

Baptism of Our Lord

Mark 1:4-11

LSB Hymns: 507, 402, 682, 830, 618, 394.

Introit: Psalm 29

P Give to the LORD, you heavenly beings,

C give to the LORD glory and strength!

P Give to the LORD the glory due to His name!

C Worship the LORD in holy splendour!

P The voice of the LORD is over the waters.

C The God of glory causes it to thunder. The LORD is over many waters.

P The voice of the LORD is powerful.

C The voice of the LORD is majestic.

P The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars.

C The LORD shatters the cedars of Lebanon.

P He makes Lebanon skip about like a calf.

C He makes Sirion skip about like a young wild ox.

P The voice of the LORD

C flashes out with flames of fire.

P The voice of the LORD makes the wilderness tremble.

C The LORD makes the Wilderness of Kadesh tremble.

P The voice of the LORD causes the fallow deer to be in labour, and strips the forest bare.

C In His temple everyone is saying, "Glory!"

P The LORD sat enthroned over the Deluge,

C and the LORD has for ever been sitting as King.

P The LORD will give strength to His people.

All The LORD will bless His people with peace.

Collect: Father in heaven, at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan river You proclaimed Him Your beloved Son and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptised in His name faithful in their calling as Your children and inheritors with Him of everlasting life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C Amen.**

Old Testament: Genesis 1:1-5

Epistle: Romans 6:1-7

Gospel: Mark 1:4-11

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for the sermon is the Gospel heard before from Mark 1:4-11 which was our Gospel reading before.

4 John the Baptist came in the wilderness and preached that people should repent and be baptised for the forgiveness of sins. 5 All the land of Judea and all the people of Jerusalem kept coming out to him. They were baptised by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. 6 John was dressed in camels' hair, wore a leather belt around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. 7 He preached: "He who is mightier than I am is coming after me, and I am not worthy to bend down and untie His sandals. 8 I have baptised you with water; but He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit."

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. 10 Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, He saw heaven being torn apart and the Spirit coming down on Him like a dove. 11 Then a voice came from heaven: "You are My Son, whom I love. With You I am well pleased."

Lord God, Heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your Truth, Your Word is truth. **Amen.**

Dear friends in Christ,
Peace be with You.

As we listened to today's Gospel, we once again heard about John the Baptist. We heard that he was baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Did you hear those words? John proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. John's message is consistent with the words Jesus gave to His church on the day He rose from the dead. **Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations."** [Luke 24:45–47] Even though Jesus will give these words to the church years after John the Baptist died, John's message is still consistent with these words. He proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

So how did people respond to those words? In today's Gospel we heard that all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. People responded to John's proclamation by confessing their sins. These people repented of their sins and received forgiveness. That's exactly what we heard in today's Gospel.

But then something really odd happened. Jesus came to be baptized! Now remember, this is a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The thing is that the Bible tells us that Jesus never sinned. We heard John himself in today's Gospel, saying, **"He who is mightier than I am is coming after me, and I am not worthy to bend down and untie His sandal-straps. 8 I have baptised you with water; but He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit."**

The Holy Spirit inspired Peter to write, **He did not commit any sin and no deceit was found in His mouth.** [1 Peter 2:22] The Holy Spirit also inspired John the Evangelist to write, **You also know that He appeared in order to take away our sins, and there is no sin in Him.** [1 John 3:5] So what did Jesus do or say that He would need to repent? We've just read that He didn't need to! It would seem that He had no need for forgiveness. Here's the perfect Son of God getting down into the water with John. Why? Why should the sinless Son of God receive a sinner's baptism from a sinner like John?

Well the answer comes from the words of the Apostle Paul. By the power of the Holy Spirit he wrote, **God made Him who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.** [2 Corinthians 5:21] Even though Jesus never sinned, He God declared Him to be a sinner ... not with His sin, but with our. The sin that Jesus carried into that baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins was the sin that He took away from all of us.

Yes, Jesus really became one of us. He took on all that has gone wrong with us ... every sin. By taking our sin onto Himself, He becomes the greatest sinner. He becomes the greatest sinner so that He could become our only Saviour. He takes His place under our sin, so that He could lift it from us and carry it away. He carried our sin away from us so that the punishment for that sin will not fall on us, but on Him. That's the way that God decided that His judgment and His righteousness should go. Jesus should take our sin onto Himself with all its condemnation, guilt, and punishment. God turns His friendly face to us because Jesus became one of us and took our sin on Himself.

So it is that Jesus submits to the Baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins! He repents of your sin. He undergoes the sinner's baptism for sinners. Jesus stands with us in the waters of a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

From the moment that the single cell of Divine humanity came to be in the womb of the Virgin, the Son of God has carried the sins of the world. Up until this moment of baptism, He carried our sins in silent anonymity. Now, at His baptism, His role as sin bearer becomes public. **He saw heaven being torn apart and the Spirit coming down on Him like a dove. 11 Then a voice came from heaven: "You are My Son, whom I love. With You I am well pleased."** The time has come for Jesus to publicize His journey ... a journey that will pass through the cross where He will take away the sin of the world ... a journey that will

also pass through the empty tomb of Christ's resurrection that demonstrates His power over death. God the Father is pleased with His Son as He continues this journey of salvation.

The Baptism of Jesus is an epiphany of Jesus to John and his followers ... but it is more than that. This is an epiphany of the entire Trinity. So, we see that while it's the Son of God who takes on our human flesh in order to redeem us, it's the entire Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are involved in our redemption.

This epiphany of the Triune God shows us the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit within the Triune God. **"You are My Son, whom I love. With You I am well pleased."** This is a statement that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit relate to one another in love. As the Apostle John states in His letter, **"God is love."** [1 John 4:8, 16] At Jesus' baptism the heavens were torn apart as the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit brought heaven down to earth – to unite heaven and earth – to heal our relationship with Him.

The fact that the heavens were torn open tells us that the heavens were closed. The heavens were closed because our love for God was broken. The intimate loving relationship we see within the epiphany of the Triune God reminds us that our love toward God has grown cold. The Law states, **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."** [Deuteronomy 6:5] Nevertheless, we look for love from the gods of our own making. Very often the god we worship is the one we see in the mirror. It's our pleasure – our wants – our desires that are at the center of our lives. God desires our relationship with Him to be like the relationship between a bride and a groom, but we often commit spiritual adultery and pursue the gods of our own desires.

The Baptism of Jesus reveals the plan of God to restore this love – to heal our relationship with Him – to open heaven to us once again. Here we see the Son of God in the flesh in order to take our place under the law. Here stands the sinless Son of God who carries in Him the sin of the entire world. Here is Jesus standing with us in the waters of baptism in order that we might be joined to Him in eternity.

In today's epistle the Apostle Paul tells us that in baptism we are united to Christ. He states, **³ Or do you not know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might begin to live a new life.** [Romans 6:3,4.]

The voice from heaven said, **"You are My Son, whom I love. With You I am well pleased."** This is God the Father expressing delight in God the Son. This is God the Father expressing delight in us as well. For Jesus' journey through the cross and the open tomb earned salvation for us. Through baptism, the Holy Spirit joined us to Christ Jesus. All that is ours belongs to Him, and all that is His belongs to us. So God delights in us just as He delights in Jesus. In a world that has long ago surrendered to sin, death, and the devil, there is one place where we receive the delight of God. That's where we're in solidarity with Jesus who heard the Father say, **You are My Son, whom I love. With You I am well pleased."**

Do you live where Christ is? Do you know where God lives? God has put His name on you too. He put His name on us when water was joined to God's word according to Christ's command. He put His name on us at baptism. We are not just a mish-mash of organic molecules. Through baptism, Jesus is in solidarity with us and we with Him. Because we are in Him and because He is the beloved son, we are also beloved. We are never alone. Jesus is in solidarity with us and we are in solidarity with Him ... in the water ... at the cross ... at the resurrection. We are in solidarity with Christ into eternity. **Amen**

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

3rd Hymn: 682,

Prayer of the Church

P Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Brief silence

P Lord God, Creator of all good things, we pray Your blessings upon all that You have created. Sustain Your creation with Your mighty power and Your tender care. We pray that at the Last Day, You would restore creation to its former glory through the power of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P God of all grace, shower Your forgiveness and mercy upon all who are baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Baptism, You have united us with Your Son, Jesus, that His death and resurrection have become our death and resurrection. Cause us daily to die to sin and to live in Your gracious Salvation through Christ Jesus. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Father in heaven, Your Son was baptized in the Jordan River to anoint Him to proclaim the kingdom of God. Move us to repent and believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Enable us in faith to cling to our Baptism and to God's holy and precious gift of grace. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P O Lord, You give to Your people various vocations through which they show Your love to others. As You bless Your people with various talents and abilities, grant them the grace to use their gifts for the betterment of their neighbor and for Your glory. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Heavenly Father, You have adopted us as Your children through the waters of Holy Baptism. Strengthen us to live in the baptismal grace You have given to us. May our lives demonstrate true Christian virtue so the world might see the powerful witness of our faith in Your Son. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Gracious Lord, You offer grace to Your people in Your holy body and precious blood in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Assure us of our salvation through this wonderful gift, that we would faithfully receive the blood and body of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Lord God, You are the Great Physician and healer of Your people. Be with all of those who are sick or hospitalized this day *[especially*

]. Support them with Your tender care and mercy. Bless all doctors, nurses and medical professionals, that they might work diligently and faithfully to the betterment of Your people. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

p Into Your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

4th Hymn: 830,