

Lessons for the Festival of the Baptism of our Lord January 8, 2023

Psalm 29 ~ *A hymn of praise to God who rules over all his creation.*

Isaiah 42:1-9 ~ *The Servant of the Lord will establish justice.*

Romans 6:1-11 ~ *Through our baptism in Christ we are dead to sin.*

Matthew 3:13-17 ~ *Jesus was baptized by John to fulfill all righteousness.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Let it Be Done.

John thought it out of line for Jesus to be baptized by him, but Jesus assured him it was to be done to fulfill all righteousness. The servant in Isaiah's song would bring justice or righteousness to all nations as he established a new covenant for all people including the Gentiles. When we are baptized into Christ, God says, "It has been done!" Where the penalty for sin is concerned, it has been carried out; we have died. In Baptism, new life as God's child has begun; we are alive! As children of God, we say, "Let it be done, Lord," as we reach out to bring God's healing to bear on the nations.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord, when You were baptized in the waters of the Jordan, You willingly accepted Your task of faithful Servant to restore me to God in righteousness. Help me say, "Let it be," when I see opportunities to serve You by restoring wholeness and health in this world. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: God invested Himself in Christ to establish us in righteousness; He has made us whole and holy through Baptism. Reconciled to God, we are now reconcilers in this world, sent out to invest our lives in bringing wholeness to those who are shattered.

OFFERING PRAYER: O Lord, these gifts we bring today
For You to bless in many ways,
To work Your righteous will and way
So all the world may sing Your praise. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: Our lives are so fragmented by sin that we just cannot do anything right. We are so concerned about doing things right - and proving that we are right - that we drive more distance between ourselves and even those we love. Because of the distance between God and us, Jesus comes to us, just as He came to John. He approaches us in His Word and Sacraments. In Baptism God sets about removing the distance between us by giving us His righteousness. His grace in Christ restores our lives to wholeness and peace, the way He intended them to be in the beginning.

Questions to Consider: How is Baptism an echo of Creation?

- What can you see in Isaiah's servant (Isaiah 42) that is fulfilled in Jesus?
- How is Baptism like new life for us?
- Why did Jesus' Baptism "fulfill all righteousness?"
- What does Jesus' Baptism at the Jordan have to do with your Baptism?

Bonus on next page: Comparison of Joshua's deliverance to Jesus' Baptism

Up from the Jordan

Joshua 3:7 - 8; Joshua 4:14 - 18; Matthew 3:13 - 17

Eager, they looked at the promised land,
Lying so close, but beyond their grasp.
Moses was gone, who had led their band
Forty plus years to this shore at last.

Slowly the priests, as they bore the ark,
Stepped to the edge of the swollen tide.
Just then the waters, so swift and dark,
Rose in a heap on the uphill side!

There on the sand at the Jordan's banks
Joshua stepped up to lead them through.
Great was the cheer as it cleared the ranks:
"Now we all know God has chosen you!"

Many years later from that same stream,
Jesus rose up with a dripping head.
Sending a Dove in a sunlight beam,
"This is my Son, whom I love," God said.