

Baptism of our Lord
Sermon Text: Mark 1: 4-11
Related Text: Genesis 1:1-5
Acts 19:1-7
Date preached: January 11, 2009
Note: 3 baptisms.

Abraham, Mya and Danett, fear not! You have been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Members of St. Paul's fear not! You have been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Through baptism, God has connected you to himself. He has claimed you as his children. He has brought you into the family. God has made you brothers and sisters of one another.

Fear not, what God does, God keeps done. What that means is that God is not going to cast you out of his family. God may not be pleased with everything we do in life, God may not be pleased with every decision we make or with things we fail to accomplish, but that doesn't mean God will totally undo what has been accomplished.

God has claimed you as his children. In so doing, God has connected us to our Lord Jesus Christ. Plainly put, that makes Jesus our brother. Abraham, Mya, Danett, and all of us who have been baptized have Jesus as our brother.

He is the one who for us and for our salvation has suffered and died so that our sin would not separate us eternally from God. His blood is what seals the deal.

Think of what Jesus has done in this way. God walks into a room. There in the room you have two of his children fighting over a toy. You have two other children accusing each other of breaking a family heirloom. You have others waving things they have in front of their siblings who want that item, but can't have it.

In the midst of this God is about to punish everybody. After all there are rules in God's house. You don't steal from each other. You don't taunt each other. You don't fight. You respect the others belongings. All these rules are broken. All these children deserve timeout. What Jesus does is that he steps in and says to God, no, I'll take the punishment.

Its not fair. Jesus didn't do any of these things. Nonetheless, Jesus accepts the punishment. That is what Christ does for us when we lie, when we steal, when we taunt or call each other names, when we discriminate against other brothers and sisters, when we fail to help those in need, and so on and so on.

However, Jesus time out wasn't sitting on a chair in the corner. Jesus' time out came on a cross, and lasted three long days. During that time Jesus was dead. But death could not break Jesus from the connection he has to God. Likewise, because we are connected to Jesus in our baptism, fear not, not even death or anything that can cause us fear will be able to break that connection.

Over time however, it can be hard to remember that we are connected. Far too often we go about our lives thinking that we can do something without God's help, or we forget to thank God for helping us. Still there are others who don't share our beliefs and say that there is no God.

In those moments we are not alone. God reminds us that we are part of his family. God reminds us that Jesus has died for us. God has given us a helper in our daily lives. Jesus calls this helper, the Holy Spirit.

In baptism, Jesus received the Holy Spirit. Today, the Holy Spirit rests upon us. Sealed by the Holy Spirit, you Danett, Mya, Abraham and all of us who have been baptized have been marked with the cross of Christ forever.

Jesus baptism marked the beginning of what we refer to as his public ministry, the events that are recorded in the Gospels. Baptism also marks our beginning.

It marks the beginning of a new life in God's family, regardless of how old or young we are at the time of our baptism. Baptism marks the beginning of our understanding of what it means to be connected to God and to have Jesus as our brother.

For the Holy Spirit is at work at us, revealing as we go through life our purpose, our talents, our abilities and the ways we can use everything from our knowledge to our offerings to show God's love in the world through us. To show God's love is to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit. Fear not, trust in the Spirit to guide you in everything you do.

For by the power of the Holy Spirit, your life will shine like the light of the candle given in your baptism. Your life, lit from the life of Christ, will shine before the places you live, work, play and travel, so that all who see your good work will glorify God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.