

SERMON: "BAPTIZED ... AND WHEN"

**TEXT: OLD TESTAMENT ISAIAH 42:1-9
NEW TESTAMENT MATTHEW 3:13-17**

**January 11, 2026
Baptism of the Lord Sunday**

**Dr. Dave Kivett
Ordination and Installation of Officers**

INTRODUCTION

This is a full service – lots going on. Yes, it is the beginning of a new year
It is also Baptism of the Lord Sunday ... good way to start a new year,
remembering that Jesus' ministry started with his baptism. So too does ours
It is a good day to ordain and install our new elders and deacons

Again a good time to make the connection between our baptisms
and a call to service. Baptism is, in and of itself, an ordination and installation

This service will include those ordination / installation questions about a willingness
to serve. It will include the laying on of hands for those being ordained.
I love that imagery. All those hands reaching out to support one another
Before that we will be called to remember our baptism and what it means

It is a logical progression – a sermon about Jesus' baptism as the beginning
of his own ministry, then a call to remember our own baptism,
then a commissioning of those who serve – sending them onward to serve.
But there is a bit of a record scratch there, the jarring sound of abruptly
stopping the music. Please tell me you kept your vinyl records

That abrupt halt in the smooth progression ... I don't actually remember my baptism.
We are a tradition that baptizes infants because it is a sign of God's
not only amazing grace, but initiating grace. God's love comes first!
My parents remembered my baptism. I remember our kids
I have the certificates, the pictures.

In my almost 40 years of ministry, I have been a part of many baptisms
The picture on the screen is the one that comes to mind when I am called
to remember my baptism, all our baptisms, and what they mean

When I was serving as an interim pastor in Chattanooga, Farrah came to me
asking if we could set a date for a baptism – for her daughter and for her.
She could not remember ever being baptized. I suggested the first Sunday
in November. Her response caught me off guard. She said ...
"Won't it be too cold then? I want to be baptized outside, in a stream"

Let's think about baptism that way – wherever and whenever we were baptized
Being baptized outside. In the elements ... and ready for the elements
Jesus was baptized outside, in the river Jordan.

AND WHEN

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God’s Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from the heavens said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

One of the interesting things about how Matthew tells us of Jesus’ baptism is that he doesn’t really. We get the before. Jesus goes to be baptized by John in the Jordan. John hesitates knowing that he isn’t really worthy to do this Jesus tells him “it is proper to fulfill righteousness” AKA the right thing to do

The next thing we know, we read “and when Jesus had been baptized” Nothing about the baptism itself. We get the after, an “and when”. It is an impressive “and when.” The Spirit descends like a dove, a voice from heaven says, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

The thing I really love about this picture from a baptism in a creek is the light. Farrah’s dad, who took the picture, was so happy his lens caught that light It does have a heavenly quality about it, the way the light streams down The way I think about baptism is this ... I think that kind of light from heaven is part of every baptism even if the camera doesn’t catch the image

To me that is part of the ‘and when’ of baptism
God’s love and light envelop us and then send us out to be the light
It is to me an ‘in the light’ moment so we might be the light
That is how the baptism story fits in the story of Jesus
He is, as we will be years later, baptized for the “and when”

And the “and when’ God sends us into is outside, in the elements
Remember the sequence is the story of Jesus in Matthew, Mark and Luke
Jesus’ ministry begins with his baptism. What’s next?
He is led into temptation.

Like I said, I’ve been part of many baptisms. Been invited to be in the pictures or maybe invited over for lunch. But I’ve never had anybody follow the sequence spelled out in the gospels and go from baptism straight to temptation
“The baptism was lovely ... let’s go to the casino!”

I’m not suggesting that pattern. But I do want to encourage you to think about the “and when” of your baptism ... to think about what’s next, what path God might have set out in front of you. Your baptism is a springboard into that future
It is a ‘christening’ just like launching a boat, a sending out to sea

SUMMARY

The language often used for baptism is to talk about being sealed
God's love covers you, claims you, keeps you
And not just for some photogenic moment in a gown
But for whatever is outside. You may not have been baptized outside
But you have been baptized for the outside,
for the "and when" and "what's next?"

Oh, and the other thing about that "and when"
There is the Spirit descending like a dove that I have compared to the light
coming down on us, like the water dripping down ... and we are sealed.
There is the other part where a voice from heaven speaks
and tells us, who this is – "the beloved"

Again the same thing happens to us to help get us ready ... ready to go outside

I remember going to camp as a kid. I was maybe a fourth or fifth grader.
My mom wanted me to try the camp on the river not too far from her hometown
Washington, North Carolina, (Little Washington) on the Pamlico River
It was an Episcopal camp (I was baptized in the Episcopal Church in that town)
Good camp. Bad name for a camp on the river – Camp Leach

I went there one summer. A few summers later I went to a YMCA camp
in the mountains. Did some rock climbing. Both times, both camps
my mom did the same thing before sending me on my way
She wrote my name on everything ... and I mean everything
Guess she wanted people to know whose boy was hers, just in case

I think in our baptism, as in Jesus' baptism with the voice from heaven
God lets the world know whose we are ... writing God's name and ours
Sealing us in God's light and God's love and sending us out
Then the 'and when' ... Why don't you kids go outside and play?