

FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE WORD OF GOD 1.10.2021

Let's look at the Bible readings for the Baptism of our Lord Sunday, Jan. 10, to prepare for on-line, drive-in, and in-person worship (10 am) with Abounding Joy.

1ST READING: Genesis 1:1-5 By His Word God brings order out of chaos

¹In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And **the Spirit of God** was hovering over the face of **the waters**. ³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

⁴And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO GENESIS, CHAPTER 1

1. Here, in the very first verses of the Bible, the Holy Spirit is connected with water. What does this have to do with baptism?
2. God makes great things happen by means of the word that He declares. He creates the world and makes new believers by simply declaring it to be so. What does this have to do with your baptism?

2ND READING: Romans 6:1-11 In our baptism we died and rose with Jesus

¹What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who **died** to sin still **live** in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his **death**? ⁴We 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**. ⁵For if we have been united with him in a **death** like his, we shall certainly be united with him in **a resurrection** like his. ⁶We know that our old self was

crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be **brought to nothing**, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For one who has **died** has been **set free** from sin. ⁸Now if we have **died** with Christ, we believe that we will also **live** with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being **raised** from the **dead**, will never **die** again; **death** no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰For the **death** he **died** to sin, once for all, but **the life he lives he lives** to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves **dead** to sin and **alive to God in Christ Jesus**.

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO ROMANS, CHAPTER 6:

1. The Apostle Paul starts out by posing the question, that since God is really good at forgiving and we are really good at sinning, why should we not just keep on sinning. How does he answer this in verse 2?
2. For Paul, salvation is all about being connected to Jesus, that is, dying to the old and being raised to newness of life. Is baptism just a nice ceremony by which we are welcomed into God's family, or is it a radical, and violent killing and raising?
3. What are the implications of vs. 11 for your daily struggle with selfishness/sin?

THE GOSPEL: Mark 1:4-11 Jesus' identity in revealed in His baptism

⁴John appeared, **baptizing** in the wilderness and proclaiming a **baptism** of repentance for the **forgiveness of sins**. ⁵And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being **baptized** by him in the river Jordan, confessing their **sins**. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop

down and untie. ⁸I have **baptized** you with water, but he will **baptize** you with the Holy Spirit."

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was **baptized** by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "YOU ARE MY BELOVED SON; WITH YOU I AM WELL PLEASED."

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO MARK, CHAPTER 1:

1. The purpose of John's baptism was to *prepare* people for the One who alone can forgive sins. Christian baptism actually *brings* the forgiveness of sins. What's the significance of that difference?
2. Note the difference between John's baptism, which was with just water, and the baptism of Jesus (Christian baptism) which includes water *and* the Holy Spirit. Do you see the connection between this and the opening verses of Genesis?
3. Check out the similar "tearing" references here (vs. 10) and in Mark 15:37-39. What do you make of this? What's the connection?
4. If baptism is for the forgiveness of sins, why was Jesus, the sinless perfect Son of God, baptized?
5. How does the Father's declaration over Jesus in verse 11 relate to what the Lord said to you in your baptism?
6. Can you find references to all three persons of the Holy Trinity in this story?