

Sermon for January 7, 2018
Baptism of Our Lord
"There's Got to be More"

Genesis 1:1-5

Mark 1:4-11

This is how the story of the Good News of Jesus goes. Like the prophet Isaiah used to say, "I'm sending a messenger ahead of me to get things ready. He'll be like someone yelling in the wilderness 'the King is coming'" So John the baptizer showed up in the wilderness and started a camp meeting. He would preach that people needed to change their lives and get baptized.

People from parts all over came to hear John. Even city folk came and some even got baptized by him. Now John didn't even take up an offering at these camp meetings. He didn't need to because he lived off the land and wore whatever he could find.

And when he preached, John would tell people that one who was more powerful than him would come and baptize them with fire and the Holy Spirit. Then one day it happened. Cousin Jesus came to John's camp meeting and was baptized. As Jesus came up out of the river the heavens opened up and the Holy Spirit descended upon him like a dove. And as if that weren't enough, God spoke out of heaven and said, "You are my son whom I love. You make a daddy proud."

Have you ever gotten the feeling like there's got to be more? I remember when I was in High School. We all thought that life would be perfect when we had moved away from home and had our own place and our own wheels. Some of us went off to college or went to work. And we discovered that we had our own place and our own wheels. And we had this feeling that there had to be more.

Some people think that when they become financially secure and have a stable trusting relationship and a family that they will have arrived. But every day people with loving families and comfortable jobs up and leave it all. They excuse it as a "mid-life crisis." But at the heart of it is a feeling that there's got to be more. More than the day to day responsibilities of life.

Then there are the people who either live for the weekend or for retirement. When that time of rest or retirement comes, they are at a loss. They feel that there's got to be more. There simply has to be more to life than the things we strive for so often.

That is how I think the people of Jerusalem felt in Jesus' day. They had it all. The city folk had the Romans to keep the peace. Despite the taxes, and sometimes because of them, they had economic security. The people in the city

were often on the government's good side too. So they were comfortable.

Yet they came out to see John. They might have come in part to see a spectacle. I am sure in his camel's hair robe and with his fiery preaching, he must have put on quite a show. Some of them, however, were touched by him and changed. Even tax collectors repented and were baptized.

They must have been looking for more. Even John said, "There's got to be more." He said that there was another coming after him that was even more amazing. That this amazing one would baptize them not with mere water to symbolized the spirit of God but with the actual fire of the Holy Spirit. Then as if on cue there came Jesus. And the heavens opened and God said, "You are my son."

There's got to be more! Maybe even God felt that way once. The Bible tells us that in the beginning the world was a formless void, and that the spirit of the Lord swept over the universe. I guess as God looked at that formless void God thought "There's got to be more." So God said, "Let there be light" And suddenly there was light.

But we all know that there was still more. It took five more days for God to be satisfied with the universe. It is as if each morning God looked at the universe and said, "There's got to be more." So God said, "Let there be land" or "Let there be a sun and moon and stars." Then finally plants and animals and humans.

But even that was not all. There was a whole history of things and people. God kept talking to the people and doing things for them. And the Bible says that God is not finished. There was much more to come.

Have you ever had the feeling there's got to be more? If you have you are right. There is more! There is more to life than the things that most people strive for. There is more than wealth, and power and security and admiration.

There is Jesus! But even then there is more. Yes, I said there is more. No, there is not more than Jesus. There is more of Jesus.

Even after we have surrendered ourselves to God in Christ and been baptized into the death and resurrection, there is still more. There is more worship, more devotion, more praise, and more service. Some people think that baptism or accepting Christ is the end. They think at that point they have arrived. John, the pioneer baptizer, said there is more. Even God at the dawn of time foresaw more.

If you have even felt there's got to be more, you were right. There is the one who comes to pour out the Holy Spirit and fire. There is Jesus and a life dedicated to knowing and serving him. And that is more than you or anyone else could ever have hoped for!