

Baptized with the Holy Spirit
John 1:29-42
January 15, 2023

Someone this past week when they saw the sermon title and made the comment that they thought that last Sunday was the baptism of Jesus, wasn't it? I said it was but that I have been going with the texts of what is called the Revised Common Lectionary that is not only used by some Lutheran Pastors but even by other denominations. The lectionary gives 12 different texts for each Sunday of the year as well as special texts for special days like days for each apostle, Thanksgiving and the like. This year as you may have realized, I am preaching on the Gospel lessons. The gospel reading for today, happens to talk of baptism again.

When we think of baptism, we think of the baptismal font that sits, some would say, in the way, but it is prominent, yes in the way but it is situated before you get to the altar where we come to receive Christ's Body and Blood in His meal for us. Yes, you need to be baptized and taught, from the pulpit and the lectern so that you know what you are doing, and what Christ is doing as you gather at the rail with those who understand what is going on and who believe as you do that Christ is coming to you in this gift where sins are taken away and you are partaking of Him as He strengthens you to go out, with those you have so much in common with in Him.

In baptism, you have the water and the Word. We saw that last week as Jesus and John stood in the water of the Jordan where John was thinking Jesus should baptize him was encouraged to baptize Jesus, the man who needed no baptism, washing of the filth of one's sins but submitted to it to show how He was going to personally wash away sins by His sacrifice of going to the cross and shedding His blood.

This week we have John making comments again, where he points to a time before Jesus was baptized by him. He has baptized Jesus and now he is pointing out why Jesus came and that He was to be the Lamb of God, the lamb of sacrifice, Who would take away the sins of the world!

John said he didn't know Jesus but as we know, He was his cousin so he did know Jesus but what he hadn't put together with what he knew about Him was that Jesus was the long looked for Messiah. It was at His baptism that he put 2 and 2 together, which I guess was easy to do since with the descending of the dove of the

Holy Spirit and God declaring from heaven, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus that day. Guess where the Holy Spirit was in your baptism. He was with the water and the Word as you were baptized. He descended upon you and now lives in you. Yes, you are carrying Him around with you. This is He of whom the writer to the Hebrews quoted Jesus, who said: Hebrews 13:5c "I will never leave you nor forsake you." The writer to the Hebrews then provides another quote in verse 6 from Psalm 118: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

Luther said that the Psalm, Psalm 118 was his Psalm. He wrote in his writings (AE 14:45) "This is my beloved Psalm. Although the Psalter and all of Holy Scripture are dear to me as my only comfort and source of life, I fell in love with this psalm especially. Therefore I call it my own."

When you have the Holy Spirit living in you, what should cause you fear from mankind? You shouldn't for He who went to the cross is the same one John bore witness to, the Son of God who baptized you with the Holy Spirit in and through the water and the Word that, more than likely, your pastor used that day to make you a child of God.

I know most of us don't think about God living in us. Yes, the Holy Spirit is one of the three persons of the Trinity. If you think about it, what should it mean to have God living in you? He is living in your body whose members sin. Yes, we know as we have come to know from Romans chapter 7 that there is a struggle going on between your mind that knows how you should go about life and your flesh, that Old Adam that is still hanging around to get you to go against what you know to be true and good and do those things that are contrary to God.

Why would Jesus want to come and dwell in you when you still sin. He paid a high price to get you. The reason He paid that price was because of your filth, your sin that needed to be paid for and He paid for it with His very body and blood. You are that important to Him.

One thing about it, He will be with you through His Holy Spirit no matter where you go, no matter what you are doing, no matter what you may have to deal with as you live in a world that is full of sin and has so many who don't understand and have no idea who the real Jesus is.

You have the Holy Spirit living in you. He is with you, night and day and yes He will tweak your conscience when you make those choices to do as Adam and Eve did when they decided they needed more than the Lord provided in the garden. That still amazes us now, as everything they had in that garden was perfect, nothing missing that was any good. How could they go against God when it was only one command that they had to keep?

We know through the story I have told a few times of the kids left home with the fresh, homemade cookies. Mom was making cookies for some affair later in the day when the phone rings and she needs to go out for awhile. The kids are busy with something so she thinks it is OK to go out, it won't take long. She tells the kids she will be out for a little while and says there are some snacks in the fridge and in the drawer but the cookies are for a later event. She leaves with only one command for the kids. "Don't eat any cookies as they are for later. She only had enough for the later event, "there are all sorts of things to eat, don't eat any cookies!"

Even though there are other things the kids like to eat and to do while she is gone, what is going on in their minds? Yes, those cookies sure would taste great. The smell of those fresh cookies is out of this world, would Mom miss just one or two?

Isn't that just how sin comes to fruition. James the writer of the book we just began studying in our Sunday morning Bible study wrote: James 1:14-15 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Death, the opposite of Life, the eternal life given by Jesus through the Holy Spirit given us in our baptisms. Death, the prize of the devil. He wanted death for Adam and Eve, why else would he tempt them to eat from that tree. The Lord promised them death if they ate from that tree. Death they got but as we know, there was then given the promise of the Son of a woman who would do in the devil and through His suffering would give life.

They have a program on TV with dead people walking around. I don't know much about it other than the commercials for it. The thing of it is, we live life in this world, where so many people we see walking around are dead in their trespasses and sins. They are dead but they don't know it. But what do you and I know? We know that without the Holy Spirit entering them, they will experience eternal death.

We have been baptized and the Holy Spirit has entered into us and is living in us. He will watch over us, never leaving us. What does that do for you, the Holy Spirit guiding your life? Will He direct you to those who are ready to hear from you? Will He use you to move the other person along to the day when they will be ready? Could you be one more example of what a true Christian is like, having something more, something different than those people of the world? He will ready us for what He has for us each day.

John had baptized Jesus and the next day, he sees the baptized Jesus and points out that Jesus is going to do something greater than the baptism he was doing. Was there a discussion the day of Jesus' baptism about what went on that day? Were John's disciples there that day to see the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus? It doesn't say but when they see Jesus the next day, they want to know more.

John's comment of Jesus being the "Lamb of God" must have triggered the thought of the lamb of the Tenth Plague of Exodus 12 that was eaten on the night of the passover who's blood caused the Angel of death to pass over the houses of those who trusted in the Lord.

Andrew who then followed Jesus and the other disciple who some think might have been John would then go to witness to others of Jesus as the Messiah who was to come. Andrew went and told his brother Peter and we know from the scriptures, Peter became one of the three that we constantly see with James and John close to Jesus.

We are close to Jesus, so close that He lives in us through His Holy Spirit. He is watching over everything you do, everything you think. We might think the whole naughty and nice of Santa Claus is a kids thing but what about you? You have the Holy Spirit to direct you to do the nice.

Jesus was baptized and He came, as John said to baptize others, you and I, with the Holy Spirit to keep us to the day He calls us home to be with Him forever. He not only instilled the Holy Spirit in us to help us but along with our baptism through the water and the Word, He continues to come to us through His Word and through His very body and blood given us in His meal for us.

We have been baptize with the Holy Spirit. So many more are in need of the Holy Spirit to save them as well. They need the faith that the Holy Spirit gives, faith to believe the promises of God to His creation. We know that all who believe and are baptized will be saved. That is the message He has given us to relate to our world.