

The chaos of the last few days to remember who we are. Our identity is rooted in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our Gospel reading appointed for today is from the Gospel according to Mark 1 beginning in verse 1. We hear who John is and what happens to Jesus.

We have a whole lot of detail about who John is and what John is doing. He is known far and wide for baptizing and for calling for the confession & repentance of sin. This is how the Gospel of Mark begins. It begins knowing we live in a broken world and we are broken people. But that is not the end of the story. In fact that is where the story begins. We begin with John because in this time he was well known. John was not a mystery to those who would've first heard the Gospel of Mark. Jesus was much more of a mystery. So what is it that they hear about Jesus from the very first public experience? That the heavens open and a voice speaks, you are my beloved, this is my son, my child, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased. Think about that for a second. The first words used to describe or explain Jesus' identity are words of love, claim and proud.

Throughout Jesus ministry, we are also called children of God. In fact, through Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection, that we, you & me can have those very same things said about us. You,

my child; you, my son; you, my daughter are mine, my beloved and with you I am well pleased.

When I remind my children who they are and whose they are that I want them to stop and think, before they say or do anything else that they are loved. Loved, not just by Mom and Dad but by God and the community of faith. This is especially important for us in the midst of the upheaval we have experienced in the last year. Before we say or do anything else, that we are God's children, disciples of Jesus Christ. To be a disciple is to be loved by God and that God calls us to do two things. First, to love God with all of our heart, our mind, our soul and our strength. The second is to love our neighbor as ourself. Everything flows through the love God has for us and in turn have for God and each other. This Sunday, we have the opportunity to renew our baptismal covenant with God and each other. We get to promise again, to God and each that we will live faithfully into our covenant. In the name of the Father, the Son & the Holy Spirit. Amen.