

**A Monumental Event****Luke 3:21-38**

The other night I was sharing with Robyn about a phone call I received from my Dad. I began by telling her that our nephew Stephen has been accepted into the Master's Music program at MSU. Then I changed topics to tell her that Dad has been released to return to work by the doctor only I didn't say Dad I just said he had been released. Robyn then commented that she didn't no he had been off work thinking I was still talking about Stephen. Then she told me she was confused. So I had to go back and begin with my conversation with Dad about his release to work and then the news about Stephen.

Maybe you have been in a similar conversation. It is frustrating when people jump around in a conversation from one topic to another and they expect you to follow all the story lines and yet that's what I did to Robyn. Do you every feel that way when someone does that to you?

That's what this passage seems like on the onset. In last week's message we noted that Luke summed up John's ministry by saying he came, he preached, and he was put to death by Herod Antipas for speaking against his marriage to the divorced wife of his brother Herod Philip.

**So why does Luke elect to finish out this chapter by going back to an event that took place prior to John's death and then conclude with the genealogy of Jesus?** Both seem out of place. It would seem to us in following a chronological order of his ministry that Jesus' baptism should be inserted before the death of John. It would also seem to us that the genealogy of Jesus would better fit in the passage about His birth. That seems to be more logical than where Luke elects to include them in his gospel. But like a skilled writer, Luke has his reasons.

Simply put, what we will now discuss is a transitory

passage that concludes the ministry of John and begins the ministry of Jesus, who is the focus of the gospel. John would later tell one of his followers **"He, (speaking of Jesus), must increase and I must decrease."** Remember that John came as the forerunner to point to and prepare people for the coming Messiah. His job was now done and the focus of the gospel is on Jesus. The insertion of the genealogical record is to show us that this Jesus is the God/man who is the rightful Messiah. As there are in our day and will be more in the days ahead who claim to be the Christ, so it was in that day as well that some claimed to be the promised one.

**Matthew 24:4-5 "Jesus answered: 'Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.'"**

**Matthew 24:23-25 "'At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect – if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time.'"**

This genealogical record shows that Jesus is the true Messiah, not just because He would make claim to it or because John said so when he told the crowds to **"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."** He is the Messiah because the records also prove it.

So with me, open your Bible to our passage in **Luke 3:21-38**. With our focus on Jesus, let's look at the following points.

**His example for ministry**

**His endorsement for ministry**

**His entrance into ministry**

## **I. HIS EXAMPLE FOR MINISTRY – v. 21**

I think that we would all agree that regardless of what occupation you might find yourself entering,

proper preparation is essential. Your path may find you selecting from several colleges that has your area of interest. Once you make the college choice, there are classes that you must choose from, some are chosen for you, but others you can elect.

You may have chosen a trade school that specializes in a particular field be it automotive or computer technology.

You may choose to apprentice yourself in plumbing or construction or as an electrician.

You would also hope that the person who stands as your pastor is one who has prepared himself by going through Bible school and/or seminary.

As we look closely at our passage we notice that Jesus prepared Himself for ministry as well. We see two specific areas that were essential for the work that was ahead of Him. They are examples to us as well. They are His baptism and prayer. From the view at a distance they may seem insignificant but when we zoom in for a closer look we see how important they were. Let's look first at the example of His baptism.

#### **A. His Example in Baptism – v. 21a**

We begin by noting that Jesus was baptized when all the other people were being baptized. This is not saying that everyone in Israel was baptized. What this is saying is that Jesus came to be baptized at the height of John's ministry when everyone who desired to be baptized did so. Consider for a moment Matthew's account of Jesus' baptism. We see there that John's recognition of who Jesus made him reluctant to want to baptize Jesus. He stated that Jesus should be the one to baptize him, but with insistence by Jesus John was obedient.

Let's ask ourselves, and maybe you have wondered this, why would Jesus need to be baptized and why by John? After all, we saw from last week's

passage that John's was a baptism of repentance for sins and according to such passages as **II Corinthians 5:21** and **Hebrews 4:15** Jesus was without sin. Skeptics use the occasion of His baptism to claim that this shows Jesus was a sinner like everyone else; otherwise He wouldn't need to be baptized.

Others want to ignore this event as an inconsequential act of no importance.

Still others believe that He was baptized because everyone else was getting baptized.

Then there are those who believe that this act launched His priesthood. According to the Old Testament law before the priest offered a sacrifice, they would first go to the laver and wash themselves and then they could perform the sacrifice. They claim that this was Jesus' way of cleansing Himself before His own sacrifice.

Let me offer these thoughts as to why Jesus felt it necessary to be baptized.

1. **Matthew 3:15** reveals the primary reason. **“Let it be so now; it is proper for us to this to fulfill all righteousness.”** Simply put, Jesus was saying it was the right thing to do. On one hand, John's baptism meant a turning away from sin. On the other hand, it meant that the individual was trusting God. Jesus' baptism affirmed both. While He had no sin of His own to repent from, He was making a public declaration that He would not sin and that He was committing Himself to always trust God.

But it goes deeper. His baptism was a way of picturing His own work of redemption. We recognize that baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as necessary to be forgiven and redeemed. Not that baptism saves, but that it is a picture of Jesus's own death, burial and resurrection. His baptism was a foreshadowing of that event at Calvary.

The One who had no sin took the place of those who were filled with sin. It was the only way to fulfill the righteous act necessary to secure our salvation, that is not His baptism, but His sacrifice.

2. In His baptism He identified with the sinners He came to save. He couldn't die for sinners if He couldn't identify with their sin. Now that doesn't mean that He deliberately sinned so He could identify with sinners. I don't have to get drunk to identify with a drunkard. I don't have to use drugs to identify with someone addicted to drugs. Several hundred years earlier Isaiah wrote that the Messiah would be **“numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressions.” (Isaiah 53:12)**

**Hebrews 4:15 “For we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted as we are yet without sin.”**

John MacArthur concludes by saying “Jesus’ baptism represented the willing identification of the sinless Son of God with the sinful people He came to save...He who was without sin submitted to a baptism for sinners. In this act the Savior of the world took His place among the sinners of the world. God **“Made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (II Corinthians 5:21)**

His identification with sinners would culminate when He took our sin on the cross. He was committing Himself to be the substitute for man's sin. Though people didn't understand its significance then, it was a public willingness on His part to be a substitute for us.

3. His baptism was the point at which John identified Jesus as the Messiah.

**John 1:26-31**

4. His baptism is an example to His followers to obey. If Jesus thought it was necessary to be baptized, we should too.

5. His baptism was the beginning point of the public ministry of Jesus from carpenter to teacher.

He gives us an example in baptism.

He gives us an example in prayer.

## **B. His Example in Prayer – v. 21b**

I think you would agree that people in ministry need to be committed to prayer. Of the gospel writers Luke is the only one that mentions that Jesus was praying at His baptism. Luke loves to show that Jesus prayed. And while we don't know what Jesus prayed about, although some think He prayed that the Holy Spirit would come, we know that He prayed.

Notice the occasions that Jesus prayed:

1. **Luke 5:16** – He often prayed in solitary places.

2. **Luke 6:12-16** – He prayed in the selection of His disciples. These were the guys who would carry on the work of Jesus after He was gone, the guys who were going to turn the world upside down. Yet on more than one occasion they wanted to know who was going to be the greatest among them in heaven. Muhammad Ali wasn't the first to claim to be the greatest. James and John wanted seats of authority on the right and left hand of Jesus.

Of all the people who followed Jesus, I think it had to be a tough decision and He spent the night in prayer. And when you look at the group of 12 He selected, they were not the cream of the crop. When we select Deacons to serve on our Board, we have some criteria from Timothy and Titus that the men are striving to live a godly life. I'm not suggesting that the 12 disciples didn't, but look at them. Peter was a brash, outspoken guy often

speaking or acting before thinking. Remember the time when he vowed he would never desert the Lord or the scene in the garden where there are a host of Temple soldiers who came to arrest Jesus and Peter grabbed a sword and lopped off the ear of Malchus, servant of the High Priest. It didn't matter that they were outnumbered and outmuscled.

Thomas was a doubter. He walked by sight. James and John were hotheads, known as the sons of thunder. When a town rejected Christ they wanted to call down fire from heaven and destroy the place. We might say they were always looking for a good fight. They were ambitious and full of zeal. John MacArthur suggests that James was a greater threat to the religious establishment in Jerusalem than was Peter who was the leader of the group. He believes that James was more zealous than all of them because it was James who was executed first.

Then there was Matthew who was a tax collector. From other studies we know that tax collectors had a reputation for extortion, dishonesty, and stealing. Jesus also chose a guy who belonged to a gang – Simon the Zealot. That group was on a mission to overthrow the Roman government by force and free Israel from oppression.

And who can forget that He chose Judas Iscariot, the guy who would betray Christ and send Him to His death.

Jesus prayed before the selection of His disciples and for good reason.

3. **Luke 9:18** – He prayed at Peter's confession.
4. **Luke 9:28** – He prayed at the transfiguration.
5. **Luke 11:1** – He prayed before teaching about prayer.
6. **Luke 22:32** – He prayed just before Peter's denial.

7. **Luke 22:41-44** – He prayed at Gethsemane.
8. **Luke 23:46** – He prayed on the cross.
9. **Luke 24:30** – He prayed after His resurrection.
10. **John 11:41-42** – He prayed at Lazarus's tomb.
11. **John 14:16** – He prayed for the coming of the Holy Spirit.
12. **John 17** – At the Last Supper He prayed for Himself and His disciples both then and now.

What a wonderful example Jesus gives to us at the beginning of His public ministry of the importance of prayer.

Peter Dyneka, the founder of the Slavic Gospel Association would often say “much prayer, much power.”

My hope is that if you are going to be involved in ministry that you consider the example of Jesus and pray. Pray at all times and pray in all ways.

If you teach or facilitate a class – pray.

If you sing in the choir – pray.

If you take the offering – pray.

If you are on a ministry team – pray.

If you clean the church – pray.

If you give to the food pantry – pray.

If you witness – pray.

If you pass out bulletins – pray.

Jesus gives us a model to follow that in ministry we need to be in prayer. He gives us an example for ministry in His baptism and His prayer life. **Do you need to do the same?**

From our passage we also note a second thought. We see His endorsement for ministry.

## II. HIS ENDORSEMENT FOR MINISTRY – v. 22

When Pastor Don retired and I was considered to replace him I was asked to submit my resume'. It listed things about my previous places of employment along with my academic and ministry credentials. At the end it included a list of references, people who could vouch for me, validate my credentials, and endorse my ability. Now for me, I also had support from Pastor Don. He had known me for quite a few years and then I served for a couple years as his assistant. So I came with some endorsement.

Jesus probably wouldn't get many interviews in today's modern culture. He had no formal training. He didn't go to any rabbinical seminary. He had no work history in ministry, only that of a carpenter. He hadn't taught in the synagogue, yet this event was His catalyst into public ministry and we will note that many called Him teacher, many thought that He taught with greater authority than the trained religious leaders. So where did He get His endorsement? It came from the only two places that really matter.

#### **A. His Endorsement Came by the Holy Spirit – v. 22a**

Notice that John saw the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus in bodily form looking like a dove. It was not a dove, but something that looked like a dove. To John this was a sign that this was the Messiah. Remember what we read in John's account of the baptism of Jesus? **"I would not have known Him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is He who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and testify that this is the Son of God."** (John 2:33-34)

What John saw was the authentication of Jesus as the Messiah through the coming of the Holy Spirit on Him. This was not, as some people believe, the incarnation of Christ. At His birth He was both

God and man and we'll see that in a moment through the genealogy.

This event did not awaken His Messianic consciousness; it deepened it and revealed to John that this was the Messiah.

A dove represents purity, peace, gentleness, and humility. That the Holy Spirit came in the form of a dove and not that of an eagle or some other bird of prey speaks of the kind of ministry Jesus would have. It spoke of His life and character, the nature of His ministry. To the crowd Jesus said **"Come to Me all you who are burdened and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in hearth, and you will find rest for your souls."** (Matthew 11:29-29)

The coming of the Holy Spirit was an endorsement for Jesus to begin His ministry and the Spirit would empower Him for the task ahead.

#### **Isaiah 42:1-4**

Here is the picture of the Messiah who has the strength and right to judge the nations, but will not use it at this time. He will not break a bruised reed or snuff out a dimly lit candle. In **Luke 4:18** we will hear Jesus say that the Spirit has anointed Him to preach the good news. He didn't need a diploma or a resume', His endorsement and empowerment came from the Holy Spirit.

The ministry of Jesus was endorsed by the Holy Spirit as John witnessed His descent onto Jesus right after He was baptized.

This verse gives us another endorsement.

#### **B. His Endorsement Came by the Father – v. 22b**

**"You are My Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased."**



The Father was stating His affection for the Son. By calling Him Son, the Father was authenticating His relationship with Jesus, that He was indeed deity.

The Father was endorsing the ministry of Jesus, that He was the One who prophesy spoke about who would bear the sins of the world.

We found from **Isaiah 42:1** that this is the chosen one in whom God delights. On two other occasions, Jesus would hear the affirmation of the Father that He was pleased with all the Son was doing, in essence stating that Jesus was obedient to everything the Father willed. He would hear it at the transfiguration and then again in the week just before His crucifixion.

**(Luke 9:28-36; John 12:28)**

What the Father expresses to the Son is nothing short of infinite, tender, and eternal love. There is no greater love than between the Father and the Son. Because the Son loved mankind enough to die for us symbolized through His own baptism, God expressed His love and affirmation of the work that was ahead of Him.

We see here a clear indication of the Trinity involved in the baptismal event, but more than that, it reveals to us that all three affirm and are active in man's salvation.

Jesus was perfectly qualified for ministry, endorsed by the coming of the Holy Spirit on Him and the voice of approval by the Father about Him.

**Verse 21** showed us His example for ministry.

**Verse 22** showed us His endorsement for ministry.

**Verses 23-38** will show us His entrance into ministry.

### **III. HIS ENTRANCE INTO MINISTRY – v. 23-38**

Luke gives us a general idea about the age when Jesus began His ministry. He was about 30 years old. To further substantiate the credentials that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, Luke includes His genealogy. It reveals that He was both God and man. If He had arrived on the scene without having been born, He would not have had the legal right to the throne promised to David's seed that someone from his family line would sit on the throne forever. If He had arrived on the scene without having been born, He would not have the legal right to be our kinsman redeemer, He would not have been able to be a living sacrifice for our sins. These genealogies substantiate the claim that Jesus is the Messiah.

If you compare this list of names with the genealogy given in Matthew you will notice several differences. You may notice that Matthew's account begins with Abraham and ends with Jesus while Luke begins with Jesus and goes all the way back to God. Each account also gives different names. You may also notice if you compared names in the Old Testament that some names are missing in both records. You probably expect me to give you some explanations for this and you would be right, so I'll do my best.

As to the differences in order, remember that Matthew is writing to Jews who would be interested in the Jewish heritage of the Messiah and only concerned so far as it goes back to Abraham, the father of their people. Luke on the other hand, was writing to Gentiles and was showing that the Messiah was not just for Jews, but was for all mankind so goes all the way back not just to Adam, but to God. Luke wanted his audience to know that redemption through the Messiah was available to everyone and anyone. It was also a way of showing the deity of Jesus.

The genealogies of Matthew and Luke show us that Jesus was not a self-appointed Messiah, but that He had the right to make the claims He did. And just

because they leave out some names does not invalidate the genealogy.

Now as to the differences in names between the two lists from David on there are a couple of thoughts. The genealogy of Matthew shows the legal line of Jesus from David's son Solomon through Joseph who adopted Jesus as his son giving Him the legal right to be the heir to the throne. Luke's genealogy gives the lineage of Mary from David's son Nathan, but notice that it begins with Jesus as the supposed son of Joseph, son of Heli. Heli was the father of Mary, but like our culture, when someone got married they also called their in-law Father. Luke's genealogy shows the blood line of Jesus going all the way back to God, that not only was He human, He was also God. Because Jesus was identifying with man, it is important to show His entire lineage.

After the Temple was destroyed in 70AD, all genealogical records were lost. No one can come today and make the claim that they are the Messiah, because it cannot be substantiated legally without those records.

The Genealogy shows us that He was the descendant promised to Abraham who would bless all the nations of the world. Because He was the son of Adam, it shows us that He was fully human. Because He was the Son of God, it shows us that He was fully God. Because He was the Son of David through Solomon, it shows us that He has the legal right to the throne of David. Because He was the Son of David through Nathan, it shows us that He has the right to be our kinsman redeemer. As we close, having taken a look at His example for ministry, His endorsement for ministry, and His entrance into ministry we need to pause and thank Him for the example He gave us to follow.

Do you have need yet to follow Him in baptism?  
Do you have need to follow Him in prayer?

Let's also thank Him that both the Spirit and the Father endorsed not just His public ministry then, but they were endorsing the redemptive work He would accomplish for mankind.

Let's also thank Him that He has the credentials through His genealogy to do what He came to do, to be our sacrifice for sin and that God the Father was pleased with Him.

What does this passage teach us about Jesus? It's more than just that we should be baptized or pray. His example shows us His obedience to the will of the Father.

His example shows us a spirit of humility. His example shows us a spirit of determination to complete the task given Him, a willingness to do everything that was required to fulfill all righteousness. That He would go through death on the cross assures our righteousness.

How is God's Spirit asking you to respond today?  
Our time of communion is a wonderful opportunity to talk with the Lord about what He has spoken to us about. Will you be obedient to His voice today?