

“What Child Is This” - Luke 3:15-22 - Rev. Jeffrey B. Childs

As Christians we claim Christ. We claim the world for Christ and Christ for the world. But who is this Christ for you? Or as the Christmas carol inquires, What Child Is This? Let me ask a personal question, **“Who is Jesus for you?”** How do you describe this one who is both human and divine? On the road to Jerusalem Jesus will ask his disciples both, “Who do people say that I am?” and “Who do you say that I am?” (Mark 8:27-30) so, let me ask again, how would you answer Jesus? “Who is Jesus for you?”

At the end of this story today in Luke chapter 3, how does the voice from heaven help to answer the question? Most of us here probably believe that Jesus is the Son of God, though we might have a hard time articulating what that fully means. And though there are some churches who force the issue that people must believe this or that doctrine, I would contend an alternate view. Because I believe that it is not so much about what you or I believe! Ultimately it is what God believes. Let me say that again. **Ultimately it is what God believes.** God is the ultimate judge of such things. And this story tells us that God believes in Jesus and is well pleased. What do you think God thinks about you? What might God be saying about you?

God believes in us enough to send us Jesus. Jesus believes in us enough to call us to follow and take the time to teach us. And Jesus believes in us enough to die for us on the cross. This is the Savior that we claim and proclaim. I would postulate that; **we believe in Jesus who believes in us.**

Our lives depend upon our ability to listen for God’s call and to boldly follow the instructions. Today how might we hear our call as Jesus heard his in discerning the meaning of these words: *“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”*

William Barclay in his commentary of this portion of the Gospel of Luke wrote, *God said to him, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” That saying is composed of two texts. “You are my beloved son” - that is from Psalm 2:7 and was always accepted as a description of the Messianic King. “In whom I am well pleased” - that is part of Isaiah 42:1 and is from a description of the servant of the Lord whose portrait culminates in the sufferings of Isaiah 53. Therefore, in his baptism Jesus realized, first, that he was the Messiah, God’s Anointed King; and second, that this involved not power and glory, but suffering and a cross.*

Friends we believe and affirm that we are children of God. Can you listen and hear God say to you, “you are my beloved son” or “you are my beloved daughter?” Do you know deep in your heart how much God loves you? God loves you enough to send Jesus to show you and teach you and die for you and rise for you that you might have eternal life. So, let’s live that way!

For decades, off and on since I was a teenager, I have read *the Upper Room* daily devotional. I remember my grandmother would pick up a copy at church and bring it home and we would read it each day while I was growing up. Now I read it on my computer or iPad each morning. If you would like to read it online or receive it as a daily email, just go to www.upperroom.org and follow the instructions. BTW, for the last five years I have had on my bucket list to write a devotion for the Upper Room and this year I

moved it to the top of the list and have it as one of those to do this year. A few years ago I was struck by the words in a devotion by Eugenie L. Daniels from Massachusetts.

She wrote, "It took a long time for me to sit and listen for God. But then I was surprised at what the Lord was saying. Instead of a thundering voice telling me to do enormous deeds, I heard the Lord whisper, "Send a note to Donna; she has cancer." "Come aside and rest; you are doing too much." "Listen to this person though she annoys you. She needs help. You can pray with her." Someday, maybe I will hear a thundering voice telling me to do great things. But for now, I am still learning how important it is just to listen to God."

The thought for the day was: "God is always speaking to us. How do you listen?" When I read this, I knew God was speaking to me and the message was for the sermon today. How do we listen and hear the voice of the Lord? It seems that there is a simple key here. Reading the story in Luke's gospel closely I notice that the Holy Spirit comes upon Jesus while he is praying. And without breaking stride, the story continues with the voice of the Lord speaking to Jesus.

One of the ways God speaks to us is in prayer. In the quiet and silence of prayer or meditation do you hear God speaking to you? Practice being still and listening. Many times we seem to have selective hearing and we tend to tune God out as we fill our heads with other noises, so that God's voice is drowned out. Jesus taught us to listen with our heart and to hear God's voice. Eugenie Daniels taught us the same as she began to listen and to pay attention as God would call her to perform simple caring ministries. If you find God calling you to do likewise, please let us know how we can help you as you answer God's call. Alleluia and Amen.

Who Is Jesus

Jeffrey B. Childs 1/8/2025

Who is Jesus? What words could describe the Word?
What can we say to fully describe Christ?
Let us reflect on all that we have heard,
And then affirm all that we have surmised.
He is our Lord, our teacher and friend,
The Messiah upon whom we depend.

Who is Jesus? At his baptism we hear,
He is God's Son, and the "Beloved One."
We are blessed that for us Jesus has come here,
He's the One through whom God's will, will be done.
Upon the cross we'll receive God's forgiveness,
And forever we will know we are blessed.