- a) If you have your Bibles, look up Psalm 2. This is called a royal psalm, sometimes even a coronation psalm ... announcing God's king in Jerusalem thru the monarchy of David
- b) *Read Ps. 2:1-2* ... Remember what Samuel did to make young David king? He anointed him ... something that the priest always did to mark the next king
- c) In the O.T. when an Israelite king was enthroned, it was believed that Yahweh adopted that king as a son to do God's work.

So keep that in mind when you read Ps. 2:7, where the Israelite king himself speaks, recalling Yahweh's word to him marking him as king: “You are my son; today I have begotten you”

So at the Jordan River, to Jewish people familiar with the stories of the kings of Judah, Jesus is being divinely affirmed as king in the line of David, in order to do God's work!

4. The 3<sup>rd</sup> clue that Jesus is being launched on a mission comes in the next words in Luke 3:22, “with you I am well pleased”. These

words come from Isaiah 42:1, which you may want to look up

- a) Isaiah 42 is one of the so-called “Servant Songs” describing an ideal person or people who will be a serving savior figure for Israel
- b) *Read Isa. 42:1* ... This phrase, repeated from heaven at Jesus’ baptism, identifies Jesus as a suffering servant
- c) For many Jewish listeners, this last phrase of the heavenly voice does not blend well with the first one that identified him as a king. If you recall our time last fall describing the monarchies in Israel & Judah, most of those kings were not servants at all but selfishly misused their power!

So it sounds like a contradiction ... Was Jesus a king? Or a servant?

God here is saying Jesus is both, but the people had never seen a consistent humble servant king. They couldn’t imagine it!

#### **D. So how will Jesus be a servant king? How will he use his power to establish his kingdom?**

### **III. Jesus goes into the wilderness to find out.**

**A. And this is where Satan tempts him, in another preparation for ministry.** I find it helpful to think of these temptations as different ways Jesus could set up a kingdom & establish a following

#### **B. The 1<sup>st</sup> temptation is to feed the many hungry poor people – turning stones into bread**

1. This way of being king is to appeal to their self-interest ... give them food, or money or better jobs, and they’ll follow you anywhere, Jesus!
2. Renowned Scottish commentator William Barclay called this the temptation to “bribe people to follow him”

#### **C. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> temptation, Satan takes Jesus on a high mountain & offers him all the political and military power in the world**

1. Some would call this the temptation of compromised allegiance because Jesus responds with the OT quote, “Worship the Lord your God and serve only him.”
2. But I also see here the temptation for Jesus to be a dominating military king and force people into his kingdom ...
3. Jesus refuses to build God’s kingdom on military might

**D. The third temptation,** being saved after jumping down from the pinnacle of the Jerusalem Temple, **is to be a spiritual superman Messiah,** overwhelming people with his supernatural powers.

1. Surely if he bounced right back up unhurt after jumping from the

rooftop, then people would want to follow this kind of king!

2. Barclay called this the temptation to “sensationalism” ...
3. Although Jesus sometimes performed miracles, he also refused to do so on demand, as in Luke 23:8 when he said & did nothing before King Herod who wanted him to perform some kind of sign.

**E. But in all these temptations, the way to establish his kingdom was coming “over” and “above” the people, rather than from “underneath” which is the servant way.**

1. Hesston College Bible teacher Marion Bontrager put it this way: “How you establish a kingdom determines the kind of kingdom it will be”
2. Next week in following the salvation history thru Jesus, as he returns to his home people in Nazareth, we will see he reveals the kind of kingdom he’s ushering in.

**IV. So as the adult Jesus first appeared in Judea, in his baptism and his temptations, we have seen signposts pointing toward his mission in this world**

**A. But as I look around in our sanctuary today, other than a pulpit, I don’t see a chalkboard or power tools or work boots or other typical symbols of people who are on a mission with Jesus**

1. What I do see is a table obviously laid out in preparation for the Lord’s Supper
2. So what do these learnings from Jesus’ preparations for ministry have to do with communion?

**B. The Lord’s Supper reminds us & gives us a glimpse of what kind of Lord we imitate and follow**

1. When Jesus gathered his disciples that final time in Jerusalem to observe the Passover with him, he told them they should do what he was doing ...
2. They should repeat this meal with the special and unique meaning that he was reshaping it.
3. Jesus took a meal that highlighted a sacrificial lamb which recalled God’s deliverance of slaves from Egypt ... and he made it into a meal recalling his own self-sacrifice, which was the ultimate means of God’s deliverance of us from sin

**C. What are we doing when we come to this communion table?**

1. In the Lord’s Supper, we don’t merely say “I believe in the Jesus who gave himself to us for forgiveness of sins.”

2. In the Lord’s Supper we are doing more than affirming individual beliefs.

- a) We are re-forming a living faith community (the body of Christ today) that is fed by Jesus
- b) We are committing ourselves to follow in the footsteps of this master in his kind of mission, rather than taking our human purposes and thinly applying the name of Jesus over them.

3. In this simplified meal, we declare for all to hear, & demonstrate for all to see, these 3 truths found in the Lord’s Supper:

- a) 1<sup>st</sup>: “I believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord” ...

That’s a lovely creed, but let me boil it down a little more for you ... Here’s a simpler way to express this meaning of the Lord’s Supper: “I live through Jesus.”

## 3 Truths of the Lord’s Supper

- 1. I live through Jesus. *I believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.*

b) 2<sup>nd</sup>: “The Jesus way of living in this world will be my way of living”

Simpler translation: “Jesus is seen in me”

### 3 Truths of the Lord’s Supper

1. I live through Jesus. *I believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.*

2. Jesus is seen in me. *The Jesus way of living will be my way.*

c) 3<sup>rd</sup>: “The Jesus people of faith will be my people as well. I belong with them as much as I belong with Jesus.”

Simpler translation: “Jesus is seen in us”

### 3 Truths of the Lord’s Supper

1. I live through Jesus. *I believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.*

2. Jesus is seen in me. *The Jesus way of living will be my way.*

3. Jesus is seen in us. *The Jesus people of faith will be my people.*

**D. May the bread and the cup, these symbols of the Jesus way remind you of the one who let baptism and temptations shape**

him for ministry as a servant king.

## V. Conclusion

**A. For our musical response, we will be singing a new bilingual communion song "Pan de Vida" which I invite you to turn to in green songbook, #85**

1. There are alternating phrases in English & Spanish and you can find the translations of the Spanish at the bottom of the page.
2. When we come to verse 2, feel free to choose either English or Spanish at the same time

**B. But just now I invite you to keep the songbooks open as we take some moments of silence to ponder the truths & mysteries in the Lord's Supper** (take 2 minutes silence ... OR have pianist play softly thru STJ 85)