

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Rev. Taek Kim

Scripture: Matthew 3:13-17

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, 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 it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

A family went to church for the first time, and after service someone asked the 11-year old daughter what she thought of the service.

"I don't understand why the West Coast isn't included too," she replied. When we inquired what she meant, she added, "You know, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the whole East Coast." (Ann Spivack, Reader's Digest)

The mystery of the Trinity is before us as we read of the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus like a dove. Jesus, fully God and fully human, emptied himself for the world. He was not alone, as we are never alone. And when Jesus left his disciples after his resurrection, he told them that he would not leave them abandoned or orphaned. He promised the very Holy Spirit, the very spirit of God that raised him from the dead, would live within each of them and every believer.

From Christian Theology in Plain Language, I read, "Within his own mysterious being God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The designations are just ways in which God is God. Within the Godhead there are three "persons" who are neither three Gods nor three parts of God, but coequally and coeternally God." (Christian Theology in Plain Language, p. 143)

It was during Christ's baptism that we are shown three-persons of God. Some of you remember being baptized as a youth or as an adult. Some of you do not remember your actual baptism because you were baptized as an infant or young child.

One point of clarification is that salvation is not based on baptism. Neither is it dependent on any sacrament, such as Holy Communion. It is by faith one is saved. Thus, the baptism of the Holy Spirit comes at the time of spiritual rebirth.

Baptism is a public expression of faith and the receiving of God's grace and sanctifying work of Jesus Christ in one's own life. Baptism is one's entry and membership into a local church.

Baptism is entering into covenant with God in which he promises to be their God and the people promises to follow God all their days.

In baptism water is used as a symbol of God's cleaning power and life-giving source. Jesus said of himself that he is the living water that eternally quenches one's spiritual thirst.

Without God having acted first, we would be unable to move toward God. The good news is that in Jesus Christ, God has acted to make salvation possible. What God offers us must be accepted in repentance and faith. Confirmation and reaffirmation are our responses of commitment, profession of faith, and rededication.

Returning to this morning is Scripture lesson, we read that Jesus came to the Jordan, to John (his cousin) to be baptized as many others had.

Upon thinking more about John not feeling worthy to baptize Jesus, I thought of our relationship with Jesus and how we may not feel at times we are worthy of Jesus' presence or work in our lives, asking of us of our service in his ministry. We may feel unworthy or not holy enough for some of the tasks or ministries God calls us to do or serve. We may tell Jesus that he needs to find someone else to do such a job for him.

But if we really think about what Christ calls us to do, it is not all about us or what we think Christ wants us to accomplish. Our obedience and our calling are about Jesus Christ more than it is about us. As John the Baptist was thinking of how unworthy he was, Jesus was thinking of his obedience to his Heavenly Father and the purpose of saving the world.

We must see how Christ seeks to continue his saving work in and through us, even when we feel broken, and unworthy of such holy tasks.

God has much for us to do that involve his kingdom building. But God does not give us more than we can handle nor jobs we cannot accomplish. For God's work will be done, whether we feel worthy or not, whether we feel competent or not, and whether we feel as though we succeeded or failed. For when God has holy works to do, we must trust that he will provide all that we need to complete what he has set out for us to do. Whether it is in our families, in our jobs, in our studies, or any place or with any one, we must remember who we are and whose we are.

When we remember Christ's baptism, and when we remember our baptism, we remember that God loved us first, that Jesus Christ fulfilled the new covenant that we may be reborn by spirit and water, and that as God's children we are more than conquerors in Christ.

How have you experienced the presence, working, and power of God and the Holy Spirit in your life? What are the evidences of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives? Do we and others see them?

Baptism shows us what it means to be "in Christ." Being joined with Christ when we are saved is like being placed into water, completely covered. We are not seen except through the water, as we are not seen by God except through Christ. When God the father sees us, he sees us in and through the filter of Christ.

Luther said we should begin every day remembering that we are baptized. When we feel the water on our faces in the morning, it should remind us of the waters of baptism. To do so is to enter each day with a renewed sense of ministry. Who will I meet today? How will my activities today be a ministry to others? How can I share the dessert first with others, in this community of faith and beyond? May your life and love be a reflection of knowing how God loves you through the saving grace of Jesus Christ and presence of God's Holy Spirit within you.

Remember, baptism is an act of dedicating your life to God, representing life cleansed and renewed. At times we may feel such peace like a dove, and at other moments we may feel the power and passion of God's love in our hearts as if there was fire within us. And there are times when we need to stop in the midst of all that is going on in our lives and to take time and be still; to be still and know he is God and he is with us. God wants us to experience his presence and to make his presence known to others through every aspect of our lives. So, as often as you can, take time to remember your baptism.

Though some find it hard at times to comprehend, by God's Holy Spirit we have the power and presence of God within us, making us able for his good works.

In Romans 8, verses 10-11 we are told the Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives in us as disciples of Christ. And Christ is always with us always.

"Anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him." 1 Corinthians 6:17

Go and live for God knowing He is with you and even within you, making you able to live and love for Him in all times and circumstances. Amen.

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

Jean Baker and Cheryl Marlow thanks everyone for all the prayers for their brother George Maxwell. He was released from the hospital and will have a visiting nurse and therapy at home. Please continue to pray as he recovers.

PRAYER REQUEST

Jamie's mom, Becki, as she has been having headaches and double vision last week, and after an MRI was found to have had a mini-stroke. Thank you for your prayers.

Prayers requested for our John and Kathie Brazon's brother-in-law's father, Mike, who was hospitalized with pneumonia (which caused sepsis) and was found that he has cancer in many of his organs Prayers for the Robson family during this time.

