

Baptism of Jesus (January 11, 2026)
Romans 6:1-11; Matthew 3:13-17 (Series A)
Dead to Sin

I know I have seen it before, but it popped again where someone was making the case that because Jesus ate with sinners that it was okay to sin. The apostle Paul answered that with a question and answer. He said, “Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”

So, when and how did that happen? It happened when Christ was baptized. While some people will try to maintain that Jesus was baptized for his own sins, therefore, making the case that Jesus wasn't God nor perfect, the truth is different. Jesus was baptized to be obedient to all that God required, therefore showing that he strove to be perfect which man was supposed to do. His desire was to serve God perfectly in our place.

But Jesus wasn't baptized merely because he should be baptized but he did it in order to take our sins upon himself. Baptism makes us part of the family of God. Without baptism we are dead but with it we can have eternal life, because Christ took our sins. Without a means to be lifted out of the water we would drown and in our sinful condition without someone to lift us out of it we would die.

Now, John the Baptist talked about baptizing with water and the word but that Jesus would come with power and the Holy Spirit. John called the people to repent of their sins and their baptism was a ceremonial washing of their sins from their bodies. John did connect this to the coming Messiah with the teaching that without repentance and faith there is no salvation through baptism that is why the Pharisees were not welcome, for they saw their good works as being enough.

When Jesus responded back to John when he thought Jesus should baptize him, the answer given was that Jesus had to be baptized in order to fulfill all righteousness. This wasn't then just about the righteousness of Jesus but was rather about the righteousness of all people being possible through his baptism. That is part of why we talk about being drown in our sins, dying everyday to sin, and rising to new life in Christ.

Children have been known to say that they are not that dirty so they don't need a bath, but mom or dad may say otherwise. Small children may need to be placed in the bath and washed and then be lifted back out by mom or dad because they can't safely do it all themselves.

Such is our condition with sin; some say they're clean with no sins that matter while others will admit they have sins but don't want to give them up. Our Heavenly Father, through all the prophets, John the Baptist, the apostles and Jesus, has said everyone needs to get clean. Others, like those who came to listen to John with an open heart and open mind will say, “Yes! I need to be cleaned. I don't want to be dirty with sin any longer.” It is these people who go to the waters of baptism knowing that they need to be lifted up out of it by Jesus' death on the cross.

The water puts us in his family but only Christ can lift us up to heaven. Only by faith in Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit can we be transformed to have a heart that says, "I don't want to sin anymore. Having received the grace of God I no longer desire to openly rebel against him. I want help to live new in the light of the Gospel."

Jesus' death saw our punishment for sin removed from us; the sins that washed from us by faith through baptism. So, do we sin in order to more greatly appreciate our baptism and forgiveness? No? To do so would mean that we never wanted to stop. This is the error of those who will claim that since Jesus ate with sinners it is okay to keep on sinning. Paul says, "No!" Having died to sin the desire should be to live transformed. We have been lifted from the waters in which we should have died, so why would you want to jump back in.

So we remember our baptism as in the invocation when the words are spoken, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." We are being lifted back up by the one who died and rose back to life, resurrected to never die again. He gives us the help we need to keep our eyes up where hope is found. May we live new lives, transformed to not be as we were when the devil had control. Let us die to that sinful heart and live in the righteousness of Christ. Amen.