

## ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

**Isaiah 42:1-9**  
**Matthew 3:13-17**

**Faith Community**  
**January 13, 2008**

### Introduction

We stand in awe of a person like Abraham Lincoln. He freed the slaves and kept our country together, all the while being humble and thoughtful. He brought about major accomplishments that have changed our lives forever.

This time of year we think of the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. who led the civil rights movement and gave millions of people greater freedom.

Or we think of Mother Teresa, who was the epitome of caring love, compassion, and selfless giving. Oh, if we could do even a part of what she did! Do you ever look at people who have done so much and wish you could do something like that?

### I

In our gospel reading this morning, Jesus seeks out John the Baptist so that he can baptize him. Jesus goes out to the barren wilderness where John is baptizing one person after another. They all walk in the water, John the Baptist takes their heads, dunks them, brings them up, and then helps them out of the water. The next person comes forward and the same thing happens.

Jesus gets in line to be baptized. When John turns and sees Jesus standing there, he cries out, "You want me to baptize you? It should be the other way around." But Jesus says, "No, it is right that you should baptize me." So John does.

Then the heavens open up and a voice says, "This is my son, the Beloved, with whom I am pleased."

John the Baptist didn't want to baptize Jesus; we understand that. Why would Jesus be baptized anyway? If baptism is the washing away of sin, Jesus already is glistening clean. For Jesus, baptism is more than cleaning. Here Jesus' identity is clarified and his calling is laid out. The voice from heaven announces who he is – God's son, who is pleasing to God. Jesus' identity is made clear for everyone at his baptism.

Jesus' baptism also begins his calling. Jesus isn't involved in any public ministry until after he has been baptized. His baptism marks the beginning of doing what he has been called to do. At Jesus' baptism God makes clear who Jesus is and what he is to do. After his baptism Jesus goes out to the cities and villages teaching and preaching. It is then he begins his ministry.

### II

Jesus' baptism tells us about our own. Baptism for us is being welcomed into the household of God, and is clearing away the past and beginning new, but it also marks our calling. Because we are baptized, we are called to serve God and serve God's people.

Martin Luther was said to stand in front of his mirror each day and say, "I have been baptized." It reminded him that in his baptism he was given work to do for God's kingdom.

In the same way that Jesus' calling is related to the announcement of who he is, so your calling and mine are related to our identity. As we begin to know ourselves better (do we ever completely know ourselves?) we begin to see the ways in which we can work for God. When we start to realize what we are good at, and what our skills and talents are, we start to see the ways in which God can use us. As we clarify our interests, we see areas where we can help God in our world.

When a young girl begins to realize that she has a wonderful voice, she starts to see ways in which she can serve God.

When a young businessman knows that he has organizational and management skills, he has a suggestion of how God can use him.

The compassionate woman, who listens – and hears – other people's concerns, has a hint of how she can use her gifts for God's glory.

The couple who retires and suddenly has a lot more time also has an opportunity to use their experience and wisdom to help others.

At Jesus' baptism his identity was clarified and his call given to him. The same thing happens for us. We know who we are and see how we can serve God.

### III

Most likely the call we receive will not be to change the whole world. We probably won't bring about earth-shaking change. Most likely we won't get more than our 15 minutes of fame – just like everybody else! But we don't have to be Abraham Lincoln or Mother Teresa for our calling to be important.

We are called to do our part in our place. We don't have to fulfill an enormous list of grand achievements; we just need to be faithful where we are. We don't have to do it all; doing our part is enough. We can turn that old saying in a positive direction and say, "Enough is enough." If we do our part – if we do enough – that is enough.

### Conclusion

Today elders and deacons have responded to a clear call from God. People looked at their faith and skills and abilities and asked them to serve as officers in our church. Not all of us get that overt of a calling – someone calls you on the phone to ask you!

So if our calling isn't as clear as that then we have to listen and explore where God might be calling us. Look at where your talents lie. What really interests you? Where do you feel you have received God-given abilities? Now how can you use those gifts to serve God – inside or outside of the church?

You don't have to change the world, but you have the opportunity to change *someone's* world.

God is calling you to be part of God's great mission in this world. You won't find a higher calling or more important work. Listen to what God is calling you to do.

Amen