

The Right Time

Sharon had been married to Rob for seven years. They had two beautiful children. But Sharon's mother began to sense that her daughter was starting to go through a hard time in her marriage. One day she called Sharon and said, "If I pay for a baby-sitter, will you go shopping with me tomorrow?" Sharon jumped at the invitation. While eating lunch together the next day, after shopping, Sharon's mother leaned over and said to her:

"I had a reason for asking you out today. I have something important to tell you. It's something my mother told me and asked me to tell my daughter when the right time came. My mother called it 'Three guidelines to a happy marriage.'

The first guideline is this; "Never keep score in marriage. Don't ever say to your spouse, 'I've been doing more than my share. It's not fair.' The day you begin to keep score is the day your marriage begins to die."

The second guideline is this; "Never be too busy for your children. Don't ever say to them, 'Can't you see I'm busy? Come back later.' The day you become too busy for your children is the day your communication with them begins to die."

The third guideline is this; "Never miss a day praying for your family. Don't ever let 24 hours go by without talking to God about your family. The day you stop conversing with God about your family is the day you deprive them of the greatest gift a mother can give."

As her mother finished, Sharon took her mother's hand. Her eyes filled up with tears as she said: "Mom, that's the most beautiful advice you could give me. But why did you wait seven years to tell me? Why didn't you tell me the day Rob and I got married? It would have helped me so much-so very much!" Sharon's mother said: "Honey, I wanted to tell you the day that you and Rob got married. Oh, how I wanted to tell you! I wanted to tell you with all my heart. But I knew it wasn't the right time. I knew you weren't ready then. I had to wait for the right time-when you would understand what I was talking about."

I like that story. One reason why I like it, of course, is the beauty and wisdom it contains. But I also like it for another reason. It helps me understand something very important about today's feast: the Baptism of Jesus. When we read the Gospels carefully and prayerfully, we find ourselves asking this question: Why did Jesus wait so long to begin his preaching? Why didn't he begin his preaching in his twenties, rather than wait until he was thirty? To put it another way, why did Jesus remain in Nazareth for thirty long years, when he knew the whole world was crying out for what he had to say? What in the world was Jesus waiting for?

The answer to that question is simple, but important. Jesus was waiting for John the Baptist to call the people to repentance. It was because the people were not yet ready for what Jesus had to say. Until they were conscious of their sins and conscious of their need for God, they would not understand Jesus' message.

And this brings us to the most important point of all; how all this applies to our own lives. Perhaps the most important application is this: Jesus can't begin to act in our lives and transform them until, like the people of Israel, we are ready to let him do it. Nor can Jesus do anything to make us ready. Only we can do that. And the way we make ourselves ready is the way Sharon and Israel became ready. It is to recognize and to admit that we cannot go it alone in life. It is to recognize and to admit our need for Jesus Christ. Only when we have reached this point can Jesus begin to act in our lives to transform us into what God made us to be.

When you reach this point, when you are ready for a change in your life,

You will know that...

YOU ARE LOVED,

DEACON DAN