

JUST-A-MINUTE – for the First Sunday after Epiphany, January 11, 2009

If Christmas is about showing how God becoming human in Jesus, Epiphany is about showing how this man Jesus is God's Son. Which is the point of this Sunday's celebration of the Festival of the Baptism of Our Lord. The Gospel is **Mark 1:4-11**

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Questions for Discussion

- (1) "Baptize" is a Greek word which means "to wash" or "to bathe." When people let John "bathe" them, they did that as a sign of their repentance. Is our Sacrament of Baptism today a sign of our repentance? Or a sign of God's forgiveness?
- (2) Note this difference: John said the coming one would baptize with Holy Spirit, rather than with water. In fact, Jesus was baptized in water, and the Spirit descended on him. What do you make of that?
- (3) The heavenly voice declared that Jesus is "my beloved son." Is that the point of our baptisms, that we are "God's beloved children"?

A Prayer for Epiphany 1

Holy God, creator of light and herald of goodness, at the waters of his baptism you proclaimed Jesus your beloved Son. With the baptized of every time and generation, may we say yes to your call to repentance and be led to the life of abundance we experience in your kinship and your love. Amen.

(RCL Prayers, p. 55)

Blessings to you this Epiphanytide – *Pastor Mark Wegener*
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