Doing and Saying – a Christian Pilgrimage

## *Whose are you – Week 27*

*Identity*

## Day 182: Baptism Prep Day 7

*Whose am I? I am my own person! I do not belong to anyone or anything other than myself.*

To what state has God actually called us? All of us? We are free – free from the power of sin in all its forms and demands, free from the expectations of our culture, free from fear, free from subservience to human injustice. And we are slaves – bound to a God who redeems us from our former slavery, makes us his children, calls us no longer his servants but his friends, whose law of love supersedes any and every human law, who makes slave and freeman, Jew and Gentile, male and female all one in Christ. What binds us to him is not law, fear or obligation, but love. *(credit: theStory Bible Guide, Scripture Union).*

*So you would say I'm a slave to God? I belong to God? And in belonging to God, I am paradoxically granted freedom? Even freedom of not obeying human law if it contradicts God's law?*

After being transformed by the Holy Spirit, you have the freedom of choosing the old way or the new – so where before you were a blind slave, now you choose what you serve – but you serve something, regardless. Your freedom is that you are now given the gift of being able to make choices in wisdom, rather than not having that opened up to you.

We are all a slave to something – we "belong" to something, whether we realize it or not. We belong to missing the mark (sin), or we belong to God. Just like day 151 illustrates.

Then Jesus said to those Judeans who had believed him, "If you continue to follow my teaching, you are really my disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." "We are descendants of Abraham," they replied, "and have never been anyone's slaves! How can you say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "I tell you the solemn truth, everyone who practices sin is a slave of sin. The slave does not remain in the family forever, but the son remains forever. So if the son sets you free, you will be really free."

In baptism, you are saying you belong to Christ. And Christ wraps his arms around you in love, and sets you free.

Whose are you?

Share your answers with others whom you trust.

## Day 183: Baptism Prep Day 8

So, what are you?

*I am God's Image.*

Whose are you?

*I am Christ's.*

You truly believe this?

*I believe it as much as I am able.  I still have lots of confusions and doubts.*

Then I think we are ready for baptism.  Welcome to the Temple of God.

Being God's representative as God's Image, and belonging to Christ, what do you truly wish for the world?

Share your answers with others whom you trust.

## Day 184: Baptism Prep Day 9

*Why did you want to firmly establish that when we started talking about money?*

Well, being God's Image and belonging to Christ, what do you want to do with your money?

*Truthfully? Pay my bills and have a few luxuries and enjoyments.*

Thank you for your honesty. What does God want you to do with it?

*Help his plan of changing people from the ways of the world to the Way of The Kingdom?*

I think so. How much money should you give for that, and how do you give it?

*Evidently in the Old Testament part of the bible the answer is "24%" and "to the church."*

That was the answer for them, yes.

How much money should you give to contribute to God's plan, and how should you give it?

Share your answers with others whom you trust

## Day 185: Baptism Prep Day 10

*What does the New Testament part of the bible say?*

Great question – the New Testament is filled with testimony and letters all revolving around the people of God trying to figure out what living in Christ's Country meant to them in their daily lives, just like we are trying to do. Here are some snippets:

Jesus said to (the rich man), "If you wish to be perfect, go sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box (at the Temple). He also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all offered their gifts out of their wealth. But she, out of her poverty, put in everything she had to live on."

(Jesus said) "Do not accumulate for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and devouring insect destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But accumulate for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and devouring insect do not destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

And the Apostle Paul wrote:

"Therefore I thought it necessary to urge these brothers to go to you in advance and to arrange ahead of time the generous contribution you had promised, so this may be ready as a generous gift and not as something you feel forced to do. My point is this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously. Each one of you should give just as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, because God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace overflow to you so that because you have enough of everything in every way at all times, you will overflow in every good work."

*So it doesn't give an amount, but argues that I should devote everything to God in a way?*

In a way, yes. The bottom line is perhaps covered by an instruction actually from the Old Testament:

Every one of you must give as you are able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that He has given you (Deuteronomy 16:17).

This is echoed by Paul in the New Testament, in his letter to the congregation at Corinth:

With regard to the collection for the saints, please follow the directions that I gave to the churches of Galatia: On the first day of the week, each of you should set aside some income and save it to the extent that God has blessed you… (1st Corinthians 16:1-2).

You are God's Image and belong to Christ. Everything you have is a gift from God. How much to contribute from what God has given you (including your money, your time, and your talents), and where you give it, are up to you.

Describe how this is not an easy answer but one which is an example of your freedom in Christ.

Share your description with others whom you trust.

## Day 186: Baptism Prep Day 11

So how do you live what is healthiest?

*As an Image of God, belonging to Christ, I pursue what is healthiest for myself mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually. That health involves pursuing what is healthiest for my neighbours in the same way. And, that health involves pursuing what is most pleasing for God – sustaining or even growing His Temple, aiming at His Way of Life, worshiping Him whole-heartedly and without reserve.*

Brilliant! In other words, love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and strength, and love your neighbour as you love yourself: this is the path to life. The tools you have to help you are the gifts which God has given you: your mind, your emotions, your strengths and abilities; the bible; the church; and most of all, the Holy Spirit.

*The Holy Spirit.*

Without God participating with us (i.e., the presence of His Spirit), we are dead, the bible is a dead book, the church is a dead organization. If you find participating in church, reading the bible, or even daily living to be deadening experiences, pray for the Holy Spirit, seek appropriate help, and try to change the situation so that it is filled with God. Reawaken your awe and gratitude. Remind yourself that you are loved beyond measure, and everyone else is too.

Write down your thoughts regarding Day 186.

Share your thoughts with others whom you trust.

## Day 187: Baptism Prep Day 12

I'd like to briefly go over the worship service we use in the Anglican church when baptising people. It consists of:

**the gathering of the community** – in every service, we gather and focus in so we can worship and listen to the Word of God.
**the proclamation of the word** – again in every service, we listen to the Word of God, read from the Bible.
**the presentation and examination of the candidates** – Baptism candidates or their sponsors are examined to be sure this is what they truly want. Prayers are offered for them and for those in need.
**thanksgiving over the water** – we thank God for water, the outward sign of the Holy Spirit about to immerse the candidate, and the community members renew their baptism covenant along with the candidate.
**the baptism** – the actual baptism itself
**the eucharist** – we then join in celebration as a community by reaffirming our one-ness with Christ, together.

### *How am I examined?*

With the following questions:
Question Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?

Question Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?

Question Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?

Question Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Saviour?

Question Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?

Question Do you promise to obey him as your Lord?

In your own words, explain your understanding of the above questions, and your answers in response.

Share your thoughts with those you trust.

## Day 188: Rest

We come again to the seventh day, so today we rest. Reflect on the past week and care for your needs (body and spirit). In the evening get together with a group you trust and share what you would like to from the previous week – good points, hard points, what you've learned, what you've struggled with, etc. Decide again if you wish to continue journeying together or want to stop.

Know that God loves you.