

Lessons for First Sunday after Epiphany The Baptism of our Lord January 13, 2013

Isaiah 43:1-7 – *God promised eternal support to His family, all who are called by His name.*

Psalm 29 (*Antiphon: Psalm 29:3*)

Romans 6:1-11 – *All who are baptized into Christ are joined to His death and resurrection.*

Luke 3:15-22 – *When Jesus was baptized, the Spirit affirmed John's witness that Jesus is the stronger One.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Baptized in His Name

This morning we celebrate a Baptism and a coronation. Jesus came to the Jordan River as the obedient Son and Servant of God. The heavens opened, the Spirit descended, and the Father announced: "This is my Beloved Son." Years later Saint Paul described what Jesus' baptism means for us when we are connected to His death and resurrection; we are dead to sin, and alive to live for God. Isaiah proclaimed that this faithful Servant would come to bring justice through gentleness to all who are baptized in his name.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: O Holy Spirit, present with your power at Jesus' baptism and at mine, as you have made me a child of God, so continue to make the mercy and forgiveness won by the Christ, the Servant of the Father, powerful in my life that I may be merciful and forgiving to others. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: The days, skills, and goods God has given us are like precious grain on the threshing floor to be gathered up and used for God's purpose as He calls His scattered children home. What kind of lives must we live to show them the love of the Father and the redemption we have in Christ Jesus?

OFFERING PRAYER:

Our worthless chaff and wasted deeds,
now dead in Christ and swept away,
leave righteous lives like precious seeds
to show God's mercy every day.
Lord, use these gifts to gather those who roam
far from the grace of God our Father's home. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: We are sons and daughters who have been scattered far from the family of God, and we live in a land of death. But the Lord who created us has called us by name and carried us through the waters of chaos to bring us to the waters of our Savior's baptism. Baptized in Christ, we are joined to His death as far as our sin is concerned and to His resurrection that we may live for Him. Gathered from the ends of the earth, we rejoice to be united to the One who is more powerful than sin and death. In the cross of Christ we are dead to sin; through His empty tomb we are alive in His righteousness!