

**Christ Community Covenant Church**  
**The Baptism of Christ: "Set aside" . . . but not like an old pair of boots.**  
**Pastor Dave Scherrer—October 19, 2014**

It was this time one year ago that we had just confirmed with the good people of Arvada Church of Christ that we wanted to buy this building. As two teams of elders we sat in one of our classrooms at 82<sup>nd</sup> and Simms. We prayed and agreed to a price and with a handshake we agreed to purchase this property for \$38 a square foot and offered back to Arvada Church of Christ that they could stay and worship here and get healthy. Done and Done. We had 120 days to secure funding, close on the deal, remodel the building for our ministry needs and be out of our old property by January 31. We completed the contract by mid-November, closed on December 22<sup>nd</sup> and began painting and making renovations December 23<sup>rd</sup>. We finished installing the computer and phone systems by January 15 and moved our offices while still worshiping in the old sanctuary. By January 30<sup>th</sup> we finished rewiring the worship center and installed the sound board. With a 48 hour extension given to us by APEX, on February 2<sup>nd</sup> we had our first worship service here. God is so good!

That was a great day in the life of our church. And this is a great day in the life of our church as well. Today we will finish the journey from there to here by setting this building aside for the purposes of Christ. We will dedicate this space to the will and way of God. In here and from here the Kingdom of God will be advance and the glory of God will be our only hope.

Today we will '*set aside*' this space and really more correctly, God will set this space aside. Only God can dedicate a building to himself or a person to his purposes. Our job is to simply yield to His purposes. Today we do that; we will yield. We obey the will and command of our Lord and King, even as Jesus obeyed His Father and yielded to His perfect will.

Jesus said in John 6, ***"I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."*** His whole life was devoted to obeying his Father; yet it was not always easy for him. As we will see in a moment from our text, Jesus was tempted in all ways as humanity has been. Jesus told His disciples (John 5:19), ***"I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."*** In the Garden of Gethsemane he prayed to his Father, asking if he might avoid the agony he was enduring and the suffering to come on the cross. Then he ended his prayer by saying, ***"Not my will, but thine."*** Now in Mark 1 we see that He began His ministry obeying His Father as he commanded Jesus to be set aside or dedicated to the purposes of the Father. Let's read about it in **Mark 1:9-13:**

**Mark 1:9-13**

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

<sup>12</sup> The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup> And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

**Illustration: 'set aside boots'**

**What is happening in the baptism of Jesus is not what is happening in our baptism**

Being clean or set aside for the purposes of God was important to the Jewish people during the temple days. It was a regular practice for the people to wash themselves in a mikveh before certain acts of worship as an act of ceremonial cleansing, especially before going to the local synagogue or the temple in Jerusalem. But it was more than that. Some homes, especially the more wealthy homes had these private ceremonial washing mikvehs. You had to be wealthy if you wanted a mikveh in your home because the mikveh was to be fed by what they called 'living water' or flowing water. The law required every person

inside the Temple grounds to be in a spiritually pure state appropriate to the pristine spirituality of the Sanctuary itself.

### **Mikveh**

Susan and I saw the excavation of the Essene community at Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found and there the practice of mikveh was more common than that of the Pharisees or Sadducees.



Qumran



Qumran



Pool of Shilom

John the Baptist, who perhaps spent time with the Essenes went to the Jordan River to call the people not just to a temporary or ceremonial purity but to a lifetime of devotion to God by repentance.

Today the sacramental act of baptism on the part of the new Christ Follower, has this same kind of more substantial meaning.

### ***Three meanings to the sacrament of baptism***

- 1. Dying to sin and self and instead alive to Christ***
- 2. Washed clean from the consequence of sin***
- 3. Identifying with Christ and His death and resurrection***

So if repentance was associated with the forgiveness of sins, and Christ never sinned, why did Christ need to be baptized? First because the Father asked him to and God was well pleased with the obedience of His Son! Secondly, as Jesus was being set aside for ministry in this act of obedience, he was identifying with us,

### ***Christ identifying with humanity***

Jesus the friend of sinners.

Just as we . . . so he too was identifying with someone, but his someone was us. He came up dripping with humanity.

**Mark 1:12-13**

The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup> And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

This too was part of Jesus' preparation for ministry. He was being set aside for ministry through testing and by being obedient in temptation. The writer of Hebrews made it so clear;

**Hebrews 4:15**

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

If you have made a decision to be a Christ Follower and to depend on Him alone for your purposes and for your salvation hope then you too have been set aside for God. So what does it mean for a person to be set aside?

**What does it mean to be "set-aside?"**

Throughout the years Christ Followers have been pretty confused by this notion turning to all kinds of false rituals and even self-imposed physical punishments. But he is clear on how we are to consider ourselves set aside:

**Romans 12:2**

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

**1 Peter 2:9**

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

**John 17:15-18**

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

**Romans 12:1**

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

**1 Corinthians 6:19**

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,

**Galatians 2:20**

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Here is a good way to think of it . . .

**We are set aside to be "in Christ" and "of Christ."**

To be 'In Christ' means to find our direction and hope and purpose in Him. But it is even more than that, it is to find our very life in Him. Perhaps you remember the famous teaching of Jesus on the night that he was betrayed in the upper room with the disciples. Read from *The Message*;

**John 15:1-8**

<sup>1-3</sup> "I am the Real Vine and my Father is the Farmer. He cuts off every branch of me that doesn't bear grapes. And every branch that is grape-bearing he prunes back so it will bear even more. You are already pruned back by the message I have spoken.

<sup>4</sup> "Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can't bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can't bear fruit unless you are joined with me.

<sup>5-8</sup> "I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing. Anyone who separates from me is deadwood, gathered up and thrown on the bonfire. But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples.

But to be in Christ is only half of the good news of Christ, not only are we set aside to be with Christ but we are also set to be "Of Christ." I want to give you hope this morning, you matter. You and your life and your ministry matters, in an ever-living, never-dying kind of way. God wants for you to enjoy the joy of knowing that your words and deeds make an eternal difference and that your steps are measured for His purposes and not your own:

**Ephesians 2:8-10**

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Christ was set aside, we are set aside, soon our building will be dedicated or set aside . . . What does that all mean? It means that we are all together about a fresh bold mission.

***To love God, Love others and advance the Kingdom together***

And that means to pursue Christ and his priorities in the world, each of us . . . together . . . in and from this wonderful new church home.

***Pursuing Christ and His priorities in the world***

***Prayer***