

BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

YEAR B

Genesis 1:1-5

Acts 19:1-7

Mark 1:4-11

January 6, 7, 2018

Last month we talked about John the Baptist coming out of the wilderness proclaiming a baptism of repentance. Many questioned John about his identity and also about his message. Many were impressed with John and others were suspicious of him. John told them that he was not the Messiah and that he was no one but one crying out in the wilderness preparing the way of the Lord. John also told the crowds that one would come who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit. There were many that did not move beyond John's baptism. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. The baptism of the Holy Spirit as brought by Jesus. There was a teaching among Christians in the early church that taught about John's baptism. They had not been taught and had not heard about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They understood about repentance but they did not understand about the Holy Spirit. When Paul went to Ephesus he came across a group that did not fully understand about being baptized into Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul's response was to give instruction about the difference between John's baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit as given by Jesus Christ. Paul laid hands on them and prayed over them and they received the Holy Spirit. Receiving the Holy Spirit brought an immediate response. The people responded by speaking in tongues and proclaiming the name of Jesus Christ.

Acts 19:4-6 Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied

Many of us do not recall any kind of spiritual experience as tied to baptism. Some of us are suspicious of people that pray in tongues or speak tongues as a regular part of their Christian lives. The gift of tongues is one of the gifts of the spirit talked about by Paul in various letters. It is also one of the signs of the movement

of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit always results in some sort of spiritual experience. The movement of the Holy Spirit in baptism always changes the course of our lives. We can never remain as we were when touched by the hand of God and moved by the Holy Spirit. We are set apart in baptism becoming children of God. Through the waters of baptism and by the movement of the Holy Spirit we are set apart to serve the Lord. We each have a calling from the Lord that was given at baptism. That calling includes some kind of witness for the Lord.

Mark 1:9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

Jesus went to where John was baptizing. Our first thought might be that Jesus is without sin. He does not need to become a child of God because he is the Son of God. The past couple of weeks we heard about Jesus being the Son of God and that the Holy Spirit came upon Mary and she became pregnant. If he is without sin why does Jesus need to be baptized? If Jesus comes to the waters of baptism it must not be primarily about forgiveness of sins. Jesus is without sin and so does not need forgiveness. Baptism is more than just having our sins forgiven. Jesus came to where John was baptizing to fulfill all righteousness. It was to do the right thing. Matthew 3 tells us that John hesitated to baptize Jesus because Jesus is the greater one that was to come. Jesus says that it must be done in order to make things right. For you and me, baptism is also more than just having our sins forgiven. Certainly, we are sinners and not worthy of being children of God. Baptism is more about becoming children of God. It is about identifying with Jesus Christ because he chose to identify with us. Jesus came to the waters of baptism to fulfill righteousness. You and I also come to the waters of baptism in order to fulfill righteousness. We come to the waters and we allow the Holy Spirit to move us so that we live our lives for the Lord.

Mark 1:10, 11 And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Jesus saw the dove and heard the voice from heaven. **“You are my Son, the Beloved. With you I am well pleased.”** The words from heaven echo the words of Psalm 2:7 **“You are my son; today I have begotten you.”** In Jesus comes the fulfillment of the Old Testament law and prophets. In Jesus comes the fulfillment of the God’s promise to the people. In Jesus comes the promise that God will provide. In Genesis 22 is the story of God telling Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. As Abraham was preparing to kill his son God intervened and provided a ram. God provides our salvation through Jesus Christ who is the Lamb of God.

Jesus is called son of David. He is called suffering Servant. Jesus is also called Savior and Lord. Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s Word. At the baptism of our Lord God announced that Jesus is the One. God is pleased with Jesus not because of the things he has done. At the time of his baptism Jesus had done no miracles. He had not yet preached a sermon or healed any sick people. God is pleased because of who Jesus is. It is as if God was placing God’s stamp of approval on Jesus before Jesus did any act of ministry.

You and I are filled with the Holy Spirit in our baptism. In our baptism, we also hear and experience God’s stamp of approval. *“You are my son; you are my daughter. I am so pleased with you.”* God is pleased with you not because of what you have done or have not done. God is pleased with you just because of who you are. I believe that every child and every adult coming to the waters of baptism hears the voice of God. Everyone coming to waters of baptism finds favor with God. We each have the voice of God offering words of acceptance and words of assurance. We may not hear that voice of God but I believe God is speaking to us in and through baptism.

What do you believe about your baptism? Your baptism assures you are children of God? Do you see your baptism as filling you with the Holy Spirit? We have been given these assurances from God so that we can face the temptations that come to us. In the first Sunday in Lent we will hear that following his baptism Jesus

was driven into the wilderness where he was tempted and tested. We have the assurance from God that we have power and authority for ministry. We have the assurance that God is with us in our sufferings. God is with us even in the hour of death that will come for each of us. Through God's Holy Spirit we can face our times of trial and remain faithful to the Lord.

You and I are children of God. God claims us as sons and daughters. Because we are sons and daughters we receive the benefits of being children of God. We know what it means to be children of our parents. We belong to that family and we receive what the family has. Because we are children of God we have the assurance that God is present with us in our times of need. God gives us strength to face every trial. God is with us providing healing in our bodies and strength in our spirit. Jesus is our king. He is our Savior and Lord and Jesus is the suffering Servant that took care of our sins on the cross. We inherit eternal life along with Jesus Christ. Since you are baptized into Christ you are identified with Jesus. Because you are baptized into Christ Jesus identifies with you. Through baptism you have life. You have everything you need because you are claimed by God.

AMEN