**“The Great Exchange”**

Psalm 29

Isaiah 42:1-9

Romans 6:1-11

Matthew 3:13-17

Baptism of our Lord

From the Gospel account: “Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him”. Then from Paul: “Do you not know”.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

Hot off the most **unifying** Christian enjoyment we have in the Christmas event, here we are with what **divides** Christianity the most: did anything actually **happen to Jesus** **at His baptism** … or was it just a **figurative event**? And, from that (because it’s the **other half of the exchange**), does anything **happen to us** **at our baptisms** … or is that just a **figurative event**?

Why this is important is because either baptism is a **silly ritual (even for Jesus and then for us)** or it (baptism) is the **most significant of all personal blessings** (the **Gospel made yours, the baptized, that way**, actually **becoming** **through water and His Words stating the fact** God’s **ALSO** “beloved sons and daughters”. The more recent Church (only, now, 500 years old since the reformation) calls baptism an “ordinance” or Law (a **human** ritual where **God doesn’t do anything there**). The Church of the entire 2,000 years (from Christ’s ascension until now honored in Orthodoxy and Catholicism and us Lutherans from a catholic heritage) have known **God’s** **SAVING linkage through it with His Son**. We’ve **enjoyed** every Good thing that Scripture says about God’s children as **applying to us** just as to His own Son since our **baptismal union with Him**, we’re then “heirs, adopted, God the Father “**our** Father”, the Lord “**our** Shepherd”. Luther said, when oppressed by Satan, **he’d** had to agree about his own inabilities, yet answer: “You are right about what **I am not**, however, I am **baptized into Christ** … one united baptismally with Him”. God’s extremely specific Promise in Romans 6 is security with struggles and weakness **hidden beneath Jesus’ divinity (His righteousness our clothing)**. Funerals (for us who admit to the benefits of this **linkage “by baptism” to the sufficient merits of Jesus**) start with this Epistle that clearly Promises us (the baptized into Christ) **security** **THAT WAY** -connected to the Lord’s satisfactory death and then victorious resurrection. Paul wants us to **not-ever miss, or misunderstand, this extremely Great News to us**. He condemns, actually, any opposite (gutted) view that misses it: where an **objective wonderful Promise by God** gets traded for something that’s only **subjective** and **uncertain**. Why would anyone **not want** to celebrate this gracious gift that’s Promised by God through objective Means (so that we know that we have what it gives)? Yet maybe half of Christendom **chooses that decision, and tragically ignores the beauty**. Missing the blessing of that bestowed Gospel (the Gospel each of the baptized personally), that also misses the physical wonder of the thing that’s recorded for us to hear today …

**Text**

… that “**Jesus** came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, **to**” **(Himself)** “**be baptized**” (and here’s where that illustrated account helps which I’ve included into your bulletins). Jesus wasn’t, here, playing a game or performing a sham. What He did in His being baptized was what He had to do to **start the formal Gospel:** “**fulfilling all righteousness**” / what was **necessarily** (“**fitting**”), to and be drenched in and absorb the sins of mankind. Because of that, John “consented” and assisted Jesus’ with water where a Promise **dirty for Him but** **gracious for us** would **give Him our** **filth and us** the **merits of His divine purity … The Great Exchange (Him with us) swapped in water we’ve both (Him and us) got wet by**.

**JESUS GOT BAPTIZED LITERALLY INTO EVERY FILTHY OUNCE OF US**

**so that we could, then, be**

**BAPTIZED LITERALLY INTO EVERY BEAUTIFUL OUNCE OF HIM**.

**Application**

Jesus died **with and for** the sins of the **world … the whole world**. It’s **that filth** that He became “clothed with” and **crucified with His flesh** upon a cross. That work is the **OBJECTIVE GOSPEL FOR EVERY MAN, WOMAN, OR CHILD THAT EVER LIVED, OR WILL**. It’s **done** / it’s **effected**. And it’s a sacrifice that’s su**fficient and available to all / anyone who’d be willing to have it be made SUBJECTIVELY PERSONAL** to you … **saving you by divine linkage**. And **HOW** that death and resurrection of Christ Jesus is **CONNECTED AND GIFTED TO AN INDIVIDUAL** is **what Roman’s 6 is about**. Paul (seemingly upset or surprised if we don’t already know it), insists upon baptism since it’s, obviously as he puts it, the **GREATEST OF OBJECTIVE BESOWAL OF THE GOSPEL’S GIFTS OF CHRIST’S “NEWNESS OF LIFE / “DEATH WITH CHRIST INTO LIFE IN CHRIST”. And GOD DOES THAT** … for us to, simply, **RECEIVE AND BELIEVE … AND, MOST CERTAINLY, ENJOY**.

Because (as we heard in today’s Psalm”, **God’s Word of Promise is powerful** … and **Does what the things it Promises … which is the beautiful POINT of this “Great Exchange”**. “The voice of the Lord **is over the waters**; the God of glory **thunders** **over many waters**. The voice of the Lord **is powerful**; the voice of the Lord **is full of majesty**. The voice of the Lord **flashes forth flames of fire**, as in the **bestowal of the Holy Spirit**.”

And we count on God’s powerful Promises because none of us can count on what **we do** to be effective for our salvation. It’s **God, then, that links us to Jesus** **in a manner Promised**. All marriage analogies of Scripture are, **literally (and in a baptismal way)** God’s Christ becoming “one flesh with mankind, baptized into us (as a husband to a bride) to ‘fulfill all righteousness”. With that “I do”, we can take our place (us baptized into Him) as wives being made of one **literal** flesh baptismally with Him”. **He, first**: “literally and physically baptized into us … and all of us … and then we **can be** **made** literally and physically baptized into Him”. **Married to us that way**, every **judgmental** Word the Father speaks condemning sin is **addressed then to Jesus** **who took us on physically / baptismally.** And that, then, allows every **complimentary** Word that God the Father speaks **to and of** His own precious divine Son gets **addressed then also to us** **who’ve been physically and baptismally and objectively (by the marriage union of water and His Name and Promise) connected to Him**.

Listen to **how that played out with Him … then, also, us (baptized into Him)**. “Jesus, coming up from the water, **had the heavens opened, knowing the Spirit of God descending and coming to rest upon us, with a voice from heaven saying: ‘This is My beloved Son (and son or daughter when He says it of us in our same / wet event), with whom I am well pleased**.”

What God does to us is **perfect**. What we do for ourselves is **flawed** **… every time**. **Linked to Christ Jesus … YET GREAT IN HOPE BY THE PROMISE OF THE VOICE THAT’S POWERFUL AND MAJESTIC AND PERFECTLY DEPENDABLE**. “Baptized into Christ” **IS** Promised certainty. It’s what’s not just wishful thinking) but **God’s Promise, so reliably perfect**. **Salvation by the** **infallible Means that God attached Promise to is the “sufficient grace” that saves**. We are wonderfully disposed to be able to **take the Lord at His Powerful Word**.

In Jesus’ name. Amen.