



Baptism of Our Lord
January 13, 2019
Luke 3:15-18, 21-22

“Baptized with the Lord!”

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests! In the name of Jesus, dear friends in Christ, a new TV show aired in the United States in 1997 on PBS. It was called the Antique Roadshow. In fact, the show is still running. What happens in it is that it travels around to different cities in the United States where people are invited to bring in various old antiques that they have lying around in their home. They bring them in and share a little about what they know about this item, perhaps it was handed down in their family from several generations, it's been gathering dust in their attic, and they wanted to know a little bit about this thing. Then there's an antique expert who talks about the history of the item, where it was from, who made it, etc. And then, typically, the expert will ask the person how much he or she thinks that this item is worth. Then the expert shares what they figure it would sell for at an auction. Sometimes the antique is worth an extraordinary amount and the owner is shocked that this thing that's been sitting in their attic collecting dust is the most valuable possession that they own.

But did you know that you have such a treasure, such a gem, such a pearl, such a prize? It's a treasure that can so easily be forgotten about, left collecting dust in the attic of our minds, left rather unappreciated as we go about our day-to-day lives. We're celebrating, today, the Baptism of our Lord. This gives us not only the opportunity to review what a treasure Jesus' baptism was for us, but also what a treasure our baptism is for us. Just like the Triune God- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – was involved in Jesus' baptism, so also the Triune God was involved in your baptism.

When Jesus was about 30 years old he went from the town where he grew up, Nazareth in Galilee, to John the Baptist who was baptizing in the Jordan River. Now, perhaps one of the first questions that comes to our minds when we consider the baptism of Jesus is, “Why was Jesus baptized?” I mean, there's a reason we're baptized. We were born sinful, we were born with sin that we inherited from Adam and Eve, we were born dead in our sins and enemies of God. We needed to be reborn, we needed the forgiveness of sins in baptism. But Jesus didn't. Jesus was the lamb without blemish or defect, Jesus had no sin, Jesus was born sinless and remained sinless his whole life. Why should he be baptized? In Matthew's account of Jesus' baptism, John the Baptist tried to deter Jesus, “I should be baptized by you, and you come to me?” He understood. So, why should Jesus be baptized?

Well, in order to understand Jesus' baptism, let's look to what the Triune God did at Jesus' baptism. First of all Jesus is there. Jesus willingly went to the Jordan River to be baptized. By being baptized Jesus was officially beginning his work of redemption. Yes, Jesus was perfect from conception, yes, Jesus was carrying out our salvation every second from his birth to his death and resurrection, but here Jesus is showing us what that work means. He comes as our substitute in order to save us. Jesus receives the same baptism as tax collectors and prostitutes and sinners, like you and me. Jesus not only had to live a perfect life for us, but he also had to receive the punishment for our sins. Jesus' identification with sinners began at his baptism and would end with his treatment as a sinner on the cross, when God would let all of his anger and wrath for sins fall on Jesus. Jesus' baptism marked him for his work as our substitute.

But the Holy Spirit was also present. **“And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove.”** In the OT God foretold that the Messiah would be the “anointed One.” In fact, that's what “Messiah” and “Christ” means. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit at His baptism. In the OT, prophets, priests, and kings were all anointed. Someone would take some kind of canister of oil and pour it over a person's head, this act designated them as either a prophet, priest, or king. When Jesus was baptized He was anointed by the Holy Spirit to be our Prophet, Priest, and King. He came as the Prophet to tell us about God, as a Priest to offer himself as the once-for-all sacrifice for our sins, and as the King to defeat our true enemies – sin, death, and Satan on the cross.

And finally we're told that the Father was present too. "And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'" God the Father announces to all that He is pleased with the work that the Son has come to do on behalf of sinners. He is pleased with His Son who came to rescue sinful, fallen humans, like you and me.

What a treasure Jesus' baptism was for us! But that's not it! Not only was Jesus baptized with us but He has joined himself to us through the baptism he has given to us. And we see this blessing of this same Triune God in our baptism.

But again, is this a treasure that we've left to collect dust in the attic? For many of us our baptism was such a long time ago, maybe when we were very little babies, we have no recollection of it, it didn't look like a whole lot- a few drops of water, a few words spoken. On the outside it looks rather simple, rather mundane, rather obscure, rather unimpressive. It's easy to brush past it as not that important. Or, maybe we forget what our baptism means for us every day of our lives. Our sinful nature attacks us, Satan tempts us, and it can be so easy for us to forget what our baptism made us and has done for us and we give in as if we couldn't say no to temptation and sin.

Well, let's take this treasure of baptism, dust it off, and be reminded once again of what a treasure it really is. The Triune God was involved in your baptism. You were baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each of them was involved.

First, the Son, Jesus. Did you know that when you were baptized you were connected to Jesus? Jesus' baptism marked him as the substitute for sinners who came to do in every way what you and I were supposed to do perfectly. And not only that, but Jesus came to receive in Himself the punishment for sin that was properly to be ours. He did that with his death on the cross. What baptism does is it intimately connects the person who is baptized to Jesus. The Bible puts it this way, **"Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead...we too may live a new life."** And also **"All of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ."** In other words, through baptism, you were connected to Jesus; everything that Jesus was and did becomes personally yours.

Second, the Holy Spirit was involved in your baptism. We're told that through baptism a person receives the "gift of the Holy Spirit." We're also told that baptism is a washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. Jesus told Nicodemus that flesh gives birth to flesh but the Spirit gives birth to Spirit and that the way to enter the kingdom of God is being born of water and the Spirit. In other words, when you were baptized God the Holy Spirit entered your heart, your soul. He worked faith in your heart to believe in Jesus.

And finally, God the Father was also involved in your baptism. The way God brings children into this world is amazing. God chooses to use a father and a mother. God's family plan is that that father and mother care for and nurture and feed and protect that child. It's also God's intention that the father and mother not only provide for the physical well-being of that child but also the spiritual. Providing for the spiritual needs of a child first means bringing that child to the baptismal font where the child is adopted into a new family. Because of sin we're born dead, we're born enemies of God, and outside of his family. Through the gracious waters of baptism God adopts a person into His eternal family. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit so that having been justified by His grace we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus for all of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ.

Because of the work of Jesus as your substitute and Savior, because of the work of the Holy Spirit working faith in your heart through baptism, God the Father looks at you and can say about you exactly what he said about Jesus: "You are my son, my daughter, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

You know what that means? That means that you have a treasure worth infinitely more than any treasure discovered on the Antiques Roadshow. In fact, you have a treasure worth infinitely more than any treasure in your house. In fact, you

have a treasure worth infinitely more than all the treasures in the world combined. Why so? Because through your baptism you have the forgiveness of sins, through your baptism you're a child of God, through your baptism you have been freed from sin's shackles so you can live a new life- not enslaved to sin- you can make changes, through your baptism you have a treasure in heaven that will never perish, spoil, or fade, no matter what! Amen.

The Blessing of the Triune God in your Baptism

The Spirit covers and comes to dwell in you

The Son present you to his Father as one for whom he did all of his work

The Father is well pleased with you because of what his Son has done for you

Jesus has no sin to confess, he comes to our side, he lowers himself to be one of us, and is baptized. This is the way in which he is inaugurated into his saving work. Immediately, going up from the water, he saw the ripping apart of the sky, a violent verb, what did it look like? Something dramatic. Striking contrast, ripping apart of the sky, and the spirit coming down on him. You are my son, my beloved one, in you I was well pleased. Rare occasions when the whole of the Trinity at the beginning of Christ's work manifests itself. How the Triinity operates inside itself, the Father wants the Son to suffer to go the way of the cross, wants the work of redemption to take place, you want to spare children what you had to endure, but God does not spare His own Son. The Father announces that he was well pleased about the Son who has come forth willingly to begin his work. Well pleased in what his Son has no begun to do. The anointing of the spirit promised in the OT. The whole of Trinity is united in this grand and glorious goal in the beginning of the gospel. How lowly the appearance. No mention of anyone else there. The only work in human history that matters is begun in a lowly way. He comes to our side, makes himself one of us, The only way this message could be believed is if it comes with its own power.