

Readings Reflections

Epiphany: The Baptism of Jesus

The church season of Epiphany began January 6th with the telling of the story of the Wise Men arriving in Bethlehem to worship the new king of Israel, Jesus. This story is the first of several that reveal Jesus as God's Son. Today, we hear Luke's account of Jesus being baptized and announced as God's son. Do you believe this news? If so, will you allow it to affect your life? How?

Luke 3: 21-22

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Reflections

Into my family a first grandchild has been born. A time of great joy and hope for the child exists throughout my house. And as the song says, quoting from the Old Testament, 'As for me and my house, we're going to serve the Lord'. How does this child serve the Lord? What do we as Lutherans do to begin our service to the Lord?

Our faith tells us to begin in Baptism. So this child will be baptized in the coming weeks. Lutherans baptize infants, as well as adults, because, as Martin Luther teaches "Baptism is not bound to our faith, but to the Word." Scripture (the Word) teaches us that it is because of God's grace that we are received into His Kingdom, not on our merit or works, but only through His love.

Have you ever wondered why Jesus began His ministry with his own baptism? He was already in and of the Kingdom of God. There was no repentance for the forgiveness of sins needed, as

John calls for in Luke 3:3, Jesus is without sin. Yet, He is baptized. In the Matthew baptism story, Jesus even insisted that it was proper for John to baptize him. What is the significance of Jesus' baptism to you?

Baptism begins Jesus' ministry. At the end of His earthly ministry, He leaves us the Great Commission, telling us to: "...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Baptism begins and ends Jesus' earthly ministry. We believers now have a direct connection to Jesus through our baptism and our seeking to baptize all nations.

As our grandbaby begins her life and we anticipate with joy her baptism, we reflect on Jesus' actions and words. God's promise is fulfilled in Jesus; our obedience to His word is our loving response. For you and your house, how will baptism become a living action in your lives?

Readings

Monday, January 8

Luke 3: 21-22 God chooses the moment of Jesus' baptism to announce His love and pleasure in Jesus. How can remembering your own baptism connect you to God's love?

Tuesday, January 9

Acts 2: 36-41 Peter teaches repentance and baptism to the crowd and many were baptized. What are your challenges in proclaiming your baptism as the beginning of your relationship to Jesus Christ?

Wednesday, January 10

Acts 9: 15-19 Paul's ministry begins with baptism too. How will the gift of your baptism strengthen you in your ministry?

Thursday, January 11

Romans 6: 1-4 Paul connects Jesus' death to our baptism. Think of the ways that your baptism connects you personally to Jesus, how His death and resurrection provides you salvation, hope and joy and His Grace is for you.

Friday, January 12

Luke 3: 15-17 More than a ritual cleaning, baptism becomes through Jesus' baptism a connection to the Holy Spirit. Where does the Holy Spirit take you in your life? How often do you pause to listen?