

January 12, 2025 – First Sunday after the Epiphany The Baptism of our Lord

First Reading: Isaiah 43:1-7

1 - Thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

2 - When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

What life experiences have been for you like passing through waters, passing through rivers, and walking through fire?

How did your faith in God help you during those times of your life?

Psalm 23: 4 – Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.

Daniel 3: 25 – Nebuchadnezzar – “I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the fourth has the appearance of a god.”

For Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace – the only thing that burned were the ropes that had been used to bind them.

4 - You are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you,

5 - Do not fear, for I am with you;

I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you.

Psalm: Psalm 29

2 - Ascribe to the LORD the glory due God's name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

3 - The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders.

4 - The voice of the LORD is a powerful voice; the voice of the LORD is a voice of splendor.

5 - The voice of the LORD breaks the cedar trees; the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

6 - The LORD makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.

7 - The voice of the LORD bursts forth in lightning flashes.

8 - The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

9 - The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests bare.

In the temple of the LORD all are crying, "Glory!"

10 - The LORD sits enthroned above the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forevermore.

11 - O LORD, give strength to your people; give them, O LORD, the blessings of peace.

When and how have you experienced the power of the voice of the Lord?

Genesis 1: 3 – God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

Mark 2: 5 – Jesus to the paralytic – “Your sins are forgiven.”

Mark 4: 39 – Jesus rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!”

John 8: 11 – Jesus to woman caught in adultery – “Neither do I condemn you; go your way, and from now on do not sin again.”

John 11: 43 – “Lazarus, come out!”

Luke 23: 34 – “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

Luke 23: 43 – Jesus to repentant thief – “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

How does experiencing God's love and strength give you strength and peace?

Second Reading: Acts 8:14-17

Peter and John are sent to support the new Christians in Samaria, a group that was recently baptized after hearing the good news of Christ through the preaching of Philip. Here the Samaritans receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in the laying on of hands.

Acts 8: 5 – The disciple with the Greek culture name (Philip) is the one who brought the Gospel to Samaria.

Acts 8: 26-39 – He is also the one who shared the Gospel with the Ethiopian eunuch.

John 12: 20-21 – He is the one whom the Greeks who had come to worship at the festival approached with their request – “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”

Philip must have been more comfortable/adept/skilled than others in cross-cultural ministry. How comfortable are you with relating to people – talking about your faith with people - who are ethnically, culturally, and/or linguistically different from you?

14-16 - Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus).

17 - Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

In this instance people who have already been baptized with water later receive the Holy Spirit. In Acts 10: 47-48 people who have already received the Holy Spirit are baptized with water. The point of Acts 8 is the evangelistic expansion to Samaritans, not to establish as the norm receiving the Holy Spirit through a subsequent laying on of hands.

Gospel: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

21-22 - Now 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.”

All three persons of the Trinity – God the Son being baptized, God the Holy Spirit descending in bodily form like a dove, God the Father speaking from heaven.

“You are my Son, the Beloved” – also Mark 1: 11/ Matthew 3: 17 - “This is my Son, the Beloved”

Psalm 2: 7 – “You are my son; today I have begotten you.”

*Prayer of the Day – proclaimed to be the beloved Son vs. adopted as the beloved Son
Heresy of adoptionism*

2010 Best Picture – “The King’s Speech”

There are only three times when the Gospels record the words of God the Father

Luke 3: 22 - at Jesus’ baptism

Matthew 17: 5 – at the Transfiguration – “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!”

*John 12: 28 – after some Greeks came to Philip – “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”
The Father is well pleased with the Son – the Father tells us to listen to the Son – the Father will glorify His Name*