

## **BAPTISM OF THE LORD: Mark 1: 7-11**

**Humor:** Sam Houston was the first president of the Republic of Texas. It's said he was a rather nasty fellow with a checkered past. Later in life Houston made a commitment to Christ and was baptized in a river. The preacher said to him, "Sam, your sins are washed away." Houston replied, "God help the fish." Although most of us were not baptized as adults in a river, we can probably relate to this reply.

Back when the telegraph was the fastest means of long-distance communication, there was a story, perhaps just a legend, about a young man who applied for a job as a Morse code operator. Answering an ad in the newspaper, he went to the address that was listed. When he arrived, he entered a large, noisy office. In the background a telegraph clacked away. A sign on the receptionist's counter instructed job applicants to fill out a form and wait until they were summoned to enter the inner office.

The young man completed his form and sat down with seven other waiting applicants. After a few minutes, the young man stood up, crossed the room to the door of the inner office, and walked right in. Naturally the other applicants perked up, wondering what was going on. Why had this man been so bold? They muttered among themselves that they hadn't heard any summons yet. They took more than a little satisfaction in assuming the young man who went into the office would be reprimanded for his presumption and summarily disqualified for the job.

Within a few minutes the young man emerged from the inner office escorted by the interviewer, who announced to the other applicants, "Gentlemen, thank you very much for coming, but the job has been filled by this young man." The other applicants began grumbling to each other, and then one spoke up, "Wait a minute -- I don't understand. He was the last one to come in, and we never even got a chance to be interviewed. Yet he got the job. That's not fair."

The employer responded, "All the time you've been sitting here, the telegraph has been ticking out the following message in Morse code: `If you understand this message, then come right in. The job is yours.' None of you heard it or understood it. This young man did. So the job is his." Our livelihood, indeed, our life, depends upon our ability to discern the meaning of these words: "You are my child, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." We need to WHO we are.

Jesus told another story of a lost boy who wandered into a far country, {The Prodigal Son} and ended up slopping the hogs in some Gentile's pig-pen. And he ate the pods that the swine ate; (Luke 15:16)... He was lost, lonely, and afraid. But then he remembered that at home in his father's house there was warmth, music and joy.

And he came to his senses, remembered who he was, got up and went home. In His Baptism, God said to Jesus: "Thou are my beloved Son! With whom I am well pleased." In our Baptism, God says to us, "You are my dear sons and daughters....with whom I want to be well pleased. You are my dear children. Let's go forth and act like we are His Children. Let's remember who we are and Whose we are."

**Amen.**