

A Godly Baptismal Ceremony

This past summer I had the privilege of baptizing my 10 year old nephew Christian, and what a delight it was! It was a privilege not only to see a 10 year old participate with Jesus in His baptism, it was great to start off the baptismal ceremony with the Good News. In other words, instead of saying something tantamount to *“Christian, Now that you have made Jesus Lord of your life through a specific set of statements repeated properly after me, let me baptize you so that you can get saved and become God’s child!”*, I was able to encourage everyone more in the Good News!

The statement I described above looks good and accurate when you look at Jesus the Lord through the lens of business and you think of making him your CEO and boss after completing his application and orientation process. But if you will look carefully at all of the lectionary scriptures for this week and year you will see quite a different picture of what it means for Jesus to be Lord, especially and including Peter’s witness that Jesus is already “Lord of all” back in Peter’s day (Acts 10:36)

Anyway, the Good News was that because of my now knowing Jesus Himself as the Good News in His own Person, I could begin the baptismal ceremony by asking the question

- “So, why was Jesus baptized?” (Matt 3:13-17). I continued “Was he baptized because he was a sinner?” “No!” was the loud response from the attendees. “Was he baptized because he needed to repent?” “No!” came the second and proper response from the attendees. “Well then, how did Jesus’ participation in John’s baptism of repentance (Acts 19:4) fulfill all righteousness if Jesus was already righteous and had no need to repent?”, I asked
- I then went on to proclaim that “Jesus, as Lord, is the Son of God as Man who came to us in our actual sinful flesh. He was one born of Mary, a sinner, who actually inherited his mother’s sinful flesh and nature alongside his godly nature (see Mary rejoicing in God her Savior – Luke 1:46-55! Only sinners need saving!) And yet, Jesus was the one man who never sinned in sinful flesh (Heb 4:15)”
- Pressing on I noted that “Because we are all sinners, and sinners can’t even repent without repenting in a sinful way (that’s how full of sin we are!), Jesus was substituting for us and taking the place of every human person in his baptism. He was literally repenting for us in righteousness (being rightly related to his Father in the Spirit without any sinful thoughts or actions in human flesh ever!)
- Continuing, I stated, “Therefore, when Jesus lived, He lived our life. When He was crucified and died, he suffered and died our death. When he rose, all of Humanity rose in Him. When He ascended, all of Humanity ascended in Him. Christian, that is

what your baptism is all about! It is your participation with Jesus today in proclaiming with him that 2000 years ago all of humanity was baptized into the Life of God the Trinity; Adopted and included in His Life and Love forever!"

- Before immersing him in water I invited Christian to repeat the phrase above in a personal way, "When Jesus lived, he lived my life. When Jesus died, he died my death. When Jesus rose I rose with him. When Jesus ascended to His Father, I ascended with him and was seated in the heavenly places in him!"
- Concluding the service, I baptized him "not into any sect or denomination but in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit of Adoption", prayed over him that he might have this sealed in himself forever in his encounter with the Triune God, family, friends and neighbors, and sent him off with cheers and clapping.

A stranger sitting at the pool noting all of this said it best "That was wonderful!" And it was!

~ Tim Brassell