

Immanuel (Augsburg) Lutheran Church
Shobnier, Illinois
Baptism of Our Lord (observed)
January 10, 2021
Mark 1:4-11

Jesus Baptized for You

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Mark 1:9-11 ESV)

In the Name of Jesus, the only Savior of the world.

The Child is born of His virgin mother. On the eighth day He shed His blood as He was circumcised, according to the Law. He was presented in the temple on the 40th day of His birth and Simeon and Anna rejoiced in seeing their Savior. Within a few months, some visitors arrived from the East bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, truly gifts fit for the King of the Jews. Now St. Mark makes no mention of any of these things. Rather, he begins his Gospel with these words, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Then, after a few verses describing John's baptizing and preaching, he simply states that Jesus "was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." So today we celebrate the Baptism of our Lord, the beginning of His active ministry of salvation.

Now it is truly remarkable that Jesus came to be baptized by John, because John proclaimed "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." And while John declares his own unworthiness to even untie Jesus' sandals because Jesus was mightier than he was and was able to baptize with the Holy Spirit, he baptizes Jesus. For Jesus too, in addition to the throngs that came out to John, came out to him in the wilderness to be baptized by him.

But why? Why did Jesus come to be baptized? Certainly He did not need Baptism for Himself. Jesus had no sins of which to repent, but we do. Jesus had no sins to confess, but we do. Jesus had no sins for which He needed forgiveness, but we do. No, Jesus didn't need Baptism, but we do. Therefore He underwent Baptism for us that we might be saved through Baptism.

Then we're told that when Jesus "came up out of the water, immediately He saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove." And with the heavens torn open, Jesus heard a voice which said, "You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased." Indeed, the Father was telling His Son the words every child desires to hear from His Father. God was telling His Son that He was pleased with what His Son was doing. The Father so loved the Son that He was pleased with His life and death as full payment for sin. The Father so loved

His Son that He promised, "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you" (Is. 42:6). Here was power for living! And dying!

Yes, at Jesus' Baptism, He was anointed to His saving office of Prophet, Priest, and King. He was anointed to His office of Messiah and Savior. He had started on the road to the cross where He would complete the task of saving the world from sin and death.

By His Baptism, Jesus sanctified Baptismal waters, that is, He made them pure and holy. Indeed, the water of the Jordan River was filthy, so much so that Naaman once refused to wash in it, even if it would cleanse him of his leprosy. So it is that when our Lord was Baptized, the water was already filthy with the sins and transgressions of the world. In His Baptism, Jesus washed all of those sins onto Himself and bore them all the way to the cross. Thus your Baptism is "a washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5), and a washing away of sins (Acts 22:16).

So in Jesus' Baptism, we find the comfort in our own. He took our sins upon Himself, carried them in His body, and died on the cross so we wouldn't have to die for them. Through Baptism we are so joined to Christ that His life, death, and resurrection are our life, death, and resurrection.

And while you may not have realized it, at your Baptism the heavens were opened as well. More than that, they were rent asunder, torn open, just as the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom when Jesus died. They are opened and God poured out His gifts on you. He filled you with His Spirit who creates and sustains saving faith in you, a faith which believes and trusts in Jesus and all that He has done for your forgiveness and for your salvation. He fills you with the same Spirit which empowered Christ to withstand temptation, the same Spirit which empowered Christ to endure the shame and the pain of the cross. He fills you with His Spirit who empowers you to live a God-pleasing life of serving your neighbor. Indeed, in your Baptism you were anointed to be priests too. With your sins forgiven, you all are a "royal priesthood", set apart to serve God night and day with your prayers for and works of service to your neighbor, and for your praise of God as you believe and trust His promises (1 Peter 2:9).

Furthermore, as God the Father showed His delight in His Son by calling Him His "beloved Son," so you, too, are called God's beloved. Despite the sinful nature which still clings to you, God looks upon you with favor. He looks upon you as a loving Father looks upon His dear children. So it is that God will never leave you nor forsake you. He does not let you face temptation alone. Because your heavenly Father loves you, forgives you, saves you, He supports you with His holy angels through every temptation, through every trial, through every affliction of body, mind, and spirit. He ministers to you on a continual basis through His Word of forgiveness and through the Sacraments. Indeed, because of Jesus' tremendous sacrifice made on our behalf, we see in heaven a loving, caring Father as well, who is with us through every hill and valley we face in this life.

Indeed, Jesus was, and is, God's beloved Son. And because God has made you His child in your Baptism, He is pleased with you too. You, too, have a loving, caring heavenly Father who delights in you as His dear child. Your sins have been washed away from you and are now on Jesus. You have been raised from the death of sin to live a new life in Christ. By the grace of God you too will be raised to eternal life in heaven. Yes, Jesus was baptized for your salvation, and you are baptized into that salvation in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Rev. Timothy J. Landskroener