

Order of Worship for January 9, 2022 8:30 AM
Baptism of our Lord

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “To Jordan’s River Came Our Lord” - Hymn #405

Beginning

P: We begin

C: in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

P: We begin

C: with the sign of the cross.

P: We begin

C: as we began, with water, Word, and Spirit in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

P: Let us begin

C: the world all over again with Word and Spirit, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

P: Let us begin

C: God’s new creation adding the Word of life to the stuff of life.

P: Let us begin

C: By baptizing the world in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and with the sign of the cross.

Confession of Sins

P: Do you renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways?

C: We do.

P: Do you reject the old, the dead, the life apart from God?

C: We do.

P: Do you believe in God the Father Almighty and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, and in the Holy Spirit?

C: We do.

P: Will you be baptized into the Christian faith, into a life of service, into a life of giving?

C: We will! We have been! In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and with the sign of the cross.

Gift of Forgiveness

P: For if we become one with Him in dying as He did, in the same way we shall be one with Him by being raised to life as He was,

C: For we know this: the old being has been put to death with Christ on His cross, in order that the power of the sinful self might be destroyed, so that we should no longer be the slaves of sin.

P: For when a person dies, he is set free from the power of sin.

C: If we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him.

P: For we know that Christ has been raised from death and will never die again—death has no more power over Him.

C: The death He died was death to sin, once and for all; and the life He now lives is life to God.

P: In the same way you are to think of yourselves as dead to sin, but alive to God in union with Christ Jesus. In His name, your sins are forgiven.

C: Amen.

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 43:1–7

R: “But now thus says the LORD, He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in My eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring My sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by My name, whom I created for My glory, whom I formed and made.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: Romans 6:1-11

R: What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with Christ in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We 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. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Luke 3:15–22

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 3rd chapter

C: Glory be to You, O Lord.

P: As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but He who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to

untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand, to clear His threshing floor and to gather the wheat into His barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

So with many other exhortations John preached good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother’s wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to You, O Christ.

Creedal Statement: Sacrament of Baptism parts Third and Fourth, p. 325

Children’s Message

Sermon Hymn: “*Jesus Once with Sinners Numbered*” – **Hymn #404**

Sermon: “*While He Was Praying*” - **Luke 3:15–22**

If you have a problem like finding someone to shovel your walks because of your bad back or a car that won’t start on these cold mornings, people can make suggestions to you. Perhaps they can even help you. But when someone really bad happens, like when you are diagnosed with cancer, the only thing they can seem to offer is, “We will pray for you.”

It can seem like the easy way out to offer prayer. It takes work to shovel a driveway for someone who has a bad back, time to help charge a battery, and an expense to us to help them pay for a new car. But to offer our prayers? What big deal is that? Can’t anyone pray?

Yet what do we see Jesus doing as He is baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. Luke in his Gospel specifically tells us:

When Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased.”

It is in the act of praying that Jesus is shown to be the Messiah by the presence of the Holy Spirit as a dove and the voice of God the Father.

Luke notes other times when Jesus prays. He is praying when the devil comes to tempt Him. He takes breaks from teaching and healing to pray. He is praying when His body is transformed and Moses and Elijah appear with Him on the mountain of transfiguration. He teaches the disciples to pray the Lord’s Prayer. He is praying in the Garden of Gethsemane when He is arrested. And Jesus’ last words before He dies in the Luke’s Gospel is the prayer, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.”

Here is the God’s Chosen One, the Messiah, the One sent to save the world, the One sent to do something about the mess of our world. And what does He do in those critical situations? He prays!!

Praying is something most people do. Well less than half of the population in this country go to church. Fewer go regularly. Yet, the vast majority still say they believe in God and they pray. But so do non-Christians. Millions of Moslems regularly stop work in their countries several times a day to get on their knees, face Mecca, and pray to Allah. Millions go to Hindu, Buddhist, or pagan temples to pray to their gods or ancestors. So what big deal is it for us to pray?

In the Old Testament we see how people prayed to their pagan gods. But why? They did it to get something from that god. When it came to things you could control like sharpening a plow or moving water from a well to a garden plot, you depended on your efforts. But to get rain, heal from sickness, or have the safe delivery of a child, things that people could not control, you turned to the gods. In dealing with those gods you dealt with them as you often did with humans who had power. You did what you could to get them to give you what you wanted. So prayer involved flattery, rituals, sacrifices, and promises. You did what you could to get what you wanted. We call that manipulation.

But with God that was all different. God could not be manipulated. All you could do is ask and trust that God would give. And that trust lay not in what you did or offered, but solely in His goodness and mercy. If people tried to manipulate God, like the people of Israel so often did, then God rejected them just as He did when they prayed to pagan gods.

I had a social studies teacher who gave a somewhat cynical, but often true way to look at history. He told us if you want to look for a reason why people did what they did, look for a dollar sign. We are told that the threat of German oppression led the United States into World War I and that we were going to make the world "Safe for Democracy." But that ignores how industries and agriculture made fortunes supporting Britain and France during the war, something they couldn't do with Germany because of the British naval blockade. After World War II the United States sent much aid to our former enemies in Germany and Japan. But what sold that aid to Congress was not charity, but warnings about the threat communism could take over in those countries, a communism that spoils trade and economy. Remember what God told Adam and Eve after they sinned. He told the man that He would "lord" over her like a tyrant. And He told the woman that she would seek to manipulate him.

When we try to manipulate, then we treat people like vending machines or computers. We do what we do to get them to respond the way we want them to. Instead God wants a relationship with us, one based not on what I can get out of you, but out of love.

That is what we see in Jesus as He is baptized. His baptism was not like ours to take away His sins. His baptism was to fulfill the Old Testament promise that God would "pour His Spirit on His chosen Messiah." It was the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. But notice that Jesus did nothing special to receive this gift. He went to the Jordan to be baptized by John the Baptist, the prophet His Father chose. Baptisms were common among Jews, but John's baptism was unique because of entering the water by yourself, John did it to you. Your role was passive. Jesus was endowed by the Holy Spirit not because He convinced His Father to give the Spirit to Him, but by the will of His Father.

A typical hero story of ancient mythology is to have a hero do something brave like slay the dragon, or a cyclops, or a hydra like Hercules. Then they are acclaimed as heroes. But before Jesus does anything miraculous He hears the words, “You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased.” Only after that do we see Jesus fight the temptation of the devil, then go on to heal the sick, chase our demons, calm the storming sea, and feed the 5,000.

It is as Jesus is praying that He is blessed. The praying does not “earn” the blessing; it is what He does because He loves the Father. When you love someone then you want to be with that person. Do we call our spouse or children just to pass on information? Or do we do it because we also want to “hear” them, to be in a relationship with them? That’s why Jesus prayed. That’s why we can pray.

We are taught to bow our heads, close our eyes, and fold our hands when we pray. Yes, this does show respect to God. Yes, this helps to avoid distractions. But we don’t do it because the more humble we are, the more He is liable to listen to us. Anything we try to do to get anything from God is manipulating. Instead we do those things to help us remember that God blesses out of His love, with nothing for us to offer Him. He created the world and us. To create means to make out of nothing. It is something we cannot do. As God He needs nothing from us. We have nothing to offer Him that He doesn’t have already. But He offers us Himself in a relationship, in a way we can understand through His Son, Christ Jesus.

Jesus’ baptism equipped Him with what He needed to do the ministry He was given to do. Our baptisms give us what Jesus didn’t need—the forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. But just as Jesus received His baptism in prayer, we can daily receive the blessings of our baptisms which we respond to in prayer. It gives us the attitude expressed in Luther’s explanation to the words, “Our Father who art in heaven:

With these words God invites us to believe that He is our true Father and we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence, we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

Responsive prayer

P: Let us pray, giving thanks to the Lord for the gift of baptism which we all have received.

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

P: For the gift of dying with Christ—

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

P: For the gift of victoriously rising with Christ--

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

P: For the gift of new life in Christ—

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

P: For the gift of adoption by our heavenly Father—

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

P: For the gift of membership in Christ’s Body, the Church—

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

P: For the gift of the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in our midst—

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

P: For these and all the gifts and graces given us in Holy Baptism—

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

Prayers

Lord's Prayer:

Prayer of Departure

P: Let us pray, asking God to help us remain faithful always to the new life into which we have been born in water and the Spirit.

Christ Jesus, our Rock and Salvation, baptism makes us one with You in Your Kingdom.

C: Build Your Kingdom within us.

P: Christ Jesus, You offered living water to the Samaritan woman.

C: Lead us to the Fountain of Life.

P: Christ Jesus, You restored life to the widow's son.

C: Raise us from our death of sin.

P: Christ Jesus, You gave sight to the man born blind.

C: Lord, give us sight that we may see!

P: Christ Jesus, You made the leper clean.

C: Lord, if You will, You can make us clean.

P: Christ Jesus, You are the Good Samaritan Who heals our wounds.

C: Take pity on us; heal the wounds which sin has made in us.

P: Christ Jesus, Lord and Master of all, You calmed the fury of the storm.

C: Lord, save us lest we perish.

P: Christ Jesus, the words of Your teaching filled the crowds with astonishment.

C: You have the words of eternal life.

P: Christ Jesus, by Your Word You drove the unclean spirits from Mary Magdalene.

C: Protect us from the evil spirits.

P: Christ Jesus, through Peter, You gave the crippled man the power to walk again.

C: Guide our faltering steps in the way of eternal life.

P: O Lord our God, You came to the rescue of Your chosen people in the desert. Fill us, we pray, with the strength and support of Your life so that, always secure in the comfort of Your presence, we may labor day by day for the building of Your Kingdom; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord.

C: Amen! Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD. Let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.

P: You are in our midst, O Lord; Your name we bear; do not forsake us!

C: Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD. Let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessing (Pastor) C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: "All Who Believe and Are Baptized" - Hymn #601

Postlude

