



Lectionary Bible Study
Our Savior Lutheran Church
The Baptism of Our Lord
Readings Readings and Psalm
Genesis 1:1-5, Psalm 29,
Acts 19:1-7, Mark 1:1-11

[Click here](#) to join a Live Zoom Conversation Wednesday
at 10am.

Meeting ID: 868 8793 0554

Password: 654321

Or dial in for audio only: 1-301-715-8592

Mark 1:1-11 (NRSV)

¹ *The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*

² *As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,*

*"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;*

³ *the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:*

*'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,"*

⁴ *John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸ I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."*

⁹ *In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."*

¹² *And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.*

The Gospel according to Mark (which is the primary Gospel of focus in Year B of the three year Lectionary Cycle) is fast paced, and action oriented. It is the shortest of the Gospels and believed to be the first written. Both Matthew and Luke include - sometimes word for word - most of Mark. But whereas Luke was written to present Jesus to a non-Jewish gentile; and Matthew was written for Jewish new converts or those considering becoming followers of Jesus, Mark reads like an early family history - the writing down of already familiar and often spoken stories that are told at family gatherings: "Remember when this or that happened, and then..."

In verse 1, note that Mark says this is the "beginning of the good news."

1. *Is this simply a good "opening line," or is Mark implying something more in terms of "the start of an unending proclamation of good news?"*
2. *How does Mark's Gospel end? Is there any mention of "This is the end of the good news?"*

The underlying Greek word for "good news" was commonly used for a royal proclamation of "good news" such as a victory in war; the marriage of the emperor; the birth of an heir; etc. That the followers of Jesus used this word for their story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is daring, especially in the face of Roman authority.

3. *How do the titles "Christ" and "Son of God" heighten Mark's daring opening proclamation of "good news?"*

All four Gospels make a connection between Jesus and John the Baptist, and we know that from birth, John the Baptist and Jesus were connected through the friendship of their mothers. In addition to the shared family connection, they also shared a dedication to serving God.

4. *How significant are family connections in your faith life?*
5. *How would you describe John the B? How would you characterize his message of "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins?"*

The baptism John called for was a ritual cleansing connected to repentance. But the baptism of Jesus brought something new. When Jesus was baptized, the heavens opened, the Spirit descended, and a voice from heaven was heard. "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

6. *Why did Jesus need to be baptized?*
7. *What significance should ascribe to the audible voice of God and the visible descending Spirit at Jesus' baptism?*
8. *What do you make of the word "beloved?"*
9. *Does remembering your own baptism serve as a reminder that you are also a beloved child of God?*

"Immediately" (a favorite word for Mark) after being called the beloved with whom God was well pleased, Jesus is driven into the wilderness for 40 days to be tempted.

10. *What do you make out of this quick turn of events?*
11. *Does remembering your own baptism help you face the real temptations of everyday life?*