



MINISTRIES

A Ministry of the Athens Universal Life Church
Dr. Rob White – Senior Minister
<https://aulc.us>

Doing Little Things for God!

SERMON IN A SENTENCE: Just as it was important to Jesus for John the Baptist to be faithful to his calling, so it is also important to Jesus that we be faithful to ours.

Hello Friends! I am Doctor Rob White with the A U L C Ministries and I am happy that you could take a few minutes out of your busy day to spend with us today!

Have you ever been in a job for a few months and doing a great job and everything is going just right and then get confronted by someone who has been doing the same job far longer than you? They ask you to fill in for them or to do their job for a little while and you feel like you can never fill their shoes?

Today, we see this happen to John the Baptist when Jesus tells him that he must baptize Jesus!

Let's see how John comes out after Jesus arrives.

Our scripture lesson today comes from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter three, verses thirteen to seventeen.

Starting at verse thirteen:

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him.

But John tried to stop Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and yet You come to me?"

Jesus answered him, "Allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him to be baptized.

After Jesus was baptized, He went up immediately from the water. The heavens suddenly opened for Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on Him.

And there came a voice from heaven:

This is My beloved Son.
I take delight in Him!

May the Lord add His Blessing on the reading of His Word!

Jesus came to John the Baptist to be baptized, but John protested, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Imagine how John felt! John was a good man carrying out an important ministry, but who was he to be baptizing Jesus!

It reminds me of something that took place when I was young in ministry. I was serving as a LaySpeaker for a small United Methodist Church. A LaySpeaker is like an Associate Pastor, just not ordained or licensed in the Church. One day, the Senior Pastor came to me and told me that I would be preaching the sermon on the next Sunday due to him being out of town.

I was honored and yet terrified, because I had never stood behind the pulpit and preached a sermon before. I was pretty insecure about filling my duty to be a LaySpeaker. I knew that the United Methodist Conference used the Lectionary to pull scriptures from for the sermons to be preached, so I asked the Senior Pastor, "What should I be preaching on?".

He replied, "Whatever you want to!".

I had 7 days to prepare and I wanted it to go right, so I set out right away and started writing my sermon.

When the next Sunday arrived, it was July 5th and knowing this, I had written my sermon around the theme of Freedom and Independence. That Sunday morning, I nervously walked behind the pulpit and immediately, had a calm rush over me. God told me that this is where I was supposed to be!

That moment, I decided to answer my calling and become a Minister. Oh, and by the way, my sermon went very well and was well received by the congregation. Another sign that again, I was to answer my calling.

People in other professions experience the same kind of insecurity. I once read a book written by a surgeon. He told of the first time he held a scalpel against human flesh. He was too timid, and failed to break through the skin. The supervising surgeon shouted at him. Overcompensating, the young doctor cut too deeply. He feared that he had killed the patient, but the patient survived the surgery. When I read that story, I thought that it was a wonder that that doctor survived the training.

John the Baptist must have felt those same insecurities when Jesus came to him for baptism. Until Jesus arrived on the scene, John was doing great things! He was preaching up a storm, and people were coming to the desert in droves to hear him! He told people to repent, and they repented! He told people to confess their sins, and they confessed! He told them to be baptized, and they submitted themselves to be baptized! John the Baptist was Israel's first prophet in four hundred years, and the people could hardly get enough of him.

Then Jesus came for baptism, and John suddenly turned timid. Our text says, "John would have hindered him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me?'" John had spoken with great authority in his preaching, but when Jesus presented himself to be baptized, John was faced with real authority—the authority of the Son of God—and John scarcely knew what to do. His instinct was to do nothing! He wanted to stop the action! He wanted to hide! "I can't baptize you, Jesus! Please don't ask me! I'm not worthy!"

But Jesus answered, "**Allow it now, for this is the fitting way for us to fulfill all righteousness**" (verse 15 of our scripture text). What did that mean? I'm not sure that I fully understand, but we know this much. Jesus felt called to be baptized, and came to John to obey that call.

Jesus didn't need much from John. He just needed John to baptize him. John knew how to do that. He had been baptizing people by the dozens—by the hundreds. But when Jesus came for baptism, John suddenly balked. It wasn't that he had anything against Jesus—quite the contrary. John just didn't feel worthy to baptize Jesus. He had recognized from the beginning that Jesus was the Son of God.

If I had been in John's shoes, I would have felt unworthy too. If Jesus were to come to my office and ask to be baptized, I would think, "You've gotta be kidding!" Like John, I would say, "You don't need me! I need you! Won't you baptize me?"

But Jesus needed John to be faithful to his calling so that Jesus could be faithful to his calling. He didn't need John to be perfect. He didn't need John to be better than he was. He didn't need John to be anything other than faithful. Jesus just needed John to baptize him.

Listen once again to Jesus' words. He said, "**This is the fitting way for us to fulfill all righteousness.**" Did you hear that word? Jesus did not say, "It is fitting for *me*." He said, "It is fitting for *us*." In other words, Jesus saw John as his partner in ministry. Jesus knew that it was important for him to do what God had called him to do—to be baptized—but he needed John to be faithful too, so that he could be baptized. It was important for Jesus to submit himself to John for baptism, but it was also important for John to put aside his misgivings so that he could baptize Jesus.

John was faithful. Matthew doesn't describe the baptism itself, but he does describe the results:

"Jesus, when he was baptized,
went up directly from the water:
and behold, the heavens were opened to him.
He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming on him.
Behold, a voice out of the heavens said,
'This is my beloved Son,
with whom I am well pleased'" (verses 16 and 17 of our scripture text).

Wouldn't that be something! Wouldn't it be wonderful to do a small service for God—and to see the heavens open up—and to hear God's voice of approval! That didn't happen because John was *great*. It happened because John was *faithful*! John did what God had called him to do, and God took it from there!

There's a message in that for us. God has called us to do his work and to be his people. He has called some of us to preach, and he has called others of us to keep the building clean. He has called some of

us to sing in the choir, and he has called others of us to print the bulletins. He has called some of us to lead fund-raising campaigns, and he has called others of us to teach the three-year-olds.

There is one constant in all of that. The constant is this: God has called us TO BE FAITHFUL TO THE CALLING TO WHICH WE HAVE BEEN CALLED—whether that calling be great or small—whether we feel like it or not—whether we feel worthy or not. If we are faithful to the calling to which we have been called, great things will happen!

- We might see them and we might not—but they will happen.
- We might see the heavens open, and we might not—but good things will happen.
- We might hear the voice of God, and we might not—but we can be assured that God will take our small efforts and turn them to gold.
- By the grace of God, if we are faithful, great things will happen. They might happen immediately or they might happen two generations later. They might happen during our lifetimes, or they might happen a decade after we die—but by the grace of God, if we are faithful to the calling to which God has called us, great things will happen.

Let me ask you to do something today. Make a conscious effort to remember this point: If we are faithful to the calling to which God has called us, God will insure that great things happen. That will be true whether our calling is something small or something great. If we are faithful, God will take care of the rest.

Let me tell you why I ask you to remember that. It's important to remember that is faithful so that we don't become discouraged—so that we don't say, "The church isn't growing"—so that we don't say, "We don't have enough money." If we remember that we are acting by God's power—on God's timetable—God will help us to lift our eyes from the dirt at our feet so that we might be able to see the trees and the skies above us.

That's what God wants! God wants us to believe—to hope—to celebrate! God wants us to be filled with joy!

You might ask, "How can I be joyful? Haven't you read the newspaper lately! Aren't you aware of all the terrible things that are happening around the world! Don't you know that our politicians can't get it together! Don't you realize that everything is unraveling!"

Yes, I'm aware of all those things. But I'm aware of another, even more important thing. It's this: From beginning to end, the Bible acknowledges that life is seldom easy—but it gives example after example after example of God's power overcoming crushing odds.

- When little David acted in faith, he was able to slay the giant Goliath.
- When Gideon acted in faith, he and his little band of three hundred men were able to defeat the whole Midianite army.
- When Jesus was faithful, he died on a cross—but God raised him from the dead three days later.

- When Paul and Silas were faithful, they were arrested for preaching the Gospel—but two things happened. First of all, Paul and Silas didn't mope and despair. While in prison, they sang hymns of praise to God. Secondly, God sent an earthquake that freed them from their prison cell (Acts 16).

- And so on and so forth! God is in charge, and God will win! That's the promise of scripture. And we are on God's team. Each of us is important to the victory, whether God calls us to throw a touchdown pass or to carry water to the rest of the team. All we need to do is to be faithful to the call to which God has called us. God will take care of the rest.

John the Baptist almost turned Jesus down. He almost refused to baptize Jesus. He almost became unfaithful to his calling. I don't know what would have happened if he had been unfaithful, but I have the sense that the world would have lost a great moment. But John was faithful—and he saw the heavens open—and he heard the voice of God say, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (verse 17 of our scripture text).

Let us listen for our calling. Let us not be afraid if God calls us to do something great. Let us not be ashamed if God calls us to do something small. Let us be faithful—and let us prepare ourselves to see the heavens opened—and God's voice saying, "Well done!"

That's our Lord's Message for this Lord's Day and I hope you got a blessing out of it!

Go out this week and be a blessing and be blessed! For the more you are a blessing, the more you will be blessed!

Thank you all for watching and listening and we will see you all next week!

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