

**Lessons for The Festival of the Baptism of our Lord**

**January 7, 2018**

Psalm 29 ~ *In this celebration of God's glory, the voice of the Lord speaks over the waters of creation.*

Genesis 1:1-5 ~ *God's creating Word and the power of His Spirit on the waters brought light to this world.*

Romans 6:1-11 ~ *Our own baptisms join us to Christ so that we are dead to sin and alive to God.*

Mark 1:4-11 ~ *When John baptized Jesus at the Jordan, our baptisms were filled with His righteousness.*

**GATHERING THE TEXTS:** Water and the Spirit

It was not simple water only that mixed with the swirling chaos at the creation of the world, but God's Word and His Spirit hovering over the waters that made the light and the beginning of the first day. It was not simply the water of the Jordan that washed the repentant with forgiveness when John was baptizing. As St. Paul explains it, the Word of God in the waters of Baptism connect Jesus' death to us so that we need not die again, but may live in the power of His resurrection, in Him and for Him, forever.

**PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE:** Heavenly Father, you reassured Jesus at His baptism that He was Your own Son and that You would be beside Him throughout His mission of redeeming the world. In Him I am Your child, adopted in a special way through His blood. Reassure me that You are always beside me in my journey through life; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT:** Because we have been baptized into Christ, our lives belong to Him, along with all we have. Our lives and our living are dedicated to God and His glory.

**OFFERING PRAYER:** Gracious God, You created the world and You created us.  
You called us to faith and joined us to Christ.  
Use these gifts of our hands for the glory of Your Kingdom  
To bring others to Christ and the waters of Baptism. Amen.

**CONVICTION AND COMFORT:** God's Word is powerful, whether it is spoken at the first moments of time to divide the light from the darkness, or whether it is incarnate in the flesh of Jesus, born of Mary and baptized by John. God's Word joined to the waters of Holy Baptism, powerfully connects us with the One who joined our sinful flesh in order to die our death to sin. That same Word has joined us to Himself, so that we now live with Him and for Him for eternity. When such a gift of grace doesn't make sense, all we can do is trust God's Word!

**EXTRA RESOURCE:**

**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.

--Gilbert A Franke, 12/15/2005