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The Sermon

Dr. Steven J. Lawson

Luke 3:18-22

"The Turning Point"

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TRANSCRIPT

All right, I'm ready to dive into the word of God, and I trust you have your Bible and you're ready as well. We are in Luke, chapter 3. And for those of you who are visiting, we are preaching through the gospel of Luke verse by verse, and we have now come to Luke chapter 3, and today we're going to be looking at verses 18-22, and the title of this message is - let me look at my notes and see the title here - "The Turning Point. The Turning Point." So, I want to begin by reading it, Luke 3:18, follow along with me.

"So with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people. But when Herod the tetrarch was reprimanded by him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the wicked things which Herod had done, Herod also added this to them all: he locked John up in prison.

"Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, 'You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.'" This is the reading of God's word. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, this is Your word that has been read. You guided the mind and the thoughts and the words of Luke as he recorded this, and it is written

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exactly as You would have it presented to us this day. It is faultless, it is pure, it is inerrant, it is infallible, and so we want to dive into this passage knowing that it is pure, unadulterated truth. So open our eyes to see in this passage and open our ears to hear what You say in Your word. And so we ask now for Your assistance. Lay Your hand upon me for good. Fill me with Your Spirit, that I might be a tool that You would use in this hour, and lay Your hand upon every listener here today to drink in the truth. Father, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

I've entitled this message "The Turning Point" because that's exactly what's taking place in these verses. We see the turning point in the lives of John the Baptist and Jesus. This is really a very pivotal moment. From this time forward, the ministry of John will decrease and the ministry of Jesus will increase. From this moment forward, Jesus will step out of the shadows of obscurity where He has been for the last 30 years and He will step right into the center of the spotlight of redemptive history and He will remain here all the way to the cross for the next three years.

This moment marks the inauguration of the public ministry of Jesus Christ. And John has now fulfilled his role. He has now fulfilled his purpose, which is to prepare the nation for the coming of their Messiah, the Lord, Jesus Christ. And he has been out in the wilderness and he has been preaching a message of repentance, and he has stirred up the hearts and souls of the people now for this moment for Christ to enter into His public ministry. John and Jesus were cousins, sons of Elizabeth and Mary who were related. John was born first because he was to be the forerunner of the Messiah, so he preceded the coming of Christ. And it would be through John and Jesus, though they were cousins, that the kingdom of heaven was being presented.

John and Jesus have probably never met before. They lived miles apart. Jesus lived in the northern region of the Promised Land. He lived in Nazareth growing up, which is up in Galilee. And, John? John lived in the eastern region on the other side of the Jordan River in the wilderness of Perea. And though they were cousins, and though John has come to prepare the way for Christ, what we see here in this passage is most probably the

first time these two will meet. And by now, the time has come for John to baptize Jesus. They will now meet, as I said, for the first time, and John realizes what is taking place. He will now be taking a step back and Jesus will be stepping forward. John will now step into the periphery, stage right, and Jesus will step into center stage at this very moment. John will later say in John 3:30, "He must increase, and I must decrease." That is exactly what is taking place at this moment.

Now, before we dig into this text, I need to bring something to your attention, and it is that verses 19 and 20, which you see I've just read, chronologically they actually follow later in the unfolding story of Jesus. And the reason for this is each gospel writer is not writing a historical account, per se, and they're not even writing a biography, per se. This is a brand new genre of literature known as a Gospel - capital G - and what is taking place is each of the four gospel writers are painting a portrait of Jesus. They each write from four different perspectives. Matthew writes addressing the Jews, Mark the Romans, Luke the Greeks, and John the whole world.

And so as Luke is writing his gospel under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he is intentionally telling a story, and at times, he will move a piece of the puzzle to bring an accent, to bring an emphasis that needs to be made. And after verse 18 when he says that "with many other exhortations John was preaching the gospel," Luke now airdrops verses 19 and 20 out of sequence timewise, but places it here to show the price that John will have to pay for being a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is Luke's way of taking almost like a yellow highlighter and emphasizing and underscoring the truth that you and I need to see, that there is always a price to pay for being a witness for Jesus Christ. And so I'll explain that as we walk through this. And the reason we know that this is airdropped, if you will, into this place out of chronological order is because we have the gospel of Matthew and we have the gospel of Mark, and when we compare these three, what's called Synoptic Gospels, we can reconstruct the proper historical timeline, if you will. So let's dive into this and see what Luke is wanting to draw to our attention.

And so it begins in verse 18, and I want to call this first heading, "The Proclamation by John. The Proclamation by John," because we see the continued emphasis upon the preaching of John. So, verse 18 says, "So with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people." Those exhortations began in verse 4 and have continued all the way down to verse 17, as John has come preaching repentance, he's come preaching the kingdom of God, he's come preaching forgiveness of sins, he's come preaching salvation. And so Luke begins verse 18 with many other exhortations. I mean, this is what a preacher does. He preaches a lot, and he keeps preaching.

And the word "exhortations" is very important. I hope your translation says exhortations, because if there is no exhortation, there is no preaching. It is this word "exhortation" that separates mere teaching from preaching. And there is a difference. A young man once came to Martyn Lloyd-Jones and said, "Can you tell me the difference between teaching and preaching?" and Lloyd-Jones, the great English expositor, said, "Young man, if you have to ask me the question, the difference between teaching and preaching, it is obvious you have never heard preaching, because if you've heard preaching, you know the difference between mere teaching and preaching."

If there is no exhortation, the man is simply a lecturer. He is simply an instructor. He is simply a professor. That's wonderful and that's good. But preaching takes it to a whole new level because there is an energy level, there is a fervency, there is a sense of urgency that comes with a preacher. And that exactly what we see here in verse 18, "With many other exhortations."

The word "exhortation" is a Greek word, compound word. The main root word is "to call," like to call someone. And there's a prefix, that is *para*, like "parallel." It is to call someone to come stand right next to you. It is a call for a response from you, that the goal preaching is not mere information, it is action, it is transformation. And that is what John is doing here.

And this word for "exhortation," it means to call to come to one's side. It means to summon, to entreat, to beseech, to admonish, to warn, to plead, to urge. That's what the preacher does. The preacher will not let you just sit there and not respond to the truth that is being presented. The preacher brings you to a fork in the road and you must decide which way will you go. And he makes it black and white, that if you choose to go this way, this is what'll happen with your life; and if you go this way, this is where it will lead. And he pleads with people to follow the truth of the word of God. He is a persuader. And that is what John is doing here. He is a preacher of the word.

And it says, "So with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people." Now, that's very important: "He preached the gospel." The word "gospel" simply means good news. It is the good news, the salvation that is in God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ, it is the provision of forgiveness of sin, and it is the provision of the righteousness of Christ given to those who believe. And so John is preaching this good news.

Now, this verse is very important because I want you to see that John, he's very well-balanced as a preacher. He preaches both the good news and the bad news. And let me just say there is no good news until you know what the bad news is. It is the bad news that makes the good news great news. And let your eye just flow through this section of Luke 3, and I want you to see how well-balanced John is.

In verse 3, he has good news: the forgiveness of sins. In verse 6, he has more good news: the salvation of God. But in verse 7, he has bad news: the wrath of God. And in verse 9, he has more bad news: that those who do not repent will be thrown into the fire. And in verse 17, he has more bad news: he speaks of the unquenchable fire of hell. But now in verse 18, he comes back to the good news, which is the gospel, preaching the gospel. That's good news.

And so when you add this up – what I just walked us through – it's actually three lines are good news and three lines are bad news. That's the

way we need to witness to others. That's the way we need to present Christ to others, as God opens the opportunity. It's not just all good news that we have, we have bad news to present. That makes the good news all the sweeter. And so as you find yourself presenting Christ in witnessing opportunities, you've got to tell the whole truth. You've got to tell people not only how to go to heaven, but if they do not repent, they're going to hell. We have to tell people both salvation and damnation. We have to tell people both forgiveness of sin and the fires of hell. And so John really provides us with the example that we need in his own preaching ministry.

And so I just need to ask you the question, as you have opportunity to tell others about Christ. It may be a family member. It may be a work associate. It may be someone that you go to school with. Do you tell the whole story? Do you present the full counsel of God? Do you tell people both the good news and the bad news? I think reasons some people who think they are saved but are not is because they've never been told the whole story. So this passage begins here with the proclamation by John.

This leads, second, to the persecution by Herod. It's in verses 19 and 20. And as I've already told you, these two verses really need to be fast-forwarded and placed in months later in the timeline of the public ministry of Christ. But Luke wants us to see it now because he wants us to understand that as we are a witness for Christ and as we talk to other people about the Lord, we can expect some blowback. We can expect some pushback, just like John is receiving here.

So, look at verse 19. This is what's coming around the corner for John. "But when Herod the tetrarch" – let me stop there. A tetrarch as a governor of a fourth of the region. In Herod's case here, he is the governor of Galilee and Perea. Interesting because Jesus is from Galilee and John the Baptist is from Perea, and so Herod is very closely connected to both of them politically. And so, "When Herod the tetrarch was reprimanded by him," – the him, of course, refers to John the Baptist, and what this says is that John confronted the governor about his sin. He confronted him straight on. John the Baptist was not PC, he was not politically correct. He spoke the truth no matter what the consequences would be for him personally.

And this word "reprimanded" is a very strong word. I looked up all of its uses in the New Testament and I preached out of the New American standard and saw all the different ways that this one Greek word that's used here for "reprimanded" is translated. And it's a word that is – it's a challenge to get your arms all the way around this word that you see here, "reprimanded," but I'm going to give you the words how it's translated in other passages: reprov'd, rebuked, convicted, exposed, shown his faults, refuted. That's what John the Baptist is doing to the governor. And as it says, "was reprimanded," you just need to know this: it's in the present tense which indicates that it wasn't just a one-time reprimand, that it was an ongoing series of reprimands again and again and again that John was fearlessly and courageously confronting Herod about.

And you may say, "So, what was the sin?" Well, keep reading in verse 19, "because of Herodias, his brother's wife." This turns into a soap opera, to put it kindly. Herodias is married to his brother's wife, and Herod convinces her to divorce his brother to marry him, and she convinces him (meaning Herod) to divorce his wife so that the two can now be married. But to make this even worse is that Herodias is the niece of both men. And so it's an uncle and a niece who had been married, there's a divorce, and the niece now marries the other uncle. It is just all but incest on the inside here.

And so this really has stirred the blood of John the Baptist and he cannot let this have a free pass. And so he begins to speak out boldly to the governor and, no doubt, boldly in public. And then we read, "and because of all the wicked things which Herod had done," that's just a summary statement of all the other trash that Herod is involved in. And let me just say this. Sin never travels alone. One sin always leads to ten sins. One sin always leads to twenty other sins. Once sin never is isolated by itself. And so that's what's going on here with Herod, and so John the Baptist is confronting him about all this other sin as well.

John the Baptist was like another John in church history: John Knox, John Knox who was the great Scottish Reformer of the 1500s. And he was a powerhouse of a preacher, and he confronted the Queen of Scotland

multiple times in her palace. And John Knox was known for being so outspokenly bold, and he said, "I've learned plainly and boldly to call wickedness by its terms. I call a fig a fig and a spade a spade." And by that he means, "I call sin, sin." I don't downgrade it with softer words."

Well, he has charged the governor living in sin. And so, verse 20, this didn't sit well with Herod. "Herod also added this to them all," - meaning he now adds the sin that's recorded at the end of verse 20 to this other stockpile of sins in verse 19, and this additional sin now that Herod commits is - "he locked John up in prison." That was his way of dealing with sin. Rather than repenting of sin, he goes after the one who is accusing him of sin; and because he refused to repent, he had John arrested, he had John thrown into prison - and that will take place around the corner in just a couple of months. But Luke wants us to know right here, right now that there was no hesitation on John's part to preach the truth, and he was willing to suffer for the truth, and mainly because this marriage is wrong. This marriage is wrong.

Now, this may be the right time for me to bring this up. There's been a lot of talk recently about whether a Christian should attend a homosexual marriage. And there's been a lot of talk recently about whether a Christian should attend a transgender wedding; and should they bring a gift to the wedding so that they would appear to be compassionate and loving? And I want you to know that the answer is absolutely no. You have no business being there because it is a travesty, it is a blasphemy, it is an abomination. It is not to be supported. It is not to be celebrated. It is to be repudiated and it is to be exposed. And by attending, you are celebrating this union, and you cannot celebrate blatant, gross sin of the highest order.

Adrian Rogers said years ago - and it needs to be heard again today; he's with the Lord now, "It is better to be divided by truth than to be united by error. It is better to speak the truth that hurts and then heals than to speak falsehood that comforts but then kills. It is not love and it is not friendship if we fail to declare the whole counsel of God. It is better to be hated for telling the truth than to be loved for telling a lie. It is better to stand alone with the truth than to be wrong with the multitude."

Let us not forget that marriage is not the product of culture or society, it is not the result of man's thinking, that it is God and God alone in His infinite wisdom who has designed marriage. And there is the sanctity of marriage entering into a holy union, and those who are unholy are to be reprov'd for entering into that which God has made holy. And so by even attending, much less even bringing a gift, you are giving your endorsement of approval of what is taking place. This lines up perfect with what John is doing here. He is telling the governor, "This is sin, and this is wrong," and it would cost John, literally, his head.

Herodias, this little, innocent woman - I say this sarcastically: she's a jezebel, she's a devil with a blue dress on - to quote the great theologian Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels. She goes to her new husband and says, "You know, I don't like what John has been preaching. He's been calling us living in sin. So here's what I want. I want you to have him be headed, and I want his head on a silver platter and I want it to be brought into the palace." You can read about it in Mark 6:14-29. And so weak person that Herod is, he buckles to his niece-wife and gives the executioner the order to cut off the head of John the Baptist, and it was brought into the palace, literally, on a plate. No. One sin never travels alone, it always travels like snakes, with other sins.

Well, this leads us now to verse 21. And the third thing I want you to see here is, "The immersion of Jesus." We're seeing the proclamation of John, we've seen the persecution by Herod, and now I want you to see the immersion of Jesus. And verse 21 actually follows immediately after verse 18, you just need to know that. And so as John is in the wilderness. He's preaching, the people are flooding out to hear him, and many people, countless people, are repenting of their sin. They're getting right with God, they're entering into the kingdom of heaven. And so they are coming out to be baptized as a public, outward confession of their commitment to enter into the kingdom.

And so we read in verse 21, "Now when all the people were baptized," we don't know how many people, but it was an enormously large group. I mean,

this is, in a very real sense, a revival that is taking place here, as countless people are repenting of their sin and receiving the forgiveness of God, and they're stepping forward now to be baptized. And John is out in the River Jordan so that he can baptize these who are coming, and they wade out into the water, and they will now be placed under the water and brought back up as recognition of they have received the forgiveness of sins. Now, to be very clear, baptism doesn't save anyone, it's only the outward sign of the inward reality in the heart. One little boy came to his pastor. He wanted to be baptized and he said, "Pastor, I want to be advertised." And so that's what it is to be baptized, you're just being advertised.

And all of these people – and we read, "Jesus was also baptized." He got in line. And this was a very significant moment, those four words: "Jesus was also baptized." This is the first step into the spotlight of His public ministry. This is the first time now for Him to go public and for the watching eyes of the nation to be locked in on Him, and He will be the focus for the next three-plus years. And so as He steps out of the shadows and into the spotlight, it begins with Him being baptized.

Now, this initially seems strange. It raises questions in our minds, does it not, Jesus being baptized. Jesus has never sinned. Jesus is not a sinner. Jesus does not need to repent. Jesus does not need forgiveness of sin. So why is Jesus being baptized? And I think there's a two-fold answer. The first is that Jesus, as He now begins His public ministry, He's identifying with sinners. He is identifying with those He has come to save. And this was an act of solidarity with them. Just as Adam was the federal head of the entire human race and the one man now acts on behalf of all, there is the solidarity between Adam and the whole human race. And Christ too is a federal head of His people, the elect of God. And as He now steps into the waters of Jordan to be baptized, it is as though He is stepping into our shoes, because He will be the one who will fulfill all righteousness for us.

In fact, in Matthew's version of this, in Matthew 3:15, it says that "Jesus was baptized in order to fulfill all righteousness," which is to say He must live in perfect obedience to the law of God the entirety of His life, and that it would be His perfect obedience to the law of God that would secure

perfect righteousness that is credited to our account as though you and I have lived in perfect obedience to the law of God, which we never have. But not only did Jesus die for us, He also lived for us, and it was His, what theologians call, His active obedience to the law that is given to us, that righteousness; and this baptism is the first step in that regard, at least as it relates to His public ministry.

And then the second reason is that this was a foreshadowing of the cross, as He will become sin for us and He will bear our sins in His body upon the tree. Second Corinthians 5:21, "He" - God the Father - "made Him" - God the Son - "who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." So Jesus now steps forward to be baptized as He is identifying Himself with you and with me under the law to carry out perfect righteousness on our behalf.

Now, in an argument from the greater to the lesser, if Jesus needed to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness, then you and I certainly need to be baptized. If Jesus was baptized in order to be identified with you, then you need to be baptized as a believer in order to be identified with Him. The New Testament knows nothing of an unbaptized believer in Jesus Christ.

And so this is a good time for me just to ask you this question: Have you been baptized as a believer in Jesus Christ? And if not, you need to be advertised. I mean, you need to have a billboard out on Central Expressway, and we'll bring some water out to you, and just so that everyone knows in the manner by which the Scripture has laid out, that you let others know that you are a true follower of Jesus Christ. And so if you've not been baptized, I want to encourage you to do so.

Do you have to be baptized to go to heaven? No. The thief on the cross was not baptized. Do you have to be baptized in order to be obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ? And the answer is yes, and because we are commanded to be baptized as a believer in Jesus Christ. And so if you've never been baptized, don't prolong it; never been baptized as a Christian, as a believer, do not prolong it. I would urge you to talk to one of our elders. I would urge you

to send an email to the church office. Somehow let us know that you would like to follow the example of the Lord here to be baptized. I mean, for heaven sakes, if He was baptized, what does that say about you? It says volumes that you need to be baptized as well. Well, point made.

Let's continue here to the middle of verse 21. The fourth thing that I want you to see, as we just walk our way through this passage is, "The possession of the Spirit." "And while He was praying," – this takes place after He was baptized, after He comes up out of the water. Jesus is now praying. And I must tell you that Luke makes this repeated emphasis upon the prayer life of the Lord Jesus Christ, more than Matthew, Mark, or John, and it is to show that Jesus was the perfect man to a Greek audience. And the perfect man would certainly be a man who lives in humble dependence upon God and is always in prayer.

And so we're not surprised to see this, that "while He was praying." This word for "praying," by the way, deserves a comment. It's a compound word that Luke used when he wrote this. And the main root word means to pray. But there's a prefix that's put in front of it that means face-to-face. And it means that He was face-to-face with the Father, that He was drawing near to the Father, and, as it were, in the immediate presence with communion with the Father, He's praying.

And the next three words, "heaven was opened." I think there's a cause and effect going on here, that when He prays, heaven opens up. And the same is true in your life and in my life. I'm sure that we discount what a powerful force prayer is. There's a real sense in which prayer does not change things. God changes things, but it is prayer that gets the attention of God. And when we pray, heaven opens, and heaven hears, and heaven responds.

In fact, if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, your every prayer is answered. Do you know that? You have no unanswered prayers. God answers either yes, no, or wait, but there are no unanswered prayers. Prayer gets the attention of God. God is a prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God, and Jesus is setting the example for us.

So, "He prays and heaven opens up," - as it were, the door leading into the inner chamber of heaven's palace is opened. It swung open and the skies rent and the clouds are parted - "and the Holy Spirit" - it says - "descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove." This is an extraordinary moment. "The Holy Spirit" - the third Person of the Trinity - "descended upon Him" - Jesus - "in bodily form." This is what we call a theophany. A theophany means the appearance of God - God who is invisible, God who is a spirit being, God who has no physical bodily parts, God who is invisible to human eyes.

There are times in the Bible when God assumes a bodily form. We saw that in Genesis, if you'll recall, the theophanies there and Christophany of God appearing as the Angel of the Lord. But that's Angel (capital A) and addressed as Lord, and God making a special appearance. And even Jesus' incarnation, if you will, is a theophany, as Jesus Christ Himself was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, and took upon Himself a human body, and now assumes a physical form that He did not previously have.

And now here's this theophany with the Holy Spirit: bodily form. It's not some mystical experience. It's not some existential experience. There is an objective reality to this as the Holy Spirit now descends in a physical, visible form, it says, "like a dove." It's not a dove. And I know all of our kids coloring books on this has a dove. It's not a dove. It's not a dove. And churches that have logos with a dove in it; it's not a dove. It's not a dove. It's like a dove. And the indication is that it's sailing through space and sailing through the air like a dove. And whatever this physical form is we're not told because we don't need to. The emphasis is not on like a dove, the emphasis is upon the Holy Spirit upon Jesus.

And so, what was the purpose of this? I mean, what's going on here? Isn't Jesus the Son of God? Isn't He truly God, eternal God? Didn't He create everything out of nothing? Didn't He speak the universe into existence? Is He not omnipotent?

What is the Holy Spirit upon Him? Why does He need the Holy Spirit when they are co-equal and co-eternal within the Trinity? Well, the answer is Jesus in His incarnation – you understand incarnation. That means in His virgin birth, assuming a human body and a human soul and a human mind and a human will. As He lived His life here upon the earth, He was the God-man – fully God, fully man. Not half God, half man: 100 percent God, 100 percent man.

And as He was here, He chose to voluntarily not use His prerogatives as God, and instead, He never gave up any deity, He just voluntarily chose not to use and operate in all of His deity. He chose to operate in sinless humanity. Okay? And so in His sinless humanity, He grew weary and asked for a glass of water from the Samaritan woman. He grew hungry. He grew tired. He slept in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. He was just like you and me. He was met with temptation. He was met with pressure on every side. In His sinless humanity. Jesus needed to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, just like you and I need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. He's showing us how to live. He's showing us how to walk by the example of His life.

And in His humanity the Holy Spirit descended upon Him and anointed Him – to use the biblical word – with the power of the Holy Spirit, such that Jesus performed miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus resisted temptation by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had extraordinary recall of Scripture as He preached by the Holy Spirit. And when Jesus went to the cross, He was held fast with unwavering resolution by the Holy Spirit who was empowering Him and enabling Him in His sinless humanity. And I want to show you this because this should encourage us how much we need the Holy Spirit in our Christian lives.

Listen to this. The Christian life's not hard, it's impossible. I can't live it, you can't live it. I can't do anything in the Christian life apart from the Holy Spirit. I can't even put one foot in front of the other to pursue the will of God in my own strength. In every moment of every day, I'm either walking according to the flesh or I'm walking according to the Spirit, there's not a third option. And so I must be walking according to the Holy Spirit to do what God is calling me to do. He is all-sufficient for everything

you're called to do. Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

But let me just show you this very quickly, not to get ahead of ourselves, but in a couple of weeks we'll be looking at this. In Luke 4:1, "After the Holy Spirit has descended upon Him in the River Jordan," - verse 1 - "Jesus full of the Holy Spirit," and this word "full," *plérés*, it means He is possessed by the Spirit, He is empowered by the Spirit, He is enabled by the Spirit, He is governed by the Spirit. He's full of the Spirit, returned from the Jordan. That's where we just left Him at His baptism, note, "and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness." Jesus is being guided and directed by the Holy Spirit where He is to go and when He is to be there.

And then he responds to the devil's attacks on Him in verse 3 and following, "If You're the Son of God, cause these stones that turn to bread." And what does He do? He quotes Deuteronomy 8:3, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." It's the Holy Spirit who is enabling Him to have this recall of Scripture that He has memorized and meditated upon. And then we come down to verse 14, after the temptation account is over, "Jesus returned to Galilee" - look at this - "in the power of the Spirit." It was the Holy Spirit that endued Him with spiritual might to carry out His life in ministry. We can relate to this, can we not?

And then look at verse 18. He goes back to Nazareth in Galilee, He goes into synagogue, He comes as a traveling rabbi, and He is allowed to speak. He asks for the scroll of Isaiah the prophet. He unrolls the scroll of Isaiah the prophet to what is for us Isaiah 61:1, and Jesus reads it. Here it is in verse 18: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor."

Kings were anointed, priests were anointed. They would pour a perfume and with oil upon their head and it would just flow down the whole of their body, and it sent off a sweet-smelling aroma, and it's signified the ministry of the Holy Spirit upon the king of Israel and upon the high priest of Israel.

And so it really symbolized the power of the Holy Spirit upon the king or upon the priest. Well, here's its ultimate fulfillment in the King of kings, our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, verse 18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." He closed the book, verse 21, and said, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your ears." Jesus had to be anointed with the Holy Spirit to be empowered in His humanity to carry out His saving enterprise here upon the earth.

Now, let me make this application for your life, and I've already said it. But, again, in an argument from the greater to the lesser, if the greater is true, then obviously the lesser will be true. If Jesus Christ, the greater, had to be filled with the Holy Spirit to live His life on this earth and to do the will of His Father and to do the work that was assigned to Him to do, if Jesus needed the Holy Spirit, how much more do you and I need the Holy Spirit every moment of every day to go to work, to go home, go to school, to go to church?

Ephesians 5:18, "Be filled with the Spirit." Ephesians 4:30, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit." First Thessalonians 5:19, "Do not quench the Holy Spirit." Every moment of every day, you are either trusting in yourself or trusting in God and His working by His Spirit. These are mutually exclusive, never mutually inclusive. It's either/or, not both/and. Galatians 5:16 says, "Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh." Jesus has set the example for us. You and I need to be consciously aware of how much we need to be filled with the Spirit.

The last thing that I want you to see is the end of verse 22, really, in the middle of it: "The affirmation of the Father." And so to close out this baptismal scene, in the middle of verse 22 there's "and." So there's more, "and a voice came out of heaven." The word "voice" in the Greek is *phónē*. It comes in the English language as "phone." There's an audible voice,

there's audible speech that comes out of heaven, because heaven is opened up, and God upon His throne is now speaking down into this world with an audible voice. I mean, this is a theophany in the sense of an audio appearance of God.

And God says, "You are My beloved Son, My deeply loved Son," and the reason for this is to affirm and to encourage the Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity who was made the difficult decision but the necessary decision to leave the palaces of glory where He has been the object of the angels' worship for centuries, going back to the creation of the world, where He has been served by ministering spirits, and now leave His throne and to come down into this world of woe, into this cesspool of iniquity, to be born in an animal stall, to take the form of a bond servant, to take the form of a slave, to live in obscurity, and to now step into the spotlight, knowing it will be an uphill climb all the way to Calvary as an affirmation of His Son, He says for all to hear: "You are My beloved Son. Well done, My beloved Son. You have obeyed Me. You have submitted to Me. You are doing the will that I've laid out for You." And there's something for us to learn here. We must be pleasing to God; and what pleases God is our obedience from the heart, our submission to His will, our commitment to do His work.

And then He concludes by saying, "In You I am well-pleased." I can't conclude without telling you that this one verse, verse 22, this one verse may be your go-to verse when you're asked to prove the Trinity. When someone comes knocking on your door who's from one of these fowl cults and they want to tell you there's only one God and one person. There was an ancient heresy known as modalism that said there's only one God and one person and he changes roles depending upon the circumstance and the situation. Just like for me, I'm just one person. I'm a husband, I'm a father, I'm a preacher - different roles, but just one person. No, that's heresy.

The Bible so clearly teaches that there's one God who exists in three Persons, three distinct Persons. And we see right here all three in one verse. We see the Son submitting, we see the Spirit strengthening, we see the Father speaking. It's all here in one verse. And so this combats ancient heresies that are still with us to this day. The Father is in heaven speaking,

the Spirit descends like a dove, and the Son is standing in the Jordan River, and the Spirit anoints Him. Clearly we see the doctrine of the Trinity.

And by the way, that's why when we baptize, we baptize – Matthew 28:19 – in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. It's a statement of our Trinitarian orthodoxy. And the reason we do all three names is because all three Persons are a Savior. God the Father is a Savior. He chose us an eternity past before the foundation of the world. And with His genius, He designed the Gospel message, and He has commissioned His Son to come into this world. God the Son is a Savior, John 4:42, "He the Savior of the world." By a sinless life, substitutionary death, He has secured salvation for His people.

But God the Holy Spirit is also a Savior, and God the Holy Spirit is the one who has convicted us of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He's the one who has drawn us to Christ. He is the one who has regenerated us and birthed us into the kingdom. He's the one who gave us the gifts of repentance and faith. If it hadn't been for the Holy Spirit, none of us would have ever been saved. If it wasn't for God the Father, none of us would ever be saved. If it wasn't for God the Son, none of us would ever be saved. So that is why we baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, because they work together in perfect unity.

Well, I need to bring this to conclusion. And we have just seen the turning point in the lives of John and Jesus. John is stepping off, Jesus is stepping in. John is decreasing, Jesus is increasing. Let me finish this by telling you this. There has to be a turning point in your life. There has to be a time in your life where you decrease and where God increases. It's known as conversion. It's known as repentance, a turning point.

And so as you look at your life, as you look back over your shoulder into the past, when was your turning point? When were you converted to Christ? It's not walking forward at the end of a church service that really means that was a turning point. In fact, it's a turning around and going in another direction that marks your conversion. Now, you could have been converted

when you walked forward someplace, but that in and of itself did not convert you. It's what was in the heart, what was going on in your heart.

So as you look at your life, and as I bring this to close, when was your turning point? That's when you were converted. And I've heard so many times people tell me, "Yeah, I walked an aisle when I was nine years old and then I joined the whatever group when I was sixteen. And then I went off to college and lived like the devil, and got married and we didn't ever come to church. And then finally we had a child and we thought we'd better start coming to church. And so, Pastor, when was I converted?" You were converted when you turned around. And if you continued to go down the same path, you were not converted.

And so, when was your turning point? When did you die to self so that Christ could live? When did you decrease? When did He come on the scene and increase? If that's never happened in your life, today could be the greatest day in your life, simply a matter of in your heart you repenting of your sin and receiving the forgiveness of God and the salvation that He alone can give. But the only way you can have it, you've got to turn around. You've been going, according to the course of this world, towards eternal destruction. You've got to turn around and you've got a head in a new direction. You've got a head towards heaven and glory, and it's on a narrow path.

When did your life change? That will tell you when you were converted. May God give you much insight into your own life and into your own soul because you cannot afford to be wrong about this. Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father in heaven, thank You for this passage, for the boldness of John, for the baptism of Jesus, for the power of the Holy Spirit, for the affirmation of the Father. Father, we're so grateful for all of this. I pray that You would bless everyone here today, that You would have a great effect in their soul as they walk back to their car, that today has been a life-changing day. Make one more deposit and installment in every life here

today that will lead to greater godliness and personal holiness. Father, we pray this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. God bless you.