

Through the waters
A Sermon by Rev. Frances Savill
Sunday January 9, 2022

Luke 2:15-22

This morning we come to one of the very familiar passages of the Bible. It appears in all four gospels – so we know it`s very important. It`s the story of Jesus` baptism.

So, to get you thinking, brains in gear, as we consider this foundational text, I thought we`d start with a Bible Quiz!

So, thinking caps on. Can you name 4 important moments in the Bible when God`s people have been rescued through the waters of death in order to enter a new creation life in the Old or First Testament?

This is important because Luke, and the other gospel writers, want you to hear all those foundational, touch stone moments when you read that Jesus entered the waters with all the people.

4 important moments in the Biblical Old Testament story when God`s people have been rescued through the waters of death in order to enter a new creation life:

1. Creation, page 1 of your Bible.

The waters covered the cosmos, the Spirit of God hovered over the waters, God spoke and the waters were divided.

That was the first step towards life.

As Luke tells you what happens he`s included details to help you remember, and show the significance of this moment.

In **Genesis**, in the creation story, the Spirit of God hovered over the waters.

In **Luke**, at Jesus baptism, the Spirit of God descends on Jesus.

This is a new creation moment.

And how does the Spirit descend on Jesus?
"Like a dove."

Where does a dove play an important role?

2. In the second great water deliverance story: Noah`s Ark.
Humankind is rescued through the waters of the flood.
God provided a new start for all creation.

As Jesus steps into the waters, we are invited to hear echoes and see that this long awaited Son of God is one greater than Noah, who saves us from the ruin we have brought upon ourselves, who will give us a new start.

As Jesus descends into the waters, Luke wants you to remember the next greater water deliverance.

I expect that it is the one that many of you thought of first:

3. The people of God going through the Red Sea, as the way to freedom from the Egyptians, to begin their journey to the promised land.

God saved them from the hand of the Egyptians. He answered the cries of his people for deliverance from their oppressors.

Jesus the is New Moses, the greater Moses, who rescues us from slavery, from oppression, and leads us into freedom.

4. And the 4th water deliverance is with Joshua, when the people went through the waters of the Jordan River as they were about to go into the promised land.

Jesus is a leader greater than Joshua, who we can follow into God`s promises.

And just in case we missed some of this, Luke is going to show us again, with the genealogies that follow this passage.

I would encourage you to bring your Bibles to church, and to have them open in front of you whether you are at home, or in the sanctuary.

We are in Luke 3.

We read verses 15-22.

Now look at what comes directly after this.

The genealogies.

Jesus is in the line of David, the greatest King of Israel, Solomon, the wisest. Luke traces Jesus` line through, Solomon, David, Joshua, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Judah, Moses, Noah and Adam.

And the conclusion is: Jesus, son of Adam, son of God.

When Jesus enters the waters of baptism, with all the people, there is a sense of his going in with people of all times and all places.

Jesus was at the beginning of creation brining life.

He is like Noah, the one who was chosen to give God`s people a new start- so we can be saved and start again.

Jesus is a leader like Moses who goes through the waters with us rescuing us from slavery, delivering us and brining us freedom.

And he is the like Joshua who will lead us through the waters to see God`s promises fulfilled.

When we are baptized and when we affirm our baptism, we are joined with Jesus in His life, death and resurrection.

Baptism is the re-enactment of what it means to be rescued through the waters of death in order to enter a new creation life.

But consider for a moment what it doesn`t mean.

New Creation life is not a life without pain and problems.

New Creation life doesn`t mean that God will now make all your dreams come true.

There is a kind of religious fulfillment myth that says when we enter new life with Jesus everything will go well.

Pain, suffering and problems, at least for me, will end and I will get the happily ever after I deserve and want beginning right away.
That`s a myth and simply isn`t the truth of the gospel.

God`s dream and plan for you and me are for you and I to put on Jesus, to become perfect like Him, to learn to trust God, and mostly for you and I to partner with God to make this world a more kingdom of God place.

Entering Jesus life is not a comfortable, nirvana place, but it is a place of hope.

Entering Jesus life is the path towards shalom, peace, the way of true joy and love, because we know that we follow Jesus who overcame the powers of death and darkness.

It is our risen and reigning Lord that we follow.
Today, we follow him into the waters of baptism.
And we hear the voice of God which speaks to Jesus and to us as we enter the waters with him:
"You are my beloved, with you I am well pleased."

And we take this great moment, this moment of joy, with all that it means, from Adam, to Joshua,
to give us strength and hope as we follow Jesus.