**Matthew 3:13-17**

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. **14**  John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” **15** But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. **16** And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; **17** and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

**“God’s Chosen Servant”**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father who called us out from darkness into the light of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen. A couple of days ago was the celebration of Epiphany. While the culture has gone on with life, the church stops on January 6th to close out Christmas. It was one last time to adore the Christ child with those magi from the east. They arrived late to the party, but God still had room for these gentiles to worship His Son. Except, following the light of that star turned out to be only for a select few. Everything around the birth of Jesus was actually far more private then anything public.

Today we face how the baptism of Jesus has become the light greater than any star over Bethlehem. Our nation now will very soon inaugurate a new president. This will verify publicly what we already know from the elections. The baptism of Jesus is how He enters into His public ministry. Everyone is to know Him to be the Christ. He is the Savior God had promised long ago. Many in our present day seek to be spiritual, but not religious. Yet, the reality of Jesus’ baptism reveals not a religion, but the reason why God saves sinners. We are moved from judgment and placed into Jesus. So this means the church exists from baptism and lives in baptism. There is no way to be spiritual without living through baptism where Jesus fulfills all righteousness for us.

1. **Living through baptism is no longer to be your own person.**
2. John knew this reality for he called all to repent and be baptized.

* The Day of Judgement was certain and none could put it off.
* The most upright and spiritual were put under the God’s microscope who knew their hearts.
* Yet, when Christ came to John, this last great prophet put on the breaks.
* The one mightier than John with the winnowing fork gave up His glory to join sinners in baptism.

1. You are no longer your own person.

* People who go into the military have an identity crisis and the same happened to us by means of water and God’s Word.
* St. Paul says, “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”
* Forgiveness changed everything for you became a new person by God’s grace who now looks in faith to Jesus.
* He who comes again to judge the living and the dead has already joined Himself to you in baptism.

1. **Living through baptism is to see how Jesus will do the saving.**
2. John had to come to terms with Christ being the sin-bearer.

* If baptism was life for everyone else, the sinless Son of God saw His death with those waters were carrying Him to the cross.
* John baptizing Jesus was “to fulfill all righteousness” which meant fulfilling what Scripture laid down for salvation.
* All attention was now on Jesus being the Servant for, “He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth…”
* Only by baptizing Jesus was John later able to boast, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)

1. Jesus is still doing the saving.

* Spirituality today is about satisfaction in the hands of man, but God uses His hand to deliver any by water and His Word.
* This is receiving a righteousness that flows out from the cross of Christ who died and rose for sinners.
* Since no one waits to clothe a child at birth, the same is true for clothing him or her in Christ.
* Rather than a ritual of man, baptism joined us to His Church, redeems our life daily, and lets us die with life in Jesus.

1. **Living through baptism is the advantage of God fighting for us.**
2. John saw the benefit of what came out of the water with Jesus.

* It was a miraculous event proving the Triune God goes before us to bring the victory.
* The Heavens opened to Jesus, since His baptismal Name is above all names.
* What descends is the Spirit to rest on Jesus, because He is God with us.
* At last, the Father is well pleased for His Son will suffer and die for sinners.

1. The advantage of God fighting for us is what we have.

* If a hostile world is against the church, this mission holds true, “Go therefore 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)
* Though we are only a sinner, baptism has brought a new creation where Christ has made room for the Holy Spirit who fights with and in us.
* When the darkest clouds of life come, the heavens remain open for the righteousness of Jesus shines so you can say, “I am baptized.”
* Since Jesus was beloved by His Father, joined to Jesus we become beloved children of a family that prays, “Our Father who art in heaven…”

If our times today are about mocking God, trampling upon what is good and holy, and a running after self-indulgence. The baptism of Jesus speaks to the many who have been baptized. God has spoken, “I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon…” It is to consider now every part of our life not by way of the flesh, but with baptism and the Spirit. The devil sees you are no longer a friend. The world does despise who you are in Christ. Our sinful flesh even still wants its fair share. Yet, Jesus stands with us as He did at His baptism. We witness Him being God’s Chosen Servant as He continues to come by His Word and Sacrament. More than fancying spiritually, this Jesus is faithfully calling us to His forgiveness, life, and salvation. Living through baptism promises that Jesus fulfills all righteousness for us. Amen. Now the peace of Christ, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.