

“Your baptism and His”

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Three-In-One, in whose Name we are Baptized.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On October 13th, 1974, in a small country church near Wembley, Alberta, a wonderful pastor baptized me. He said, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” On that day, the heavens didn’t open, no dove flew down and lighted on my shoulder, no disembodied voice said, “this is my son, my beloved, in whom I am well pleased.” Despite that, on that day, I became someone special - I became God’s adopted son.

You would think that this was an important day in my life. You might think that I would celebrate it annually. I should be able to tell you what day it was, how it happened, and who was there. I would think that too. However, my ignorance came to light a few years ago, when I applied to enter the seminary. Part of the entrance into Seminary is a verification of historical records, where they verify that someone qualifies to be trained as a Lutheran pastor, asking me to fill out important dates like my birthday, place of birth, and...oh yeah, my Baptism date.

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Going through the form, I was stymied by the blank after baptism date. I knew it was during the fall. I was even pretty sure it was before Halloween, but I couldn't pin down the exact day until I was able to beg the pastor of my old church to look through their records. Without that record, I could have never said authoritatively, that I was baptized on October 13th, 1974.

Even in visiting the church where I was baptized, there was no obvious evidence of my baptism. No plaque that read “On October 13th, Michael Val Mayer, was baptized here.” No circled number on a calendar. Other than an old filing cabinet, there was no proof that I was baptized. And yet I was!

No matter what the circumstances of your Baptism, each of you have a story of your Baptism. Each and every one of those stories is different in some way. Some of your Baptisms happened when you were infants. Some of your Baptisms happened when you were adults and some of your Baptisms happened somewhere in between. Yet each one of your Baptisms have something in common. Each one of your Baptism stories reach back in time to even before you were born, to the day that Jesus was baptized.

It is that story, that larger story, is what Peter is talking about in our reading from Acts this morning. That story is the story of someone

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who God anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power that was His from the beginning of eternity. That story is the story of someone who went about doing good things and healing those oppressed by the devil. That story is the story of someone hung on a tree. That story is the story that you are called to be witnesses of. That story, on the day of your Baptism, became your story.

When Christ comes again to judge the world, He isn't going to ask you when the date of your Baptism was. That isn't going to be the clinching question that tells Him if you are a believer or an unbeliever. He isn't even going to go back in His records to see what the exact date was in some massive book of Baptismal dates. He isn't going to look at your record of church attendance. He isn't going to look at how much you put in the offering plate. He isn't going to see how many Bible studies you've attended or what your devotional life looks at. He won't have to.

He won't have to because your story is linked with His. No matter what your story looks like for the 10, 20, 40, or 80 years, it looks like His. He will see when you were anointed with the Holy Spirit in your Baptism, because it was His. He will see when you went about doing good things, because those good things are His. He will see when you took up your cross because that cross is His. He will see when He

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shared His Body and Blood with you. He will see it because your story is His.

In 1865 Walt Whitman, an American poet wrote one of the most familiar lines of poetry in the world, in the opening lines of his poem, “Song of Myself.”

In that poem, Walt Whitman speaks as I can only imagine Jesus will speak on that day that He returns to every one of us here Baptized into His identity. He will say, “I celebrate myself, and sing myself, and what I shall assume, you shall assume, for every atom belonging to Me, as good belongs to you.”

On the day that you were Baptized, Jesus remembered you. Every day that you remember that you were Baptized, Jesus remembers you. Every day that you remember His story, He remembers yours combined with His. Every day He says, “I celebrate you, I sing you, and what I shall assume you shall assume, for every atom belonging to Me, as good belongs to you.” Amen.