

# Sermon for The Baptism of Our Lord

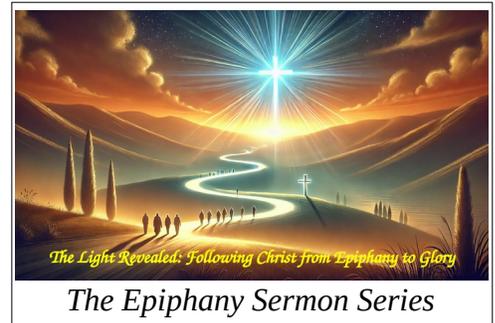
**Date:** January 19, 2025

**Location:** Zion – Colby, WI

**Old Testament:** Isaiah 42:1–7

**Epistle Reading:** Romans 6:3–11

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 3:13–17



**Sermon Text:** Matthew 3:13–17

**Sermon Series:** The Light Revealed

**Sermon Title:** Baptized and Beloved



**Introit:** Psalm 2:7–11; Antiphon: Isaiah 42:1

## Hymns:

LSB 601 – All Who Believe and Are Baptized

LSB 405 – To Jordan’s River Came Our Lord (v.1-3,5)

LSB 594 – God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It (v.1,2,5)

## Distribution:

LSB 404 – Jesus, Once with Sinners Numbered

LSB 617 – O Lord, We Praise Thee

LSB 590 – Baptized into Your Name Most Holy

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**Text: Matthew 3:13–17**

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”

But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”

Then he consented. 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; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

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Grace to you, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

## Introduction

Imagine standing by a small river early on a crisp morning. The air is quiet, the frost glistens on the trees and dead grasses are poking up through the snow, as the first rays of sunlight begin to dance on the water. It's a scene that almost feels sacred.



In general, in this part of the country, water is something we don't think about too much. There's usually plenty of it around. Perhaps we take notice of it more in its surplus: whether it's hauling it for livestock, keeping pipes from freezing, or dealing with flooded fields in spring.

Today we are looking at the baptism of Jesus. Today, I want you to think about water differently. Not just as something to: use, survive, or provide, but as something that provides life in a whole new way. Today in the "Bible in a Year" plan you will read about Abraham's faith in offering Isaac. I'd like to you see how this, in some ways, ties to Jesus' baptism. Both reflect complete trust in following the Father's plan. There is a connection between obedience and the promise of life.

The baptism of Jesus isn't just a story to marvel at. It is an historical account recorded in Scripture by eyewitness who were actually there. It's a revelation of who Jesus is, and what He came to do. It's also a reminder of who you are because of your Baptism.

## The Revelation of Jesus' Identity



The account of Jesus' baptism is one of the most profound moments in Scripture.<sup>1</sup> Try to picture the scene: Jesus steps into the Jordan River. John hesitates at first, then baptizes Him, and then something extraordinary happens. The heavens open, the Spirit descends like a dove, and a voice from heaven declares, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased."<sup>2</sup>

This moment isn't just about Jesus getting wet. This is Jesus being revealed to the people as the Son of God, as the fulfillment of prophecy,<sup>3</sup> and as the Savior who will redeem us all. Isaiah 42 speaks of the servant whom God upholds:

Behold My servant, whom I uphold,  
My chosen in whom I delight;  
I have put My Spirit upon Him;  
He will bring forth justice to the nations.<sup>4</sup>

Here at the Jordan, we see that Servant in flesh and blood.

1 Matthew 3:13–17

2 Matthew 3:17

3 Genesis 3:15

4 Isaiah 42:1

So why did Jesus, the Sinless-One, need to be baptized? Jesus' baptism wasn't for His own need of cleansing, repentance or forgiveness. It was to fulfill all righteousness,<sup>5</sup> to fulfill Scriptures statutes. Jesus came to completely fulfill God's will and plan for your salvation. He is baptized to: commune with you, identify with you, and tabernacle with you.

Jesus didn't need forgiveness, but He did need to fully align Himself with God's will for us. On Friday in the "Bible in a Year plan" you will see Jacob's name being changed to Israel (Wrestles with God). This was to reaffirm his identity in God's covenant promise. That is true for you too. Holy Baptism shapes our identity as God's child, marking us as His own. Jesus' identity with us is found in His baptism where He is identifying with sinners and takes the first step on His journey to the cross. It is a part of the process of Him joining us, walking with us, Immanuel<sup>6</sup>-ing with us. He is being "God with us." He enters the water to stand with us, showing He would take onto Himself the burden of our load of sin.

Through His baptism Jesus began His mission of redeeming you, buying you back from slavery to Satan. He is joining you in your struggles and brokenness. He is joining you in your walk through life. Jesus enters into our Baptism so we can receive His righteousness. We bring our: sin, filth and flaws to be washed off onto Him. He brings His: perfection and perfectness to wash onto us. That filth that covers Him He will carry to the cross.

## The Power of Baptism

Baptism isn't just water or getting wet. It is water combined with God's Word, God's promise, and the teaching of that Word and promises. Being Baptized into Christ<sup>7</sup> changes everything. It's where we receive our identity<sup>8</sup> as God's loved and adopted children.



Think about what Holy Baptism does to you. It washes away sin, just like spring rain washes away the grime from a long winter. This week as you "Pray the Psalm" today, you can celebrate God's justice and power. Today's Psalm Prayer reminds us it is through Baptism we find our trust in God's power to: cleanse, renew, and declare us His own. Baptism does more than clean us. It marks us. It puts God's seals on us. In Baptism, God places His name on you: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, marking us as His own possession.<sup>9</sup> That's not just any name. It is the name that declares to all, you are His own.<sup>10</sup> The Bible says:

But now thus says the Lord,  
He who created you,...  
He who formed you,... says,  
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you.  
I have called you by name, you are Mine."<sup>11</sup>

5 Matthew 3:15

6 'Immanuel' is a Hebrew word that means: The God of Creation walking with us.

7 Romans 6:3-5

8 Galatians 3:27

9 Matthew 28:19

10 Galatians 3:27; Isaiah 43:1; 1 Corinthians 12:13

11 Isaiah 43:1 (*Paraphrased*)

It is in that very moment where God declares, “You are mine” and promises you a new life and the gift of the Holy Spirit. It marks us, it brands us (in a fashion) like cattle, but marking us as one redeemed, saved, by Christ, in love we could never earn. This mark signifies ownership and care, reminding us of God’s declaration,

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name.  
You are mine.<sup>12</sup>

That makes us special to Him, and cared for and protected by Him. Your worth to God is not what earned His love. His love earned your worth. Worth ascribed to you at your Holy Baptism.

Romans 6 explains:

We were buried with Him through Baptism into death so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.<sup>13</sup>

Holy Baptism unites us with Jesus, grafting us into His death and also His resurrection. In Holy Baptism and the teaching of God’s Word we receive both.

### **Living as God’s Beloved**

Baptism also isn’t a past event. It is a present and always ongoing reality. We drown the Old Adam, that old sinful self, in our Baptism each and everyday.<sup>14</sup> Imagine it like that spring-cleaning after a long winter. It freshens and restores. It is a daily task to shovel out the grime and prepare you for new growth in faith each day. We repent, turn away from sin daily, allowing the new person in Christ to shine,<sup>15</sup> reflecting the Light of Christ and living before God in righteousness and purity forever.<sup>16</sup>



When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended on Him and empowered Him for His mission, driving Him forward.<sup>17</sup> The same Spirit works in you, through your Holy Baptism, changing you. The Bible says:

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?<sup>18</sup>

It is no longer about who you were. It is about who you are, and who you are becoming. Luther put it so wisely and simply in the Small Catechism:

Baptism signifies that the old Adam in us should be drowned, and a new person should daily emerge and arise to live before God.



12 Isaiah 43:1

13 Romans 6:4

14 Romans 6:6

15 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24

16 Luke 1:75

17 Matthew 4:1

18 1 Corinthians 6:19

Everyday, as we slog through the challenges of life, whether it's fixing frozen pipes, wrestling with icy roads, or managing kids who seem to have endless energy to do anything and everything but their daily chores, we are reminded we are God's precious possession. We are called to live in His love and grace.

Being God's child isn't about just feeling good. It's not "all about me." It's a calling. Holy Baptism empowers us to reflect Jesus' love to others. It might mean lending a hand to a neighbor, forgiving someone who wronged you, or sharing the hope you have in faith. On Friday as you "Pray the Psalms" let those verses remind you of God's protection and faithfulness. These are qualities of God that give us confidence to live out our baptismal life every day.

## Conclusion

Jesus' baptism wasn't just a ceremony. Neither was yours. Jesus' baptism was a declaration, a proclamation of His mission and identity as the Son of God and your Savior. Through Holy Baptism, you are given the same declaration. God says over you, "You are My beloved child."<sup>19</sup>

This week, as you step outside and see the snow glistening under the morning sun, or just feel the water running from the tap, let it remind you of your Baptism, your identity in Jesus. An identity given to you by God.



Take a pause this week, even if it's just for a second, and reflect on how you can take that to heart, and practice out loud and on purpose, your identity as God's child: forgiven, loved, and empowered to share His grace with others. Remember who you are: A child of of the God-King-Emperor-of-the-created-Universe-and-Author-of-life. You are one called to live in His mercy, protection and grace.

You can start that by soaking up His light in those plans I gave you. In "Read the Bible in a Year" or "Praying the Psalms in a Year." When you soak up that Light you will reflect that Light.



Next week, we are going to explore how Jesus calls us to follow Him into the light, as He says, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."<sup>20</sup>

You won't want to miss that. Amen.



Proclaiming God's Word.  
Encouraging one another in faith.  
Witnessing to God's love.  
Serving all people.



<sup>19</sup> Matthew 3:17  
<sup>20</sup> John 8:12

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