



Jesus is Baptized

Mark 1:1-11

Gus tumbled from his horse and looked around the Garden of the King. Theophilus, the head gardener, had told Gus to meet him there so he could learn more about the Kingdom and the Great King he was learning to serve. A strange barking sound came from the wall. Gus turned to see a small dragon in the window.

"Bark! Bark! Bark!" Rufus the dragon greeted.

Gus walked over to the dragon. "What's that? You have a message for me? Is it about my teacher?"

"Bark! Bark! Bark!" Rufus replied.

Gus shook his head. "I'm afraid I don't speak a word of dragon."

"Bark! Bark!" Rufus tried again.

"Hmm, did you say cookbook? Knock knock?" Gus tried as Rufus shook his head. "No, that doesn't sound like it. Oh, look, look!"

Rufus nodded, "Bark! Bark! Bark!"

Gus listened closely. "Look at the back of your head. Look around? Look behind you?" He walked around Rufus to look behind the dragon.

"Bark! Bark! Bark!" Rufus said again.

"Oh, look behind me!" Gus exclaimed. "Well, all right, but I still don't know what I'm looking for."

"Not a what! A who!" announced a voice from behind Gus.

Gus spun around in surprise. "A who? Who are you?" he asked.

A man dressed in a royal guard uniform stepped forward and introduced himself. "I am Sir Praisealot, praise God! Captain of the Castle Guard and servant to the King, praise God!"

A huge smile spread across Gus' face. "A knight? A real, honest to goodness knight! God has smiled upon me and sent you to me." He exclaimed.

"Actually, Theophilus sent me. He said you needed guidance." Praisealot explained.
"I do? I do!" Gus knelt down on the ground before the knight. "Guide me, oh noble knight, for I am unworthy to be in your presence."

"On your feet, squire! Save your worship for the King!" Praisealot said as he motioned for Gus to stand. "Theophilus tells me that you want to become a knight."

Gus was so excited to be in front of a real knight that he was shaking violently. He struggled to his feet and pulled out his sword. "I do! More than anything! I am ready to be the King's noblest knight!" He replied as he tried to swing his sword in salute. Instead, he dropped it.

Praisealot studied the clumsy young man. "You can't be the 'noblest knight,' that would be me! But, if you want to please the King, fetch the instruction manual and I will show you how!"

"I know where that is! I shall fetch it right now!" Gus ran to the stained glass window in the garden wall and removed the Bible from inside.

Praisealot followed him into the garden. "I shall pass the King's message on to you, young squire." He paused, then asked, "what is your name?"

"I am Goofus the Gallant!" Gus announced as he tried again to brandish his sword. Once again, it flew through the air and hit the ground.

Praisealot watched Gus' attempt at gallantry and then calmly said, "I can see we're going to need some sword practice, Squire Doofus..."

"Goofus, but you can call me Gus." Gus corrected.

"Well, Squire Gus, the first step to being noble is pleasing God!" Praisealot said.

Gus groaned. "More churchy stuff? When do I learn to fight?!"

"Squire Gus, knighthood is not about fighting! It is about pleasing the King! Look here." The knight took the Bible from Gus and opened it to Mark 1. "This is a report about a man named John who pleased God. John was baptizing people."

"What is 'baptizing?'" Gus asked.

"Great question, Squire Gus! It's the sprinkling or dunking in water to show you have a clean new start following Jesus. It is a sign to others that you belong to Him. What do you think people called this man who baptized so many?"

"Um...John the Baptist?" Gus guessed.

"Exactly! You're going to be a brilliant student!" Sir Praisealot praised. "Listen to what John said in Verse 7, 'After me will come One more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.'"

"Did he mean Jesus?" Gus asked.

"He did! You're two for two! High-five, Squire Gus!" Sir Praisealot raised his hand and Gus slapped his palm. "When Jesus came, John baptized Him in the Jordan River. And as Jesus came out of the water, He saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit coming down like a dove."

"The Holy Spirit?!" Gus tried.

Sir Praisealot smiled. "Correct again, my student! Now listen carefully, here is what the Bible says: 'And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, Whom I love; with You I am well pleased."' Now, what have you learned from this lesson?"

"God likes white birds!" Gus answered.

"No! The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit." Praisealot explained. "What is important are the words God speaks. God said three very important things. First, God said: 'Jesus is my Son, He belongs to Me!' Second, 'I love Him' and third, 'I am pleased with Him!'"

"Wowzers! I wish God said that about me!" Gus exclaimed.

"Do you believe in Jesus?" Sir Praisealot asked.

"I do." Gus replied.

"Well, God does say that about you! Praise God, He loves everyone in the whole world, and He is very pleased with all who believe in His Son. How do you feel now, Squire Gus?" Praisealot asked.

"Groovy!" Gus replied with a smile. "Sir Praisealot, I want to learn more about pleasing the King!"

"We shall! Next week, at this time!" Praisealot said. "Until then, remember this one thing...serving the King is the noblest thing!"

"I will!" Gus replied as Sir Praisealot exited the garden and walked swiftly away.

"I can't wait until next week." Gus thought while picking up his sword. He would work as hard as he could to learn to become a knight and serve the King.