

Ascension Lutheran Church

Pastor Godkin's Sermon for the week of January 8, 2012

Identity in the Baptism of Christ (Mark 1:4-11)

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and Jesus Christ. Amen. The text for today's homily is according to St. Mark. Our Lord says to us:

"In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And 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. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'"

This is the Word of the Lord.

Dear friends in Christ, so Christmas is over and a new year is upon us. Many of us have begun taking our decorations down for another year. We've returned from holiday traveling and resumed our routines of school and work. Only a couple weeks into the New Year, and many are perhaps trying their hardest to keep the New Year's resolutions they have made but haven't yet fulfilled. For many across our country, days are cold and dreary this time of the year. Counselors and psychologists say they see increased signs of depression and anxiety just after the first of the year.

What better time, then, to examine ourselves a little deeper, to look at what our real identity in life is? Our identity is not found in the "new me" because of the weight I lost as a result of my New Year's resolutions. Our identity is not wrapped up with holiday gatherings, as great as they were. And our identity is not connected to what gifts we maybe, our identity is not exclusive to our connections with family and friends we visited during the holidays. Rather, we find our identity in itssource; we find it with God, the God who came to identify Himself with us. In the Baptism of our Lord, Jesus identifies Himself obviously had nos in store pent of with us. How does He do this? As the Son of God He obviously had nos in store pent of or need of Baptism Himself. And yet, we seem Him humbly going into the Jordan to be Baptized by His cousin John the Baptist. He did this to identify with sinners so that as a believer we each share in the same Baptism with Christ. In essence, He was not Baptized to for His benefit but for our benefit as He connects Himself to us.

He connects Himself to us as well. Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit writes, "We 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. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. If we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. And He goes on to say, "You also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (6:4-5, 8, 11). It's through His death, resurrection, and new life.

and from our Lord and Saviour from the first chapter of the Gospel

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And in the Gospels we see Christ Himself going through according to Luke we get a slightly different view Mark. Luke tells us a bit more of the story and rec identify with John. They were asking if John might point them to Christ, the more powerful one. Their Nazareth.

Early on in the well-known movie The Wizard of Oz, herself far away from home and longing to get back that the great and powerful Wizard of Oz surely had was called the Emerald City and she had no way to the yellow brick road. And she started on this way. She was told by some characters in the movie that beginning. And so she did just that.

Now that's just a story. However, Mark 1 is a salvation promises attached to it. But there is still a similarity of Oz. The advice in that story is still good: it is Jesus certainly did just that. Not skipping steps. Not repentance for Himself, but if He is to side with you does, there in line waiting for John. And once on the till all righteousness was fulfilled and it was finished

In essence, when the Lord Baptized you He put His name on you. It says in Isaiah 43, verse 1, "He who created you, (O Israel): 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; you are mine.'" These are words of comfort from our Creator.

In the Garden of Eden, "Paradise" it is called "God's nothing". He created the people of Israel as His own nothing to be His own treasured possession. They are shaped by faith. Hebrews 11 begins to skim the surface whose faith was "counted to them as righteousness"

God creates the Church on earth today in all parts right here at Ascension. In First Peter it says, "O you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, although you were not the people of God, God has created a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own the waters of our Baptism, God re-creates us, and we

A pastor was walking along the beach with his son asking questions about the father's Sunday sermon. "Dad, I was about Christ living in us and we living in Him and the answer he noticed down the beach an empty plastic bottle. He took the bottle, filled it half full of water, replaced the cap, and threw it into the ocean. As they watched the bottle bob up and down he said, "The bottle is in the sea." In His baptism Christ identified Himself fully with us and our sinful condition, and by our Baptism we live in Him in His

through with Baptism. In the Gospel than the more brief Gospel account in words that the people were trying to get to be the Christ. But John is quick to identify what was to be found in Jesus of

the main character, Dorothy found her home in Kansas. She figured out the answer. But he was in what way there. In the story she follows the yellow brick road where it started, not half that it is always best to begin at the

beginning of history. It is an event with God's authority with the fictional story of the Wizard of Oz. It is best to begin at the beginning. And there is a need for John's baptism of Jesus, He has to begin with us—and so He has to begin with us, He was not to be dissuaded from it and it was ours.

He said to you. He said, "You are my people, (O Jacob), He who formed you; I have summoned you by name; you are my people."

He created everything there is "out of nothing" and He took them from being a people whose lives have been a race of those who lived by faith but (Rom 4:3).

of the globe, even here in Montreal, once you were not a people, but now you are a people, but now you have received mercy". He created us to be "a chosen race, a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:9). And so, in His baptism we become His "new creation"

and the son began to ask questions. He said, "Dad, I can't understand what you said about the father's sermon. He said that the father sought an empty plastic bottle with a cap on it. He replaced the cap, and threw it into the ocean. As they watched the bottle bob up and down he said, "The bottle is in the sea." In His baptism Christ identified Himself fully with us and our sinful condition, and by our Baptism we live in Him in His holiness.

This is really what Baptism is all about; living in Christian life. As Christians we live out our Baptism through repentance and forgiveness given to us by having an image of the Old Adam being drowned and the spiritual resurrection every day.

And what are we emerging to do in this world? What purpose are we connected to Christ? We are in Christ trust where He leads, so that with the strength He loved us and give freely with no strings attached. God the most fulfilling and gratifying thing we can do for one another, is giving and in connecting to our fellowship connection to Christ; the God of love and the Lord

Really, everything we are and everything we have is consecrated and set aside for God's glory and to our wallets belong to God, our skills and our talents all belong to Him because they all come from Him.

And not so strangely we find joy in giving because we are made. We find it more blessed to give than to receive. Redeemed in the image of Christ; the Lord of freedom

And so, when we speak of identity we find it most fully in the Person of Christ, our Redeemer who shared His life with us so completely that He brought us home and to be with us now and always. How do we respond? The words of one of our communion hymns say it well:

“Take my life and let it be
Consecrated Lord to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.” Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding, Christ Jesus. Amen.

Jesus. It is the foundation of the command and come back to it when we say the words; we live out our Baptism in the merit of Christ. In Baptism we are a new man emerging. It's like a

are we born again for and for what purpose so that we may follow Him and provides we may love as He has loved us. For as people made in the image of God with our lives to live in service to our fellow man. For this is the purpose of our life.

Baptized. We have been given a gift to our neighbours. Our talents and all our gifts and abilities; they all

this is the purpose for which we were made because we were made and our life itself.

fully in the Person of Christ, our Redeemer in order to make us His own and how do we respond? The words of

keep your hearts and minds in