

Sermon for What is Holy Baptism

Date: March 10, 2019

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Isaiah 42:1-9

Epistle Reading: Romans 6:1-11

Gospel Reading: Matthew 3:13-17

Sermon Title: What is Holy Baptism

Introit: Psalm 29; Antiphon: Psalm 29:3

Hymns:

LSB 601 – All Who Believe and Are Baptized

LSB 588 – Jesus Loves Me

LSB 605 – Father Welcomes

LSB 593 – See This Wonder in the Making

LSB 590 – Baptized into Your Name Most Holy

Liturgy:

Divine Service: Special



Pastor James Groleau
St. John's Lutheran Church
1200 13th Avenue NW
Austin, MN 55912
Office: (507) 433-2642
Shepherd@JamesPlace.net
StJohnsAustinLCMS.org
FaceBook.com/StJohnsAustin
Twitter.com@StJohnsAustinMN
FaceBook.com/Shepherd.James.Groleau



NOTE: Copyright information.

Bible Translation: GOD'S WORD®, © 1995 God's Word to the Nations. Some readings have been adapted to better reflect the original Greek or Hebrew.

Credit for Images:

Pronunciation for difficult words are contained in { }

© 2019 James Groleau.

Permission is granted to use these sermons for any non-profit purpose. I only ask that credit, as to their origination, be noted appropriately.

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Bible says:

You have done many miraculous things, O LORD my God. You have made many wonderful plans for us. No one compares to you! I will tell others about your miracles, which are more than I can count.¹

Dear friends in Christ. There is nothing like a true trusted friend.

A trusted friend will support you, can give you encouraging words, when everything, and everyone else, has abandoned you. When everything around you looks like it is coming against you kind words from a true friend can be that one little thing that encourages you to stand up and walk right into the storm.

This message is all about our old friend. It is about an old friend to some, and what will become an old friend to others. That old friend that will remind you that you are not facing the world alone. That old friend that will give you the encouragement to face all that may come against you. That old friend is Holy Baptism.

You may not have thought of Baptism as a trusted friend. The truth is many people think of their Baptism as something in the past. They think of their Baptism as 'I was Baptized' at some place, by someone, at some time. That is not what Holy Baptism is. Martin Luther taught his students:

One should not say 'I was Baptized.'
Rather one should say 'I am Baptized.'

What is Baptism? What should it really mean? What does this water do?

Many things.

First for foremost it means you are forgiven. It means you are free, safe and secure in the arms of your heavenly Father. No matter what may come in this life you have His name on you. You belong to Him. He will bring you safely home.

It also means you are personally connected to God Himself forever. You have been made more than just a believer or a follower. You are His very own precious child, whom He loves and cherishes; for whom He was willing to die to save.

How do we know these things? Because God has spoken. Because God said so. Because God cannot and does not lie, change His mind, or waiver in the wind with no foundation or direction. People all over the world are looking for God; trying to find God; seeking God's will for their life; wondering what God really wants, who God really is, and what God really thinks about them. They will climb mountains, trek deserts, go without food and any number of other things all in an effort to find God or God's will.

The Bible tells us to "seek the Lord where He may be found, and call on Him when He is near."² How can we know where and when that is? He has told us. He has told us to look to His

¹ Psalm 40:5

² Isaiah 55:6

Word and His Sacraments (Sacred Acts.) There is where He promises to be. There is where He will be for you every time you look, and even when you don't. St. Paul, while teaching Titus said:

Baptism is a washing in which the Holy Spirit gives us new birth and renewal.³

In other words Almighty God is acting personally in your life. He is not some distant, far off, God for whom you must seek and search to the end of your days. He is here right now, for you.

Paul says in Galatians:

All of you who were baptized in Christ's name have clothed yourselves with Christ.⁴

How's that for a personal connection? That means when your heavenly Father looks at you He sees you the same way He see Jesus. With love, care, concern and pride.

He also teaches:

All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? When we were baptized into his death, we were placed into the tomb with him. As Christ was brought back from death to life by the glorious power of the Father so we too should live a new kind of life.⁵

There's an old hymn that asks the question: "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" The answer is: you were. You were, however, not in the crowd or as a by stander. You were nailed up there with Him. Connected to him. All the more reason to "Tremble. Tremble. Tremble." The connection does not stop there. It carries you through to Easter Sunday and there you rise with Jesus, connected to Jesus. You are made perfect in the eyes of your heavenly Father like Jesus.

That is what you find in this water. You find Jesus, and all that Jesus is. You bring your sin, your mess and your mistakes to the water, and leave them behind. Jesus bring His grace, peace and perfectness. You leave with all He brings and He takes away all that your bring. That is why the Bible teaches you are a "new creation."⁶ God has made you what He wants you to be. Precious to Him. Someone in whom He finds pride.

Baptism is not just a nice thing you do. It is not just some old dusty tradition of the Church. It is not simply a faithful act to show your devotion. It is water, filled with God's devotion for you. It stains you with perfection as it washes off the otherwise permanent stain of sin.

It is here that God calls you by name. The sign of the cross is placed on your forehead and your heart. You are mark as one chosen by God. It is one of the most important moments in your life, because it is at that moment that you get to erase every moment of your life that fell short of God desire. Calling, relying on, depending on God because you are Baptized. That was

3 Titus 3:5

4 Galatians 3:27

5 Romans 6:3-4

6 2 Corinthians 5:17

true for those people who were Baptized in the very early Church and it is still just as true for you right here today.

That is part of the reason I put this Baptism Font front and center. It even gets in the way from time to time. We sometimes trip over it. Because that is where it should be in your lives. We should trip over it everyday. It should remind us that without it we are fallen sinners with no means to get up. Yet in this 'means of grace' we are standing strong with God not just with us but within us. Carrying us through, come what may!

That is why you hear me weave Baptism into so many sermons here in this church. Because Baptism is not just part of your life or in your life's past. It is your life, in Jesus Christ. It should be woven, bound, and tied to every part of your life, because that is the place is where heaven is first found. It is because of 'that' (*the Baptismal Font*) that heaven will one day be a reality for you. It is because of Holy Baptism that we are privileged to be a child of God, and part of Jesus' life.

How can water do such great things? It can't, but God, through this water, and through His Holy Word can and does. For no other reason than because He said so.

That is what is ours in Jesus' name.

Amen.