

January 10th, 2020

Genesis 1: 1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19: 1-7; Mark 1: 4-11

Baptism of Our Lord, b

As Jesus rises from his baptism He is filled with the Holy Spirit and from Him, all others, including you and me, have received the Holy Spirit. We often give baptism as the time we receive the Holy Spirit.

As some of you know, I grew up in a Baptist church. In the Baptist faith, to be saved and therefore baptized, one professes their faith as their personal Savior as a believer, usually around eight or nine years old, if the family has been faithful in attending worship. As I was nearing that age, I asked my Dad what age people were usually saved and baptized. He told me usually around eight. I told him I was going to be 88. I absolutely did not want to go forward and have everybody hugging and kissing all over me and I certainly was not interested in being baptized.

Sometime later, however, days, weeks, months, I'm not certain, I awakened in the middle of the night. Even though my parents were right in the next room, I was scared, but not sure of what. I found myself looking in my mind for Jesus, envisioning him as I had seen pictures of him in Sunday school. I cried out to Daddy. Unbelievably he

heard me in his sound sleep. Yet, perhaps he was awakened by more than my cry.

Daddy came into my room. I was crying, not loudly, just tears. He knew I was troubled, but not quite sure about what. He helped me get up and brought me to a rocking chair and pulled me up onto his lap. I said in my tears, "Daddy, I want to be saved." He waited a minute and said, "You want Jesus?" "Yes", I said. Then he prayed, "Jesus, Freda wants you in her heart. Thank you for being here with her." He rocked me a little more, and finally, actually carried me back to my bed.

I remember to this day, pulling up the covers, breathing so evenly and calmly and slipping into sleep.

Yes, within time, I went forward and yes, all the ladies hugged and kissed all over me, but it seemed more tolerable than I had anticipated. And yes, I was baptized, immersed in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When I came up out of the water, no I did not see a vision or anything out of the ordinary, but I did feel whole; I felt as one with something, which now, I believe was the Holy Spirit.

This is my story related to my baptism. Those who are baptized as infants have an entirely different story, but none less meaningful. Often when we are baptized as infants, our faith story begins to take shape early in our lives, including our confirmation of our baptism when we

very seriously begin to wonder, just what did our baptism mean and what is it like to acknowledge it –and live in it.

For those who have their faith secured in Jesus Christ, there is a presence experienced within, the presence of the Holy Spirit. We don't know if Jesus ever baptized anyone –with water. What we do know is that he baptized with the Holy Spirit, and we, as believers in him, have experienced that.

And is this not what we learn from our lesson when John the Baptist says, “I have baptized you with water, but He, Jesus, will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” So from Jesus on, those of Christian faith have been baptized with the Holy Spirit. Because, what did we hear in our lesson from Acts? There were those talking to Paul, who had been baptized with the baptism of repentance. Paul told the people to believe in Jesus. On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Paul laid his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came upon them.

We are baptized into and within the presence of the Holy Spirit. We may ask, what about those who are baptized as believers, rather than infants. Actually we have no answer. Some may have an answer that they are doomed to hell because they are not baptized as infants, but most do not believe that. Most believe that God is gracious and

perhaps even bathes us in the Holy Spirit while we are in our mother's womb, such as, no doubt, might have been the case with John the Baptist. Remember how John the Baptist leaped in his mom's womb when she met with Mary, who was soon to be the mother of Jesus. Could that not have been the Holy Spirit rejoicing within John the Baptist even before John was born?

Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has been gracious to give us the Holy Spirit. Some of us commemorate that gift at infancy, some at adolescence. Yet, regardless of *when* we commemorate the gift of the Holy Spirit, infancy, adolescence, adulthood, the gift of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ is with us, from *our* beginning to *our* end. John the Baptist said, "I have baptized you with the baptism of repentance. *Jesus* will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Yes, he has.

Amen,

Pastor Scales

