



Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Pastor Terry's Thoughts of the Week

Baptism and Beginnings

It all started When Jesus was baptized and went into the wilderness ... when our folks took us to the fontwhen I chose to be baptized...when I began to understand the promises of God.

There are a lot of reasons why a person becomes a Baptized Christian but the important point is – that’s when it all begins. This is when God comes to us with his promises and fills us with his Holy Spirit. We may or may not “feel” different, but it has happened. We have been joined to this family of God called Christians and we have taken our place in a particular family of God, in this case, Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church.

I remind people, often (perhaps too often) that we are not baptized Lutheran or Roman Catholic or Presbyterian or any other denominational name. We are baptized Christian, once and for all. God has come to us with his grace and love and we are now part of his family. What this means for our lives is: sometimes a lot and sometimes a little! Let’s move on from there.

For me, it’s a lot. I don’t remember my baptism and there are a lot of us who don’t. But I do know that it happened – I still have the certificate that proves it – and the fact that it happened is a firm foundation for me. It became firmer as I took part in the activities of my home church – everything from washing dishes, painting, cleaning, planting flowers, digging dirt, to teaching Sunday School and singing in the choir. It wasn’t the activities themselves, but rather the good people who took part in those activities and became a second family for me.. They showed me how much joy is involved in being part of God’s family.

And today? Oh yes. There is no way I can think of that I could move purposefully without the foundation I know I have received in my baptism. This is not fantasy, this is REAL.

Have all things been bright and glorious for me all through my life because I have been baptized? No. I have had my ups and downs just as you have. We are all children of God, but we live on the sinful, yet beautiful world. God created it good, but from the beginning we have tried to dominate creation rather than be good stewards. We have tried to confine rivers and keep out oceans; we have drained the land of nutrients and moved on, leaving damaged land behind. We have defiled the air and abused aquifers and springs

When we see all of this, we can become very discouraged. We can become depressed. We can continue our ways – or we can CHANGE. We can study and learn, we can recycle and renew, we can learn how to be better stewards of the earth and help bring the earth closer to the goodness that God provided in the beginning.

Our beginning was our baptism. God's beginning was far beyond our ability to comprehend! He was in the beginning – he WAS the beginning and he has given us the strength and wisdom to do good to the gift of life he has given us.

Ups and downs happen, but God is always on the up so we will find that our downs have the support of God. We find that foundation of Baptism firm and God's promises true. This is most certainly true.

TMK

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