

Claimed and Proclaimed – Pr Jim Sprengle – The Baptism of Our Lord January 9, 2022

- I. **Romans 6:6-7** – ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For one who has died has been set free from sin.
- II. **The Lord our God uses water in some interesting ways.**
 - a. Not long after the beginning of creation, He flooded the earth and brought a few people through it on the ark. (Genesis 6:1ff)
 - b. In Egypt, when the Hebrew slaves were finally delivered from Pharaoh, God's people escaped through the Red Sea as it was divided so they could pass through unharmed. (Exodus 14:1ff)
 - c. And as Joshua entered the Promised Land, again, the Lord divided the Jordan River so the people could walk through it on dry ground. (Joshua 3)
 - d. In our Gospel reading today, Jesus is out in the Jordan River as well, where John the Baptist was preparing the way for a Savior or Messiah to come and save the people.
 - i. In the Gospel of Luke, we are given a brief version of Jesus' baptism, but the Holy Spirit still descends on Him like a dove, along with the Father in heaven saying, "You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased."
 - ii. Jesus would begin His ministry of redemption and restoration after submitting to baptism – although He had no need to receive forgiveness Himself...
 1. As Pastor Michael Zeigler said in his sermon from Lutheran Hour Ministries this week, that Jesus joined us through the waters of baptism to walk beside us as we re-enter the Promised Land as God's children...He humbled Himself
 - iii. Again, water becomes an instrument that God uses to usher in a new life for the people He saves.
- III. **Unfortunately, all through history**, we humans need new life and saving.
 - a. Ever since Adam and Eve opened the door for sin and evil to enter... the devil, the world, and our sinful nature try to claim us and lead us astray...
 - i. These forces are hard at work, constantly trying to bind us even though we have freedom through the waters of baptism.
 - b. St. Paul writes about baptism in Romans chapter 6 as a death...and resurrection.
 - i. He means that the old Adam is drowned in the waters of baptism, and the new Adam comes forth free from the power of our sinful nature.
 - ii. One reason I appreciate full immersion baptism (even though it is definitely not necessary) is that it fully covers the person as though drowning... and a new Adam arises...

1. It is the picture of death and resurrection.
- iii. In fact, Revelation 20:6 makes this point by saying, “Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power...”
 1. This means that by baptism and faith, a person dies and rises again... and now when they meet their earthly end (the second death) it cannot hold them.

IV. **So why do we struggle all our lives against the devil, the world, and sin?**

- a. If we are baptized... the old Adam is dead... why don't we live in freedom from the sinful world and our own sinful nature?
- b. Paul is always writing in a now... not yet style.
 - i. Now we are free, saved and have all the promises by grace through faith... but not yet is it complete... until we enter our rest with Jesus.
 - ii. That might seem a little contradictory – we have it all now, but not yet... However, it just means that while we are still in our earthly body, the promises are real – their completion will come one day.
 - iii. The point is that when the waters of baptism washed over us and we came to faith, all the promises of God apply to us now and forever.
- c. In the meantime, temptations and sin will be a struggle until the “second death” (Revelation20:6).
- d. Last Friday in Confirmation class, we covered the Ten Commandments.
 - i. As I walked through Commandments 4 through 10, it's eye opening.
 - ii. Most people have no idea how much they sin against God and their neighbor on a daily basis, let alone the intentional choices they make to sin!
 - iii. From mocking and rebelling against authority, to breaking down people's reputations and constantly looking to gossip about them.
 - iv. There are people openly supporting abortion and the death of the unborn, to those who steal from others and justify their behavior.
 - v. The flip side of these commandments is looking the other way rather than getting involved – so when we turn away from someone in need – or we watch people steal from or hurt others... we break God's law.
 - vi. And don't get me started on the 6th Commandment and the world's desire to make up anything it wants regarding sex.
 1. Between the scourge of pornography and breakdown of marriage as defined by God – we are constantly tempted to sin or accept sinful behavior as perfectly normal and okay.
- e. So Pastor Jim, what do we do?
 - i. Live like a hermit and stay out of the world? Find a cave in the mountains, or a property out in the wilderness?
 - ii. No, because wherever you go, there you are.

1. The devil, the world, and your sinful nature will be right there with you.
2. You may not sin in the same ways, but you will still sin and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)

V. **But God in His faithfulness, gave us Jesus.**

- a. Jesus came for all people – not just the chosen people from the Old Testament who went into the Promised Land – but even us.
- b. That is the wonder and amazing gift of Epiphany, as God made known Jesus as the salvation for all people – even wise men from the east.
- c. Ultimately, as Jesus went to the cross to pay for the sins we commit and even the ones we don't know about, He opened the way for our freedom.
 - i. As we were baptized and came to faith in Jesus and all of God's promises, we were claimed as His own people.
 1. Just as our Isaiah 43 reading says, God tells us, "for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine"
 - ii. The waters of baptism delivered His pure grace and forgiveness to us – making us His adopted kids (just like I said last week)
- d. For as much as the devil, the world, or our sinful nature want to claim us, God had other plans and sent Jesus to break and hinder these troublemakers wherever possible... even using us to do it!

VI. **We never give up or give in to sin...**

- a. The Lord has provided us with wonderful blessings and a spiritual tool chest to keep up the fight.
- b. One of the very best is our baptisms.
 - i. Each day I wake up and remember my baptism because it reminds me that the old Adam is drowned, and the new Adam is forgiven, free and alive.
- c. Another huge help is the Lord's Supper
 - i. We receive forgiveness and God's strength to live for Him through all the temptations.
- d. And of course, we need God's Word
 - i. His Word is there to guide us yes, but more than that, the Word reminds us of God's love and promises that are ours by faith.
- e. When we live for Christ... when we do not allow the devil, the world and our sinful nature to go out from us – we are proclaiming the glory of God.
 - i. Others see that we don't live like the rest of the world – even though we live in it – and they begin to wonder how this is possible.
- f. You and I have been delivered from a life of bondage to sin because of God's faithfulness and love –
- g. So let's proclaim this freedom as we live our lives for Christ – showing others what it means to be claimed in the waters of baptism. Amen.