

The Baptism of our Lord  
09-01-2022  
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

Isaiah 43: 1-7	God's promises to restore and protect Israel
Psalms 29	Honour God, God's voice is all powerful God will bring Peace
Acts 8: 14-17	The Samaritans receive the Holy Spirit after the laying on of hands by Peter and John
Luke 2: 41-52	Jesus is Baptised by John and the Holy Spirit descended on him like a dove.

### Introduction

Today is the day in our Church calendar when we remember the baptism of Jesus. If you think about Jesus' baptism, it seems like an odd thing to celebrate. When we are baptized we say :-

“Baptism with water signifies the cleansing from sin that Jesus' death makes possible, and the new life that God gives us through the Holy Spirit.”

If baptism for us is about being made one with the death and resurrection of Jesus, why did Jesus himself need to be baptized. As humans we cannot ever fully begin to understand the mind of God, however it seems evident that Jesus in his humanity was intent on connecting with all that it was to be human. Luke clearly points out that Jesus was being baptized along with the others who came to hear John, in the baptism of repentance. He was not alone, but in with all of the others who came to John. And whilst Jesus had nothing to repent of, he was identifying himself not with the Hierarchy of the Jewish faith, but rather with those repenting of their sins.

Jesus' baptism however, is different to all of the others.  
Jesus is confirmed as God's Chosen Son. Jesus is God's beloved.  
And this point marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry here on earth.

So, Jesus is baptized, connecting himself with humanity, and being visibly marked as God's chosen one at the start of his public ministry.

Let us today explore the Baptism of Jesus, our own baptism, and the wonderful promises for God's people in today's bible readings.

## Symbolism – Epiphany and Jesus Baptism

In our Church Calendar we celebrate the Baptism of our Lord, on the first Sunday after the Epiphany.

We celebrated the Epiphany last week, and it's when we remember the wise men, and in our nativity scene we bring the wise men from the sidelines into the picture. So, there's a clear link here, with the wise men symbolizing Jesus is for the whole world, and then his baptism symbolizing the start of his public ministry.

### John the Baptist

But much of our Gospel reading today is also focusing on the work of John the Baptist. John didn't hesitate in obeying God and carrying out the plans God had for his life.

Today we hear how John baptized Jesus. In the account given in Matthew's Gospel, we hear how he really didn't want to do it, but he eventually agreed to Jesus' request. In today's gospel we also hear how John was thrown into jail for not backing down and denouncing Herod for the evil he had done. John followed God's will, but it didn't necessarily mean that comfort and ease in this life would follow.

Likewise, after Jesus' baptism, he began his public ministry, and that's when he began to face the ire of the religious leaders.

Both John and Jesus lived courageous lives. They were convinced of what they were doing, and remained obedient to God's plan for their lives, even when it started to get a bit tough.

Facing challenges in life sounds all too familiar at the moment. Despite how fortunate we have been here in the Tweed, dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing. It may cause us to get downhearted. We may see how our congregation is smaller, and wonder when will it get back to normal. Especially now we may be concerned for our own safety.

In the reading from Isaiah the Israelites were told not to fear because God was with them, and in the reading from Luke and Acts, we hear the promise of the Holy Spirit to those who accept Jesus.

What a wonderful promise to know that the Holy Spirit is available to all who trust Jesus now. In the midst of life's many challenges, we do not have to fear. We can be assured that the Holy Spirit is there to guide and comfort us no matter what.

## Our own Baptism

Our Baptism is quite different to the Baptism of Jesus, but it is through living into our own baptism that we have such a wonderful peace and assurance.

I'd like us all to think about our own baptism's now:-

I wonder if anyone remembers their own baptism?

I was actually 11 years old when I was baptized so I do remember it, and I do remember making the promises for myself.

Whilst baptism is extremely important to each individual who is baptised, it is not a private thing. Baptism occurs in the midst of a faith community.

Our baptism is different to Jesus' baptism, but like Jesus' baptism it calls us to begin our ministry as Christians in the World.

And as the baptized each and everyone of us has a job to do.

We are called to live our lives as followers of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

## Conclusion

Jesus' ministry ultimately lead to the death of his physical body. Both Jesus and John showed courage and determination in their lives.

As we live out our baptismal promises in our lives, do we think of it as being courageous?

The courage of both John and Jesus calls us to live with that same courage in our lives. Amid the struggles and challenges we face, we have the assurance of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to guide, to strengthen and to keep us from fear.

As Christians we are also, the Chosen of God, the beloved of God.

As Christians, we are not guaranteed happiness and prosperity in this life, but we are guaranteed life in him who calls us to himself.

We are called to continue to live into our own baptism, so that we too might hear the words:-

“With you I am well pleased.”