

Epiphany on the Mount

Sermon Series for the Season of Epiphany



SERMON INFO

TITLE

Baptism and Temptation

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Isaiah 42:1-9

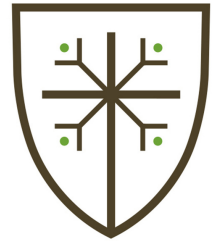
Acts 10:34, 37-43

Matthew 3:13, 16 - 4:11

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Satan, the Splitter, work to sow the seeds of doubt in our hearts? Are there areas of your life where doubt has taken root?
2. In the world today we are saturated with messages about finding our own identity. How do we remember, as Jesus did in the face of temptation, the identity given us by the Father?

SERMON NOTES



January 8, 2023

SERMON IN SUMMARY

The word “epiphany” means “to reveal or make known” and throughout the Season of Epiphany we seek to see Jesus more clearly. We all need epiphanies in life – moments that startle us into truths to which we’d previously been blind. But we especially need epiphanies about God. All the Gospels start with this Epiphany – the Baptism of Jesus at which his identity as the Son of God is revealed. And right on the heels of this epiphany is always Jesus’ temptation, throwing doubt on that identity.

Point One: Our Doubt

The pattern of God’s action and Satan’s response is all throughout Scripture. Satan always immediately seeks to undo what God has done. His name can literally be translated as “the splitter” – seeking to split us apart from what God says and what he does. In the temptation, Satan tries to get Jesus to doubt what God says at his baptism. “You are my beloved Son.” “If you’re really the Son of God...” We all know what it is like to have the seeds of doubt sown in our hearts, to ask “where is God?” or “did God really say?” And, like he does with Jesus, Satan, “the Splitter,” attempts to undo what God has done. He tries to get Jesus to seek, as Abraham did, to fulfill God’s promises in his own time and his own way. Satan, the Tempter, the Splitter, turns us inward. It’s all about me. And the main thing in doubt, the main question of Jesus’ temptation, is who he is. What is his identity and is it really what God says?

Point Two: Our Identity

Tim Keller says that identity is comprised of two things: a sense of self and a sense of worth. A sense of self means that everything you do is connected to a “durable core” – the thing around which everything else revolves. And a sense of worth is that feeling that you matter. In our Gospel readings, Jesus’ identity is given to him. It is bestowed upon him by the Father at his baptism. In most traditional cultures, identity was something given to an individual. But in our culture of “modern expressive individualism” (Charles Taylor via Carl Trueman) identity is found by a person. It’s all about you and no one else. Henri Nouwen states that the Satanic alternatives to our identity center around three things: 1. What we do. 2. What other say about us. And 3. What you have.

If you think that is who you are, you will destroy everything and everyone else for them. In Christ, we are given a new identity, one that is bestowed on us not found by us, and that isn’t based on anything we have or have not done. Jesus was raised from the dead to give you that new identity, the one God declared on him at his Baptism. In Christ, the Holy Spirit descends upon us and God declares us beloved children.