

Daniel Waldschmidt – Baptism of our Lord – Luke 3:21-22 – January 13th, 2019

What would you say was the greatest day of your life? You might think of the day you got married or the birth of a child. You might think of the day you graduated or the day you got a big promotion at work. Those days are all great. But perhaps the greatest day of your life was the day you were baptized. It probably didn't look like much. Just a pastor pouring water over your head in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. You maybe were so young you don't even remember your baptism. But there in your baptism God washed away all your sins. There in your baptism he adopted you into his family. There in your baptism he connected you to Jesus and made you an heir of eternal life.

Today we are going to look at the blessings of baptism. And we are going to see that the blessings of baptism include I. power from the Spirit, II. assurance from the Father, and III. clothing from Christ.

First, baptism gives you power from the Spirit. As we look at our passage we see that Jesus received power from the Holy Spirit at his baptism. Today we are looking at the baptism of Jesus. At first we might wonder why Jesus was baptized. The Bible says that John's baptism was "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mark 1:4). But Jesus didn't have any sins to repent of. Jesus didn't have any sins to wash away. It's like if you were to go into your cupboard, take out a completely clean cup and wash it.

But even though Jesus did not need the forgiveness of sins offered in baptism, Jesus still received spiritual benefits from his baptism. One of the spiritual benefits that he received from his baptism is that the Holy Spirit descended on him and gave him power. It says, **"When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove" (Luke 3:21-22).**

The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus at his baptism. In the Bible, the Holy Spirit often gives people power. For example, in our first lesson for today it says that when David was anointed, the Holy Spirit gave him power. It says, **"from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David" (1 Samuel 16:13).** Later in the book of Acts the apostle Peter was talking about Jesus' baptism when he said, **"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power" (Acts 10:38).** And in the book of Isaiah it says about the coming Christ, **"The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him ... the Spirit of counsel and of might" (Isaiah 11:2).** When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended on him and gave him power.

But since Jesus is God didn't he already have all power? Yes Jesus is God and is therefore almighty. But the Bible says that when Jesus became a human being he humbled himself. That means that even though he never lost his power as God, he didn't always use it while he was on earth. Instead, according to his human nature he depended on the power that the Father and the Holy Spirit gave him.

He did what God wants us to do: not depend on our own power but to depend on God's power. Notice that in this passage Jesus is praying. It says, **"And while he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him" (Luke 3:21-22).** One of the things we are doing when we pray is we are showing that we are not depending on our own strength or intelligence, but we are instead asking God for help. Jesus didn't use his strength as God, but rather depended on his Father and the Father sent him the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit gave him power.

What did the Holy Spirit give Jesus power to do? One thing the Holy Spirit gave Jesus power to do was to fight off the devil's temptations. Right after his baptism, Jesus went into the desert for 40 days and was tempted by the devil. Luke 4:1 says, **"Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the**

wilderness, where for 40 days he was tempted by the devil" (Luke 4:1). It says Jesus was "full of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit helped Jesus fight off the devil's temptations.

We sometimes wonder, where can I get the spiritual power to fight temptation? Where can I get the spiritual power to live my faith in my home and in my workplace? Well, Jesus got power from the Holy Spirit who descended on him at his baptism. The Bible says that you also received the Holy Spirit when you were baptized. In our second lesson today it said, "**God saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior**" (Titus 3:5-6). In baptism, God poured out the Holy Spirit on you and the Holy Spirit gives you power to fight the devil's temptations and live a life of love in your home and in the workplace.

Our baptism is a powerful tool that we sometimes neglect to use. Imagine that your job was to cut big wood logs. And every day you went out to saw wood with a little hand saw, even though the whole time you had a huge power saw tucked away in your garage. Someone would say to you, "You have a powerful tool. Use it!" Sometimes, sadly, we treat our baptism like a forgotten tool tucked away in our garage. Our baptism is a powerful tool. Let's take it out and use it! Let's think about our baptisms every day. Let's think about how in our baptisms God gave us the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit gives us power to fight the devil's temptations!

And let's ask God to continue to give us the Holy Spirit. Remember that Jesus was praying when the Holy Spirit descended on him. Later in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is teaching his disciples about prayer and he says, "**Your Father in heaven will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him**" (Luke 11:13). So let's remember that God gave us the Holy Spirit in our baptism. And let's ask God to continue to give us the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit will give us power to fight temptation and to live our faith. So one blessing given to us at our baptism is power from the Spirit.

Another blessing given to us in baptism is assurance from the Father. Another miraculous thing that happened at Jesus' baptism is "**a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son whom I love; with you I am well pleased'**" (Luke 3:22). Notice that the voice is specifically addressed to Jesus "*You* are my Son, whom I love; with *you* I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22). Matthew records the voice as saying "This is my Son." There is no contradiction, both give the substance of what the Father said. The gospel writers are just bringing out different aspects of what the Father was saying. By recording, "This is my Son," Matthew was emphasizing that this voice was meant for us, to tell us who Jesus is. God wants us to realize that Jesus is the Son of God. By recording "You are my Son, with you I am well pleased," Mark and Luke are emphasizing that this voice was also meant for Jesus to encourage him.

Because you see this day was a wonderful day for Jesus. He saw heaven opened. But there would be days ahead that heaven would seem to be closed to Jesus. There would be discouraging days when many would reject his message and he would face strong opposition. On days like that he would have to remember the voice of his Father, "You are my Son. I love you." And then of course there was the dark day when heaven really was closed to Jesus. When he hung on the cross, Jesus took the punishment for your sins and mine. On that day all had to hang onto was things like the memory of the voice of his Father at his baptism. "You are my Son. I love you."

Do you ever have discouraging days? Days when the clouds seem to hide God's face? On days like that, remember the words that were spoken over you at your baptism. "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Those words tell you what family you belong to. Your last name tells you what family you belong to. You were baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit because at your baptism God adopted you into his family.

The Bible says that you were baptized into Christ (Romans 6:1; Galatians 3:27). That means that when you were baptized you united to Christ and when God looks at you, he sees you in Christ. And because God sees you in Christ, God also says to you, "You are my Son. You are my daughter. I love you. With you I am well pleased." When we have discouraging days, we can think back to our baptism and hear the voice of the Father assure us: "You are my child. I love you." So that's the second blessing we get from baptism: assurance from the Father.

Finally the third blessing we get from our baptism is clothing from Christ. We said that Jesus received spiritual blessings at his baptism. The Holy Spirit descended on him and gave him power. He got assurance from the Father. So Jesus received spiritual blessings at his baptism. Another reason Jesus was baptized was to associate himself with sinners.

Notice that Luke mentions Jesus baptism along with the baptism of all the other people. **"When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too" (Luke 3:21).** Jesus was baptized to associate himself with us sinners whom he came to save.

The voice of the Father also identifies Jesus as the one who came to save us sinners. The Father says, **"You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."** "With you I am well pleased" is a reference to a Bible passage from Isaiah 42:1. Isaiah 42:1 says, **"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight (that's another way of saying "with him I am well pleased") I will put my Spirit on him."** By referring to this Bible passage from Isaiah, God is saying, "Jesus is the servant whom Isaiah was talking about." And Isaiah went on in Isaiah 53 to talk more about what this Servant of the LORD would do. There it says, **"He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was on him and by his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).** Baptism washes away our sins because it connects us to what Jesus did on the cross. In baptism Jesus washes away all of our sins and in exchange he also clothes us in his own righteousness. Galatians chapter 3 says, **"All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:27).** In baptism Jesus washes away your sins and clothes you with his own righteousness so that you can stand before God clothed in the perfect righteousness and holiness of Christ.

So you can see why the day of your baptism really was one of the greatest days of your life. Think about your baptism often. Because in your baptism you have power from the Spirit, assurance from the Father and clothing from Christ. Amen.