

Baptism of our Lord 1/7/24
Romans 6:1-11 B

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.

The Jordan River is filled with so many twists and turns that it's often called the most crooked river in the world. The Jordan River is more than 223 miles in length and can range between 33 feet to almost 100 feet in width. The depth of the river is normally anywhere from three feet to about 17 feet, which isn't counting flood stage. And, this is where John the Baptist set up shop, where he offered a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Specifically, he did this in Bethany, across the River Jordan and people came out to be baptized by him, confessing their sins.

The Evangelist Mark says that all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem came out to be baptized by John, confessing their sins. Now it's important to understand that "all the country" doesn't mean each and every citizen of that area, because we know that the pharisees and the teachers of the law refused to be baptized by John. But, we do know that the word "all" includes the crowds and it includes the tax collectors and it includes the soldiers. These people were as crooked as the river because they were so filled with sin.

And the Evangelist records their sins for us. The crowds -- they came and they confessed their sins to John. They asked what they should do and you get the idea that their sin must have been a failure to love their neighbor as themselves because John instructed them to give clothing and

food to those who didn't have them. The tax collectors came along and confessed that they were guilty of taking more in taxes than what they were required to collect. And, they would just take the difference and pocket it for themselves. The soldiers came. They were guilty of extortion, shaking down people for money. They were guilty of making false accusations against people and they were not content with their wages, which is a way of saying they were not content with what God provided for them. And, they came and confessed their sin to John.

And that's not all the sin that was confessed to John. We could add things like idolatry and refusal to learn and live by God's Word. We could add disrespect for those in authority and hatred, murder, lust, adultery, stealing, theft, lying, gossip, and coveting. We can add all those sins because those are the sins that we are guilty of; those are the sins we commit, because the word "all" represents all people of all time, in all places. "All" includes those people, including you, all who are born sinful and unclean; who sin against God and against one another by the things you say, the things you think, the things you do, and the things you decide you're not going to do.

These are the sins that are confessed to John and, at the Jordan River, these are the sins for which people receive baptism. This is all the nastiness that gets washed away and now lurk in the water of the Jordan River. You want to talk about a nasty place! You want to talk about a polluted river! I mean who would want to get into that water and splash around? Well, Jesus. Jesus does and Jesus did.

Mark tells us that when Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan, 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;

for with you I am well pleased". God the Father is pleased that Jesus got into the dirty, nasty, polluted waters because Jesus was born of virgin mother to take away the sins of the world. By Him getting in that water He is letting us know that He is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. God places all the sins of the world upon Him. So, when He gets in that water, Jesus who knew no sin, was made sin. He does that so that in Jesus, we can become the righteousness of God.

Jesus gets in that water to take the sins of the world upon Himself and, carrying that sin, He suffers the penalty that sin deserves. The Bible says the wages of sin is death and so Jesus suffers the death that all sinners deserve to die when He goes to the cross of Calvary. There He's crucified. There He suffers. There He bleeds the blood that cleanses you from all your sins. His dead body is taken down from that cross and wrapped in linen cloth and buried in the tomb. On the third day, He rises again. He rises to bring to you the forgiveness of sins, the deliverance from death and the devil, and the everlasting salvation that He won for you by dying upon that cross for you.

And, He delivers all that to you in another body of water. This body of water is only about 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide and 3 inches deep. It sits right there in the nave of the church. Many of you came to that water as infants carried in your parents' arms. Others came later in life. [Maybe it wasn't this particular font, but one just like it.](#) You came, each and every one of you, as sinners. Lurking under the surface of that water is the cross and the tomb and the resurrection of Jesus. Lurking beneath that water is the forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death and the devil, and the everlasting salvation that Jesus won for you. When you are washed with that water, you're crucified with Christ. You're buried with Him and you rise

again with Him and the forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death and the devil, everlasting salvation is given to you. The Apostle Paul points this out to you in the text for today when he says,

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.

In holy baptism, you die with Christ. You're buried with Christ. You rise with Christ. His victory becomes your victory. His new life becomes your new life, a life that is lived not in sin but a life that's lived in the righteousness of God. One in which God looks at you and sees the righteousness of Christ, such that He looks at you and says, "That's my beloved son, that's my beloved daughter; with you I am well pleased."

That is important for you remember and cherish, Dear Child of the Heavenly Father. I've said before and I say again, that the greatest challenge for any of us is to see ourselves as God sees us. From the very moment that God declares you His own child at the font of your Baptism, the father of all lies comes to haunt and taunt you throughout all the days of your life to convince you otherwise. The world comes to squeeze you into its mold, to make you find delight in the fleeting pleasures and treasures of sin. That's why, that's why, your baptism certificate is **where**? Hanging on your bedroom wall, so that it is the first thing you see when you open eyes from quiet slumber in the morning and the last thing you see before closing your eyes in sleep each night. That piece of paper tells you everything you need to know – in the body of water in which God washed you with His Word and that water, He made you His own child. And nothing – not your

own doubt and despair, not all the lies of Satan, not even death and hell itself, can unbaptize you.

In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.