

Sermon 2008 Baptism of Our Lord

Text: Matthew 3: 17

Theme: "You're Delightful"

"...and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." So said God the Father from Heaven when Jesus was Baptized. Another way you have heard it translated is, "This is my beloved Son in whom I delight." I like that one better. Jesus is a delightful Son, a delightful brother and a delightful Lord.

What higher praise can there be than to delight God? No matter how boring life may be, there are always people in our lives that can light up the room right? They are people in whom we delight. They bring joy to our lives and laughter to our lips. That is what Jesus does for God.

On the day of his Baptism, the day on which Jesus was formally connected to the promise of Abraham, the day on which Jesus would formally begin his earthly ministry among us, God the Father was there. He presided over the Baptism and it was a



joyful day for him, not because his son received forgiveness of his sins. There were no sins to forgive, but rather, because this began the official work of his son that would bring about our salvation and allow God our Father to be present in OUR baptisms.

I was not only present for my sons' baptisms, but I was the pastor who did the baptizing. There has not been a more important moment in their lives or mine. In just a couple months, Neal will get to confirm the promises that Dänya and I made for him at his Baptism and own that Baptism for himself. And God the Father will be present once again because God delights in Neal, just as he delights in you and he delights in us because he delights in Jesus.

Now I'm not naïve. I know that you're rotten. I am intimately familiar with my own rottenness. For some of you I am specifically familiar with your particular brand of rottenness because you have confessed it to me. For others of you, I have to use my imagination, but I am quite certain that there is no one



here today who could escape the fires of hell on his or her own. And yet God delights in you, not because you have done good stuff and not because you have done less bad stuff than someone else, but because HE CHOOSES TO DELIGHT IN YOU.

If you get nothing else from this sermon, get this. God chooses to love us in spite of ourselves. That's what an atheist stumbles over every time. He might say that he doesn't believe in a god who would send people to hell or he might believe that he should be rewarded for all his good works but the bottom line is that he doesn't believe that God could **choose** to love him. How could God love someone like him? Or how dare God give him love as though he needed it? But that is exactly what God does.

So when John the Baptist suggested that Jesus had no need to be baptized since he had no need for repentance, John had missed the point. Jesus was taking something common and elevating it to something new and miraculous. Now this business of ceremonial washing was no longer just a ceremony but a



sacrament. Like he would one day take the ordinary bread and wine of the Passover meal and elevate it to his own body and blood, so now would we take the ordinary water of Baptism and elevate it to the water of God's love that washes us not once but daily.

Now because of our Baptisms, every Sunday the heavens roll back and God's voice comes from his throne of Grace. YOU ARE ALL MY CHILDREN IN WHOM I DELIGHT. AMEN.

