

20 April 2019  
Great Vigil of Easter

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church  
Vienna, VA

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“Baptized”

There is an adjective for everyone these days.

There are African Americans, Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, and many other kinds of Americans.

There are gay men, straight men, trans men, and a slew of other identities.

You can be rural or urban, northern or southern, east coast, west coast, or from flyover country.

There are Democrats, Republicans, Independents, Libertarians, Greens, and more.

You are either a baby boomer, millennial, gen-xer, generation z, or whatever the next label they’ve come up with.

Everyone is something, it seems, these days.

So what say you? How do you identify? What’s your adjective?

Tonight, we hear it loud and clear: baptized. **I am a baptized child of God.**

There is no other adjective or identity more important than that. For it is who God says you are, and it will last forever.

Everything else we call ourselves or others call us is of this world and life. They are how we classify things, look at ourselves, or divide ourselves. But when we pass away and when this world passes away, so will they. All of them.

But baptized child of God you are now, and will be forever. For in baptism you were joined to Jesus in His death (which we remembered last night) and His resurrection (which we celebrate tomorrow). And so baptized into Jesus, you now transcend the things of this world, the categories of this world. Who you are is not what you make of yourself or call yourself, or what others think of you or call you. Who you are is who God has made you in Christ - namely, His child.

Tonight, we hear that again.

We will hear it stories from the Old Testament. For these stories are not just tales from yesteryear - they teach us about what our God has done, and is still doing, for us. How He is creating and re-creating. How He is saving through water. How He sent His only Son to take our place. How salvation is freely offered to all and that there is life for all who are dead in their trespasses and sins. And how the Son of God is with us through the fiery trials of life. All this because we are baptized into Christ.

So we'll also hear the apostle Paul preach that to us, too. That in baptism, Jesus' Easter is our Easter, His death and resurrection, our death and resurrection. We'll once again renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways, and we'll confess our faith in the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And in all this, we will remember again who we really, truly are: **baptized**. We will feel the cross again on our foreheads, and we'll know there is no identity better than that. Or more true and lasting.

So let us hear the Word of God again. Drink deeply of it, soak it in. Be washed in it, cleansed in it, rejoice in it.

For this word is true and for you.

For who you are? **I am baptized. A baptized child of God.**