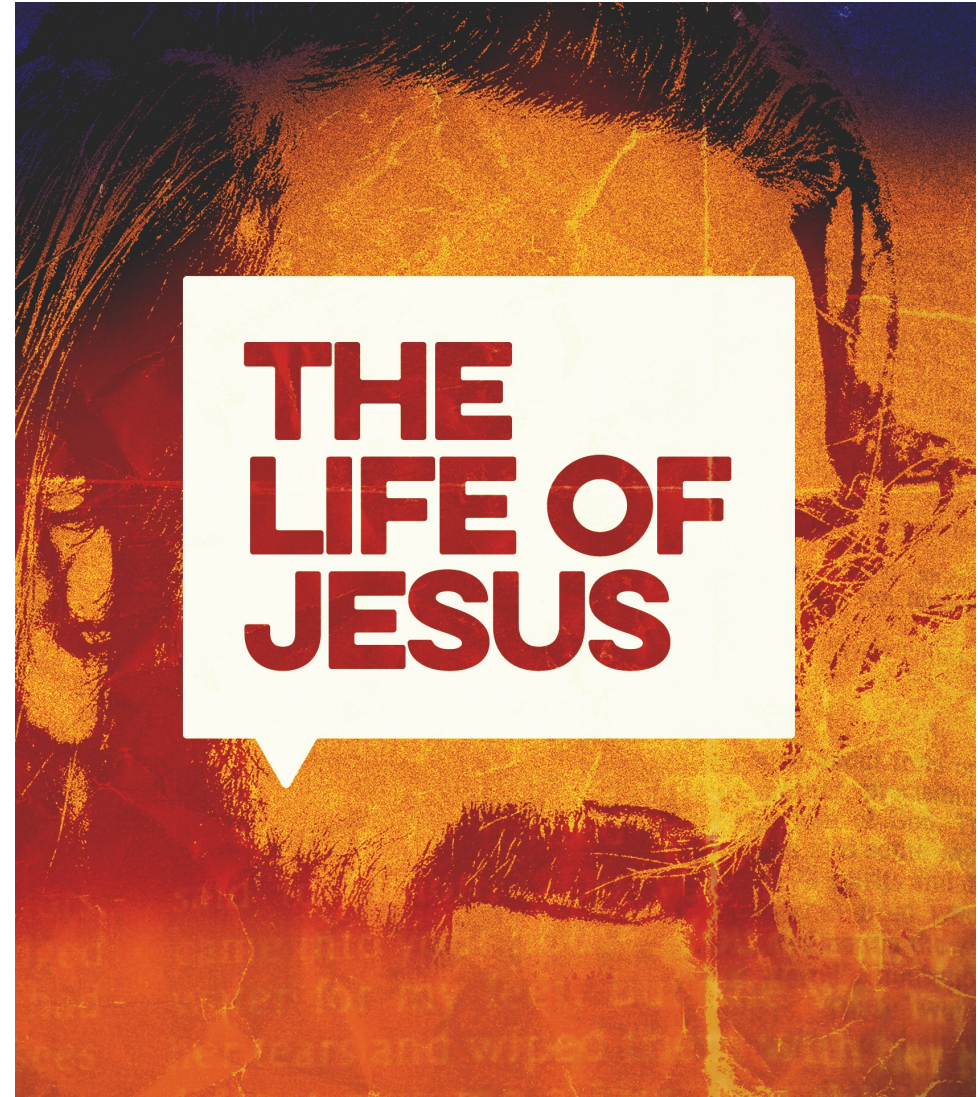


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SERMON SERIES STUDY GUIDE

NORTH: Jan. 3/7 | **SOUTH:** Jan. 10/14 | **CHAPEL:** Jan. 21



THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Pastor Kevan Smith



This study guide was written by the Pastors at Hope Lutheran Church in Fargo, ND. Find this resource and others at [FARGOHOPE.ORG/RESOURCES](https://fargo.hope.org/resources)

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

READ: Matthew 3:13-17

Every time people read this story about Jesus, there is always one question that pops up in our conversation, “Why did the Son of God need to be baptized?” When John noticed Jesus was approaching him to be baptized with everyone else in the Jordan River, he wondered out loud, “You should baptize me, Jesus!” But notice what Jesus said in response to John’s plea, “But Jesus insisted. ‘Do it. God’s work, putting things right all these centuries, is coming together now in this baptism.’ So, John did it.” (Matthew 3:15 The Message) It was Jesus’ purpose to show complete and full agreement with the Kingdom that John was announcing. Jesus’ ways using his Baptism as a symbolic act showed a complete break with the old and an acceptance of God’s new promise to be with all people. The descent of the dove (Spirit of God) upon Jesus was the assurance that he was, indeed, the Messiah, and a voice from the heavens, which John heard, declared, “This is my Son, chosen and marked by my love, delight of my life.” (Matthew 3:17 The Message) This moment ended Jesus’ tranquil life in Nazareth and launched his three-year ministry as he healed and proclaimed the Good News.

Frederick Buechner, in his book “Wishful Thinking” describes the next three years of Jesus’ ministry, “What is both good and new about the Good News is the wild claim that Jesus did not simply tell us that God loves us even in our wickedness and folly and wants us to love each other the same way and to love him too, but that if we will let him, God will actually bring about this unprecedented transformation of our hearts himself.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Why was it so important for Jesus to be baptized by John?

2. Why is it important for Christians to be baptized today?
3. When you are baptized, you are now included into God’s family. Name some of the benefits of being a part of God’s family.
4. For part of your reflection, take a few moments and read Luther’s explanation for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in his “Small Catechism.” You can find it online. Describe any new insights. What do you appreciate most about his words on this sacrament?
5. Did you realize that in the Sacrament of Baptism, the water is a picture of death? Check out Romans 6:1-11. What was Christ foreshadowing in his baptism in the Jordan?
6. Is baptism essential for your salvation? Why or why not?
7. Like Luther, is it important to ask the question, “What does Baptism mean for our daily living?”

PRAYER

O God, our Father, at the baptism of Jesus you proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized into Christ, faithful to their calling to be your daughters and sons, and empower us all with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (Evangelical Lutheran Worship book)