

Baptism of our Lord  
Sermon Text: Romans 6:1-11  
Related text: Luke 3:15-22  
Date preached: January 10, 2016

In the course of the church year, there are four occasions where baptism is particularly emphasized. Each of those occasions is also marked with a specific focus related to baptism.

Today, the church remembers Jesus' baptism. Matthew and Luke tell of Jesus baptism in such a way as to highlight Jesus and to diminish the superstardom of John that had been percolating among John's followers.

Now Luke's telling of this event highlights the unique nature of this moment. The nature is the intimacy of prayer among the Triune God. In the midst of his baptism, Jesus is praying.

Of course, maybe you'd expect Jesus to be praying in that moment. Notice also the presence of the Holy Spirit descending upon Him. Notice also the voice of God in Jesus' prayer as he listens. He hears God say, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Again, you may be expecting such an intimacy to be on display. Yet the impact of this event has great

meaning for the people we don't see specifically named. This opens the door for you. In Jesus' baptism, the Kingdom of God is opening that we might be drawn into such intimacy with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Like an infant brought to the font to be united into the holiness of God, we can't appreciate fully the grace that is being wrapped around us in the moment. In this moment we are bonded together, with God and with each other.

In being bonded to God, we are bonded to Christ and his life. To be joined to Christ in baptism is to die with Christ on the cross. For only in dying with Christ on the cross can we be fully purged of our sinful, diseased, evil nature and raised up to new life.

Christ has accomplished this work of binding us to himself, with the Father and the Holy Spirit. It means that in times of uncertainty, the certainty we can cling to is that we have been made a new person in Christ. No earthly circumstance changes that truth.

When you are the subject of mockery, when you are betrayed by the one you considered a friend, when you have been bullied, those people cannot change

your identity as a child of God. You are bonded to Christ, your brother, your Lord and your Savior.

Now, there are implications to this bond. The resurrection life that we are given isn't just something we get when we die. Romans six brings out the implications clearly.

In your baptism, you have died to sin. You are alive in Christ. This means living our lives in such a way as rejecting the things in life that lead us from God.

Look at this picture of a resurrected life, one in which we must as it is written in Romans 6:11, "consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

A resurrection life is one in which disciples of Jesus Christ are made, the faith of our ancestors is taught, and one in which we go forth baptizing. We hear it expressed in Matthew 28:19-20.

"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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. (And remember this promise from Jesus) And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

A resurrection life is one in which we refrain from getting even with those who have done us wrong. Matthew records such teachings of Jesus as, turn the other cheek, forgive your brother not simply seven times but seventy times seven, and to do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

A resurrection life is one in which husbands and wives are faithful to each other in marriage, and where brothers and sisters in Christ encourage them in faithfulness. Jesus affirmed God's intent for marriage when he taught "But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So there are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let man not separate."

A resurrection life is one in which we mentor others in the faith, following the example of Philip when he was explaining the scriptures to the Ethiopian Eunuch. It is what we do when we agree to mentor confirmation students or serve as sponsors to new members.

A resurrection life is one in which we are as stated in Acts 2, "devoted to the apostles' teaching and the

fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”  
In fact, this is our prayer week after week as we go  
about praying for each member by name.

To live the resurrection life is to use our talents, our  
spiritual gifts for the building up of the Body of  
Christ.

Simply put, living a resurrection life is to let our light  
so shine before others, that they may see our good  
works and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

All this flows from the intimacy in which we are  
bonded to God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
AMEN.