

## ***JUST LIKE JESUS***

### **Selected Passages**

**Intro:** The Brethren in Christ Ministers Manual is divided into sections. The first section is on worship which points to the importance that every Christ Follower, first and foremost, must be a worshipper of the one true God. The second section is entitled, THE CHRISTIAN ORDINANCES, and it includes the two ordinances we practice as BIC which are Baptism and Communion. By the way, the section on Communion includes foot washing, which we do not practice nearly enough as it demonstrates our desire to be servants to one another. Baptism, of course, is very important for the Brethren in Christ – after all, we are Anabaptist, and many of our forefathers died because of the importance we placed on being baptized as believers and not as babies. Baptism is not something your parents do for you, it is something you freely receive in evidence of the work Christ has already done for you on the Cross. When Kylee and Mark McClintock are baptized today they are telling the world they are new creations in Christ.

Now, it's interesting, that the next section after ordinances is entitled MINISTRY AT SPECIAL TIMES. The order of the items in this section are very important. They are, in this order: Dedication of Children, Services of Marriage, and ending with, Funeral Services. I have told people that that order is the way it should be, you are dedicated by your parents to be godly people, then you, if called into a relationship with another godly person, are married, and what follows is a funeral. That's God's plan. A godly home, a godly marriage for life, and a funeral after a godly life.

Our morning has already begun with one of those practices: we dedicated four children and their parents to provide a godly home. After this service we will go outside and baptize two people. This is a morning of celebration!

But celebration doesn't come cheap. It also doesn't just happen – it takes preparation. In the few minutes we have left, I am going to look at several scripture passages that provide a basis and an inspiration – and point all Christ Followers to be Just Like Jesus.

First:

#### **A godly life requires keeping our promises to God and not taking his grace for granted**

- In Luke 2 we have recorded that Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple to present him to the Lord in obedience to the Law. Listen, *And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."* Luke 2:22-24 (ESV). We already know that both Mary and Joseph had encounters with God where they pledged willingness to participate in God's plan, not just for themselves, and their baby, but for all of humanity.
- They were not rich. In fact, they were quite poor. That is why they offered doves or pigeons for their sacrifice. But a sacrifice is just that, a SACRIFICE! And they obediently brought their little one for dedication. They kept their promise. God did too.
- Karen read from 1 Samuel where Hannah, whose very name, means God's favor, did not take God's favor for granted. She had promised her son would be dedicated to God and she kept the promise. She brought her long awaited son, Samuel, to the house of the Lord as she said she would.
- Not only that, she testified to the goodness of God in granting her her heart's desire – the joy of a child – when she had previously been barren. It was not lost on her that God had performed a miracle in her life and she made sure she honored God for it.
- Then she "lent" Samuel to the Lord. Yes, the little ones we dedicate to God are on permanent loan to the one who will not default on that loan. As we keep up our end of the bargain, God will make good use of our loan. Notice that the final words of Karen's reading were, *And he worshiped the Lord there.* 1 Samuel 1:28b. As we keep our promises at dedication, our little ones are far more likely to become worshippers of the living God in their own right.
- Notice what happened next for Jesus as you read further in Luke 2 (Read Luke 2:39-52)

**As parents dedicate their children they grow in favor with the Lord and with others**

- Mary and Joseph took Jesus along to the temple. This was no small task. Jerusalem was almost 70 miles of hard walking from Nazareth. But you don't leave the kids at home when you go to church. They need to be here. The example is huge. The opportunities are endless. And, the payoff is eternal.
- Now mind you, JESUS WAS NO ORDINARY KID! He was on a mission from the beginning of eternity, and certainly from the time of his earthly conception – but he was a 12 year old here, who was teaching the teachers.
- Not only that, he knew *must be in his Father's house*. (v. 49). Here's the thing: as you bring your kids here, they will more and more know they MUST be here. It's a must! Kathy and I always have had a rule in our home – we never crammed church or religion down our family's throat, but if you are under our roof, you go to church – no matter who you are or how old you are. It did no harm, and certainly, it seems to have been quite good. Parents, make your kids go to church.
- Finally . . .

**Exposure to the things of God are instrumental in a decision to fulfill all righteousness**

- Listen, *Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."* Luke 3:21-22 and, *Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."* Matthew 3:13-17. Can we do any less than be just like Jesus? The answer is no.
- Our dedication of these kids today is the first step in bringing them to the step of obedience that is baptism. I look forward to the day when I see the excitement of learning about Jesus all over the faces of these little ones as I did with the Vacation Bible School kids last week. One of the things we talked about at VBS was "God Sightings" where the kids were supposed to watch for God at work in their lives, in the lives, and in the world around them. They might have noticed the beauty of a butterfly. One little girl told me she had tubes put in her ears the day before and she prayed that God would help her to be brave, and he did! And then, this past Thursday, at his grandma's graveside, with a nasty storm looming close, Ben looked at me and said, "Hey Pastor, if we had a rainbow, that would be a God sighting for sure, right?" and I blessed the Lord for a young man who saw God in the storm.
- The result of such learning, as you pass it on to your kids is a decision to make Jesus the Lord of their life and baptism is the visible picture of that step. John the Baptist didn't think Jesus needed baptism as much as he needed baptized by Jesus – but Jesus had none of it – he lead by example and he obediently stepped into the baptismal waters. It's no wonder his Father proclaimed, *You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased*. And he will for your kids and he will for Kylee and Mark. As we obediently turn our lives over to the Master, we have affirmed that we too, are his beloved daughters and sons.

**Conclusion:** So the goal is and the message today is to be just like Jesus. Being a Christ Follower is a lifelong adventure that is 24/7. Yes, day in, day out, on Sundays and between Sundays. It begins with loved ones and a loving church family who dedicate a little one, through life, to the surrender of salvation to the obedience of baptism, to the celebration of a life well lived for the kingdom of God. Yes, JUST LIKE JESUS! Amen.