

**Sermon for the second Sunday of epiphany. 2021  
The baptism of Christ. Mark chapter 1.**

I want to teach you a Greek word today, that Greek word is Metanoia.

We might not recognise it and is often translated in our bibles as repentance.

Repent and believe is how we hear the call of John the Baptist.

Often we say repentance is about changing our behaviour, looking back at the failures, and saying sorry for them.

So Metanoia is often translated as repentance.

However this gives us a very small understanding of what it means in Greek.

To those who spoke Greek Metanoia means much more than repentance and looking backwards at failure.

Metanoia in the Greek is about coming to one senses, taking stock of life, Having a change of heart about where we are going, ultimately Metanoia is about a new beginning, a new start stepping forward into life leaving the old behind.

If we think for a moment about the lost son who while he is feeding pigs comes to his senses and realises

how he can return home. For him this is a Metanoia moment, he returns home and Full of repentance, and is welcomed by his gracious father. That is just one example of how Metanoia is more than repentance.

We're only two weeks into this new year and already we are feeling fed up and wanting a fresh start. Yes good news is happening vaccinations are being rolled out but we are in lockdown and the numbers of cases is very high.

So today I want us to be reminded of what this baptism of Christ is about it is a moment of Metanoia for us, a recognition that God is at work.

In these opening verses of Marks Gospel he writes immediately of the work of John the Baptist . John the Baptist who is on the Jordan bank , quite possibly at the location where in the Old Testament, the Israelites crossed on dry ground with Joshua. A location full of opportunity and a new beginning, a Metanoia location.

It is to this place that Jesus comes unrecognised, undistinguished, part of the crowd. Yet when he is baptised by John, when he comes up out of the water, the people see the holy spirit descend like a

dove, well that's the only way they could describe it, as something occurred beyond their comprehension.

Marks Gospel is one of urgency and action and here we have Jesus being recognised at his baptism, filled with the holy spirit, and ready to begin his ministry. For John the Baptist, this is the completion of his ministry.

Today is the second Sunday of epiphany, epiphany means revealing, and Jesus is revealed at his baptism as the one John has been preparing the way for.

As today's Greek word Metanoia is about coming to one senses having a new beginning.

Today we need to be reminded that Christ is with us, Christ is with us in the labours of each day, in the confinement of our homes, we were told at Christmas he is called Immanuel, God with us and today we see him beginning his ministry. As the baton of ministry is passed from John to Jesus, as the holy spirit comes on Jesus, empowering him for ministry.

There is the verse in the old Testament, from the prophet Jeremiah chapter 29 verse 11 which says

“for I know the plans I have for you plans to prosper you plans for a future and a hope.”

This verse reminds us that God is always at work, God is always bring about his plans. At the moment we might not think that we are part of gods plans, that God is outside of our Lockdown. That Covid is not part of his plan for us. Let's be reminded that God is always at work.

Just as that Jesus's baptism the holy spirit came down to enable his ministry, so that same holy spirit is upon us today who humble our hearts and accept him into our lives that we might have strength for today.

The holy spirit at work in us is not just a warm fuzzy feeling, but rather it is an opportunity to pray “Lord in me, less of me and more of you Lord. “  
That we might decrease and God might increase in our lives.

This idea is a Metanoia moment, that we might not only look backwards in repentance but look forwards knowing that God is at work, and is already ahead of us, waiting for us to catch up.

Today be in that Metanoia moment and know God is with us.

Amen