

The Relational Master

Following Jesus to
live a life of love in
all things



Tuesday ~ Mark 1: 9-11

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

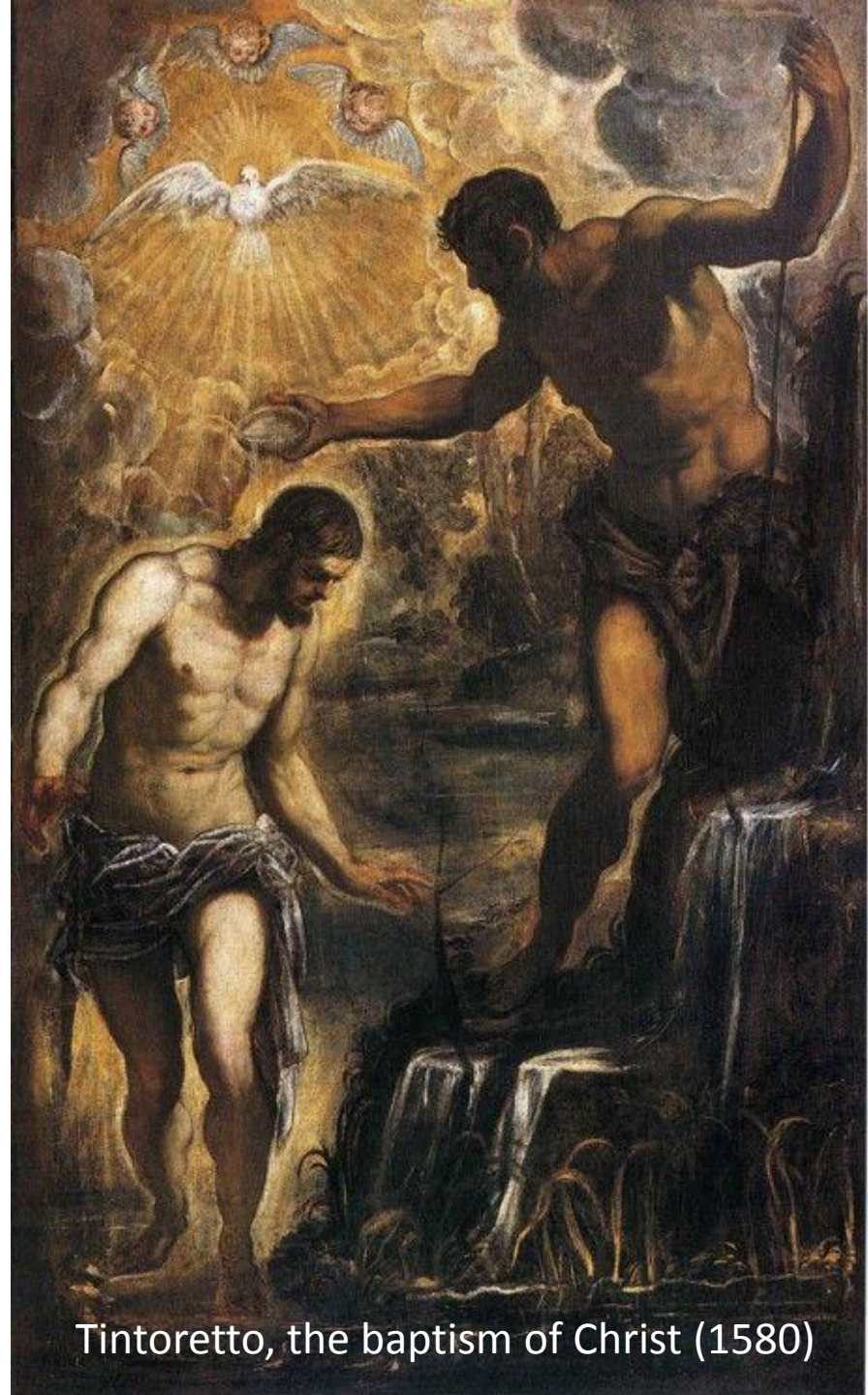
And a voice came from heaven: **“You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”**

At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

Mark's introduction of Jesus

Ultimate testimony
from earth:

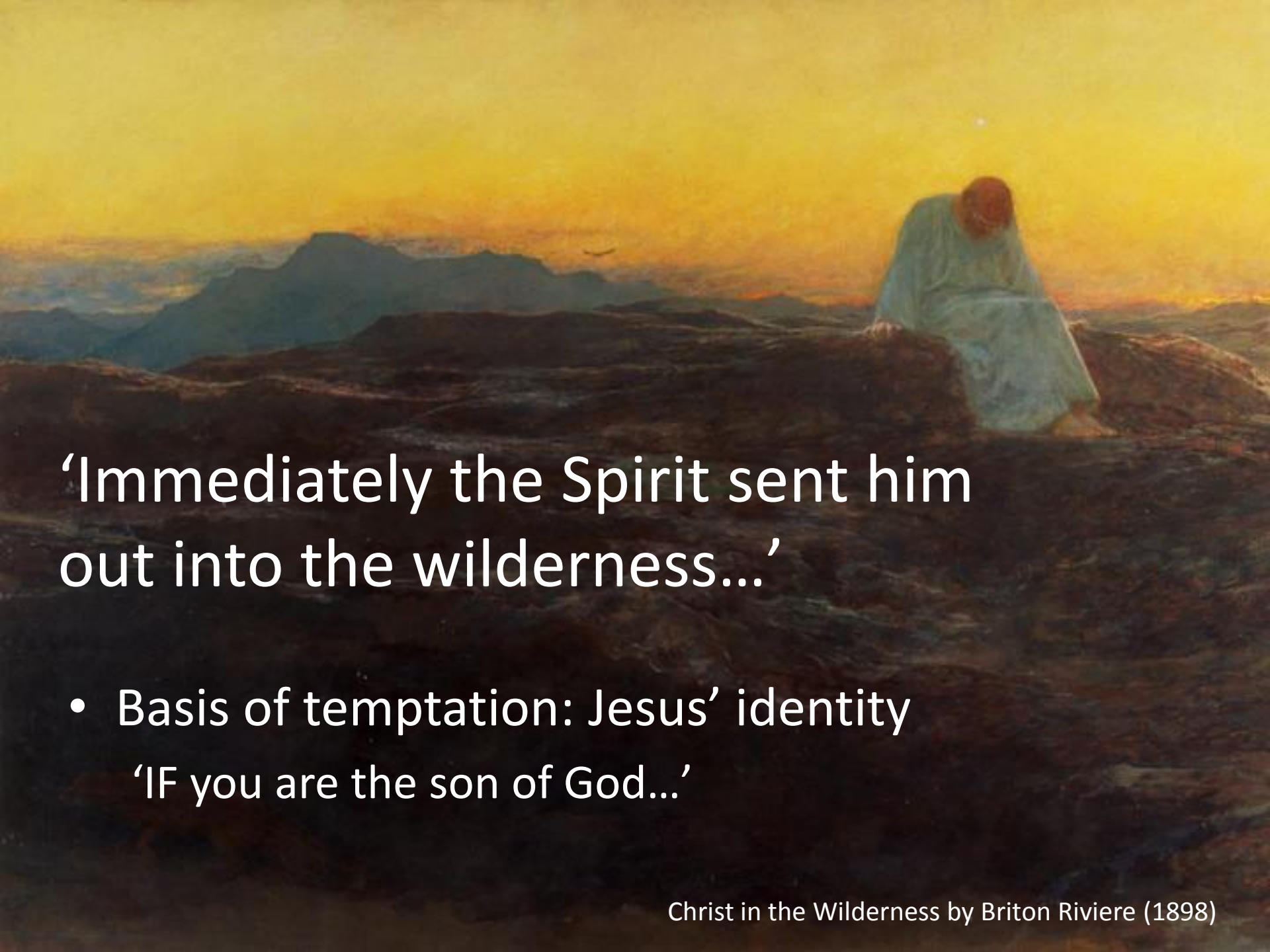
- 'no one has arisen greater than John'
- I'm not worthy to untie his sandals



Tintoretto, the baptism of Christ (1580)

Ultimate testimony from heaven

- Who was the voice for?
 - What did it signify to John and the others?
 - Matthew's version, 'This is my beloved son...'
- What did it tell Jesus?
 - Confirmation of his identity
 - Deep assurance of the Father's love
 - Permanence of relationship
 - Unconditional favour



‘Immediately the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness...’

- Basis of temptation: Jesus’ identity
‘IF you are the son of God...’

Rooted

All that Jesus did subsequently flowed from this unshakable security in the Father's love



The Identity Challenge



Counterfeit sources
of identity
mediated through
– peers, teachers,
family, even church
– whose words will
define your
identity?

Glimpses of the Trinity

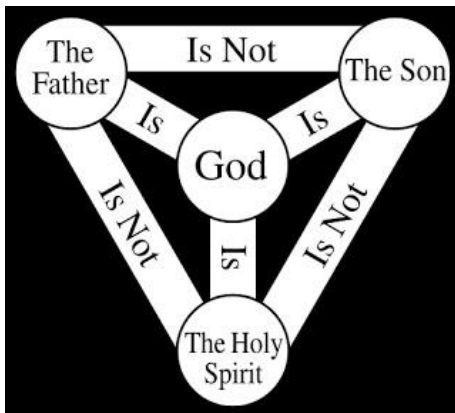
- Did you hear that voice?
- What is that amazing dove?
- Who is this man?



Poussin, St John baptising Christ (1655)

Functional theology of the Trinity

“We worship one God in Trinity,
and Trinity in Unity; neither
confounding the persons, nor
dividing the substance.”
- *the Athanasian Creed*



“Father and Son and Spirit are
one God, yet the Son is not the
Father, nor the Spirit the Son.”
- *John Calvin*

Relational theology of the Trinity

Father, Son and
Spirit are a
community of
love – into which
we are invited to
fellowship



Three implications

God is love: before God created the universe, before there was anything to rule over, there were loving relations within the Trinity

1. Relationships precede creation: ultimate reality is relational (not spiritual or material)
2. We are created as relational beings: relationships are key to our identity, purpose and meaning
3. The Trinitarian harmony of unity-in-diversity offers hope for tension in churches, marriages and nations

Beginning here we glimpse the Three-in-one;
The river runs, the clouds are torn apart,
The Father speaks, the Spirit and the Son
Reveal to us the single loving heart
That beats behind the being of all things
And calls and keeps and kindles us to light.
The dove descends, the spirit soars and sings
'You are beloved, you are my delight!'

In that quick light and life, as water spills
And streams around the Man like quickening rain,
The voice that made the universe reveals
The God in Man who makes it new again.
He calls us too, to step into that river
To die and rise and live and love forever.

Epiphany, by Malcolm Guite

Points for reflection

- What 'counterfeit' identities are distorting your relationship with God or other people?
- To what extent are you rooted in the unconditional love and acceptance of the Father? Are you able to weather the storms of other people's disappointment with you?
- Where do you need to pray for God's Trinitarian unity in diversity to be manifest?

End of Day 1



‘You are my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased’

Who was Jesus to them?

Progressive revelation:

- ‘What is this? A new teaching, and with authority!’ (Mark 1:27)
- Both heaven and hell had acknowledged that Jesus was the anointed Son of God (1:11, 24)
- Yet the disciples still called him ‘teacher’

