The Baptism of Jesus:
January 12, 2020

[VIDEO] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRbUTfSds0U

So I have to tell you…
This week I have been… [1 The Thinker]
Racking my brain…
Thinking about what… to focus on…
In relation to baptism.

I was trying to give a definitive answer…
About the process and the meaning…
Of baptism.

But… when I was researching…
And came across this video…
Of Pope Francis…
Talking to this child…
With compassion…
Suffering with the child…
In his fear and doubt…
About his unbaptized papa…

And how the Pope took the opportunity…
To comfort rather than condemn.
Even though…
You understand…
That's probably not the stance…
Of the Roman Catholic Church.

The whole situation…
Made me want to abandon…
Trying to talk about something…
That all Christians know is important…
But almost no denominations…
Agree why baptism is important.

We all have ideas and theological perspectives…
And rituals and rites and sacraments…
Ways of doing things…
That actually sometimes cloud…
The real purpose.

And to mess it all up…
Just a little further…
There are some things…
You should know about baptism… in the bible…

First… there’s no biblical evidence… [2 The Disciples]
No story or passage…
To indicate…
That the disciples were baptized.
Even though Jesus told them…
To go out and baptize all nations…
In the name of the Father Son and Holy Spirit…

Don’t you think…
The gospel writers would have
Should have
Could have mentioned…

When… how… where…
The closest followers of Jesus…
Were dunked… dipped… or sprinkled…
In the name of Christ?

They did not.

And who knows… [3 How Many]
How many baptisms…
Jesus himself performed?

None… in the scripture.

I mean… this is one of our sacraments…
Deemed important by Jesus…
And later by the early church leaders…

However…
It didn’t seem to be…
Something Jesus himself did…
Even though he expected us…
To continue to do it…
Even today.

And finally…
There seems to be some resistance…
Some confusion…
On the day…
That Jesus was baptized.

You know… [4 John the Baptist]
John was providing…
A baptism of repentance…
Cleansing for the forgiveness of sins.

And Jesus comes along…
The Son of God…
The unblemished Lamb of God…
The Messiah…
The Savior…

This was it.
He was the chosen one.
And when he asks John… to baptize him…
It's ridiculous.
It doesn't make sense.
It's not something…
That John wants to do…

Because this guy…
Does not need…
To repent…
Be made clean…
Be set right with God.

But Jesus pretty much…
Demands… and pleads…
And convinces John…
This is what needs to happen.

But WHY? [5 Why]
Regardless of the specifics…
Of how we should…
Or why we should…
Or any of the modern day logistics…
Of baptism…

We still have to ask…
Why did JESUS get baptized?

I think it has to do with Christmas. [6 Incarnation]
You know the birth of Christ…
In human form.
The Incarnation.
God in the flesh.

The reason Jesus came…
To live among us…
Was to really be one of us.

To live life in human form.
To die in human form.
And to rise again…
In human form.

Like us.

And he may not have had…
Sins that needed
To be washed away…

He may not have needed…
A new beginning…
Like you and I…
Desperately need…
New beginnings.
Over and over again…
But still he was ONE OF US.

So… in my mind…
It reassures me…
To know that Jesus…
Was baptized…
In the Holy Spirit…
Just like we are…

Jesus was affirmed by God…
Just like we are.

So maybe…
He chose to be baptized…
In SOLIDARITY…
With sinners.
Because… well…
That's what we are.

He did it… to say to us…
Even though I don’t need this,
I’m doing it anyway
So that you know I’m with you.

We’re part of the same tribe,
The same family,
The same body.

I am just like you.
And what I’m bringing…
This salvation and life…
Is for people like us.
You and me.

He led the way.

But there’s something else… [7 Transformation]
In the baptism of Jesus…
Something changed…

Right… every denomination agrees…
That baptism is a rite… ritual… or sacrament…
Of TRANSFORMATION…

But what changed for Jesus?
How was he transformed?

I mean… at the moment of his baptism…
When the Holy Spirit…
Descended on him…
When God validated…
God’s relationship with him…
Did he somehow…
Become MORE Jesus-y?

I don’t think so.
________________________________________

But in the process…
Of being baptized…
Jesus indicates…
That this mission is not about him.
It’s not about Jesus.
It’s not about John.
It’s about making things right.
With God.

This is a moment of humility. [8 God’s Will]
Jesus is submitting his will…
To God his Father.

That's what changed.

He’s showing us…
What it means….
To have a right relationship with God.

Which is… to wash away…
What comes from us…
And from the world…
To wash it all away…

And to come out of the water…

Filled with the Spirit…
Declared a child of God…
And feeling that God is pleased…
With us.

And let me tell you…
That’s a pretty great way to start!

But unfortunately…
It's not the way we remain.
________________________________________

This is from a sermon I read online [NOT ME]:

A pastor wrote… [9 Blaming and Shaming]

More often than not
We all have watched an individual or two
Go into the water
And come out the other side
With no more change in their lives
Than having wet clothes.
I remember a few years ago
Rejoicing in a young person’s
Baptismal service.
Everything appeared to be perfect.

This individual joyfully witnessed
That Jesus was their Savior and LORD.

From all appearances
It looked like they would become
A powerful witness for Jesus at school,
At home
And one day at the office.

However, in less than two years
After that baptismal service
This same individual was
Cursing,
Drinking,
Spreading malicious gossip,
Ranting [against other people],
Debasing women.

They were living the polar opposite
Of the life of a Christ follower.

Instead of bringing honor and glory to the LORD
They were bringing shame and dishonor.

The problem isn’t with Christian baptism.
The problem has never been with Christian baptism.
In fact, the problem can never be with baptism.
The problem lies in us human beings.

Well… to me… that’s just silly to say.
Of course… the problem of sin…
Lies with human beings.
There is no other option.

But it’s hard for me to think…
Like this other pastor…
It’s hard for me to accept…
That baptism is a one and done situation…
When it comes to following Christ.

This journey… [10 Sin]
Takes us down dangerous roads…
And difficult situations…
And wrong turns…
And weak-hearted compromises…
And acceptance of evil…

All those things.
And every once in a while...
Honestly... probably on a daily basis...
We forget to submit our will...
To God.

We forget that we are filled...
With the power of the Holy Spirit...
To guide our choices...
And help us on the way.

We forget that we are Children of God.
And that means something.
About how we are loved.
About how we love others.

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Going to end with a video today.
This week at confirmation... [11 Prodigal]
We talked about the Prodigal Son.

And the youth may be a little young...
To feel the power of the story.
Because it's about losing your way...
In the course of this life.

But surely... you know that story.
Surely you have felt that pain.

That's the last thing I want to say today...
About the power of baptism.

Once you are claimed...
As this child of God.
From God's end...
It's a forever deal.

And when you and I fail...
And get lost...
And make bad choices...
And abandon God...

God will never abandon us.

That's the good news...
And that's what this video is about...
[VIDEO - Prodigal]

Bottom line. [12 Baptism]
Baptism means...
You are filled with the Holy Spirit...
You are a precious child of God.
And no matter what happens...
You can always... come home.
Thanks be to God.
Amen!