

# Community of Grace

## Daily Walk for the week of January 10, 2022

### Baptism of Our Lord Devotions Written By Vernon Mukhlall

**Monday, January 10, 2022**

#### Remember Our Baptism

*"For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Gal 3: 26 – 27.* As we reflect on the baptism of our Lord, Jesus Christ, we are called to remember our baptism. But what should we remember? Should we remember the date, the time, the place, and the name of the pastor who baptized us? This information is not so important. Furthermore, some of us may not remember such information. The important thing is what happened at our baptism and what we have become. That is, who we were and whose we have now become. Remember that the Lord calls us to Himself, not by any merit of our own, but by His free gift of grace. At our baptism God has forgiven us our sins, sealed us with the Holy Spirit, marked us with the cross of Christ and made us His children and heirs forever. As a baptized people of God, we are filled with the Holy Spirit and constantly sustained by the presence of our Lord in our lives. Baptism is for a lifetime. Forever we belong to the Lord. How well we remember and internalize that will influence how we feel about ourselves and how we relate with others. As we remember our baptism, whose we are, and the spiritual inheritance we have in Christ, our lives will take a new direction in which we will have a different perspective of ourselves, our God and the lives of others – nurturing our relationship

with our God and with one another. **Prayer:** Almighty God, by your free gift of grace and through my baptism, you have made me one of your children and have given me an heavenly inheritance. Help me to remember what my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, has done for me at my baptism and the new creation that I have become. Let my lifestyle demonstrates whose I am. Amen.

**Tuesday, January 11, 2022**

#### The Life of Those Born of God

*"We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them. We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life." 1John 5: 18 – 20* In these three verses, the apostle John writes without hesitation or doubt three absolute truths, each of which is introduced with the words, "We Know". The general idea is that a strong and proper relationship with God results in confidence of our position in Christ. And this is happening in a hostile world which is under the influence of the wicked one. The bible speaks of people of the world and people of God. We are people of God who repented of our sin and put our faith in Jesus Christ. We are redeemed, justified, and sanctified by our Lord, Jesus Christ. The Son of God has given us spiritual discern-

ment so that we may know our Heavenly Father. We have passed from death into eternal life not by any merit of our own but because of the grace of God through Jesus Christ. However, we have to grow in His grace. Through watchfulness, prayer, and strength derived from Christ, we are to strengthen our faith so that we may not fall under the influence of the evil one – “anyone born of God does not continue to sin...and the evil one cannot harm them”. **Prayer:** Eternal God, through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, you baptized me into your family. You restore me by your love and grace. Continue to free my heart and mind from the bondage of sin so that I may know your truth. Amen.

**The Gospel, Revealed in Signs**

**Written By Pastor Matt**

**Wednesday January 12<sup>th</sup> “Signs in History”**

“Remember me, O Lord, when you show favor to your people; help me when you deliver them; that I may see the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation, that I may glory in your heritage.” Psalm 106: 4-5. There are many times when we desire a sign from God. When we want we clear direction on the events for the day. There are also times when we feel like we are experiencing a “set back” of some kind: the economy slows, health crisis emerges, or division in our society becomes evident. This Psalm has the perspective that God is always at work in the world around us, and that we have a role to play in that work. Understanding God’s work around us begins with trusting in our call to love God and neighbor. When we start there we begin to see

the prosperity, joy, and gladness at work in our world. We understand that the goals of God begin with our kindness to strangers, help of the poor, and demand of justice for the weak. It is easier to see the signs of God when we become that sign for others who are in need. **Prayer:** “Open my heart, O God, to the signs of your love in my world today. Amen.”

**Thursday January 13<sup>th</sup> “Sign of Abundance”**

“How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.” Psalm 36: 7-9. This Psalm is teaching us that God is the source and sign of our abundance in this life. God loves us and wants what is best for us in this life and will be at work in the world around us to give the things we need in abundance. We are simply called to trust in the loving activity of God in the community that we share. Join God in this work as we worship, learn, and serve each week. When we do this, our eyes will be opened, and we will be able to see the signs of God’s abundance and love around us. **Prayer:** “Open my eyes to the abundance of your love for me and the community around me this day. Amen.”

**Friday January 14<sup>th</sup> “Signs in Creation”**

“Your steadfast love, O Lord extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your judgments are like the great deep; you save humans and animals alike,

O Lord.” Psalm 36: 5-6. There are multiple studies that show the positive health, well-being, brain function, and sleep benefits regular walks in the woods can have on a person. The simple act of stepping into creation can lower blood pressure, expose lungs to fresh air, and give body increased amounts of vitamin-D. This psalm is seeing signs of God all through the physical creation around them. They see God in the real and tangible parts of creation that they are a part of each day. I feel this when I go into the woods even in our local parks in Grayson. We do not have to travel to some far off exotic trail to see the signs of God all around. Step outside to see a tree by your home, look up into the sky, or simply feel the breeze. God’s creation is given as a sign of love for you, the people around you, and all creatures. God made our world as a living thing so that we could see the life God offers everyone. Prayer: “Lead me into your creation, O Lord, that I may see the signs of your love all around. Amen.”

**Saturday January 15<sup>th</sup> “Sign of Return”**

“If you return, O Israel, says the Lord, if you return to me, if you remove your abominations from my presence, and do not waver, and if you swear, “As the Lord lives!” in truth, in justice, and in uprightness, then nations shall be blessed by him, and by him they shall boast.” Jeremiah 4: 1-2. The prophet sees signs of God when we act in “truth, in justice, and in uprightness” in the world around us. He sees Israel as called by God to act for these things in the world. This means we have an obligation to our neighbors, the poor, and powerless of this world to speak and act when others cannot

or will not. These actions become a “sign of return” from God of both love and justice for our world. When we “return” to the presence of God the very nature of God can be felt and this can change everything in our world. Prayer: “Return to the Lord your God, O my people, that love and justice shall grow all around. Amen.”

**Sunday January 16<sup>th</sup>**

**“The Gospel, Revealed in Signs”**

Jesus is at a wedding in Cana with his friends and when the wine gives out he takes jars of water and turns them into wine. When the wine steward realized this he says to the bride groom: “‘Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.’ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.” John 2: 10-11. When Jesus gives a sign faith is the result because people see something that reveals the presence of God. Only God could take a jar of water and transform it into wine. When this happens the disciples understand that there is more to Jesus than a great friend, teacher, or healer. Jesus shows his divine nature in an earthy action. He does this as an invitation to his disciples to change how they look at him, themselves, and the world around them. Prayer: “As you gladdened the wedding at Cana in Galilee, so bring joy into my life this day, O great Redeemer. Amen.”