

Reflection January 11th 2026

God Speaks to us Through our Baptism

At this time of the year, we move rather quickly in the life of Jesus and his family. Not that long ago we gathered to celebrate his birth, we sang carols, consumed more food than perhaps we ought to have, travelled long distances to see loved ones, and exchanged gifts.

Today our readings take us to Christ's baptism at the age of approx. 30 years. The day of the beginning of his world changing event. Baptism holds a very specific important place in our faith journey with Christ. It serves as a beginning of our following in the footsteps of Christ as our first steps of faith, and a gateway into a life of discipleship and service to our Saviour. It's way more than just 'getting it done' or 'doing for the sake of my parents or grandparents.' Whilst being obedient to parents and grandparents is very admirable, baptism is more than a family tradition it's a transformative experience connecting us to the mission of Jesus and the essence of our discipleship. When God spoke to Jesus at the time of his baptism, God is also speaking to us in the here and now.

To understand the relationship between baptism, serving Christ, discipleship, and being the bearers of the Good News, it's necessary for us to take a glance at the role of baptism in the scriptures. Through John we know Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist, which is the catalyst of Jesus' public ministry. From Matthew we hear of the Great Commission, when Jesus commanded his followers to go and make disciples of all peoples, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This instruction upholds each of the three connections – baptism, discipleship and service- everything we are called by God to take action with – to fully embrace.

As you've heard me say before, I say it again, because if I go silent then it's easily forgotten, not seen for the enriched necessity in our lives and faith journey that it is, and not given the sincere acknowledgment of God's action in our lives it requires, baptism is the outward sign of an inward change.

Baptism represents our identification – the sign of the cross on our forehead is our mark with Christ’s death, burial and resurrection. It’s our commitment to following Jesus and live according to all his teachings. When I recently baptised Tate, and all the previous people I’ve baptised, you’ve witnessed it’s an occasion where a public declaration of their faith and dedication by their family which includes us, to live in the best way possible following the life and mission of Christ. Whilst I am fully aware following Christ isn’t the same for everyone, and timing is a huge factor, God has proven to be very patient and will wait patiently in hope that as the baby grows into maturity, those who haven’t chosen to follow Jesus, will hear the voice of God speaking and calling them, turning to Jesus one day with an open and loving heart to accept the gift of life that Jesus offers.

Each time we answer the call, when we hear God speaking to us, we are acting as disciples – growing and developing our faith as we follow Jesus. Baptism is often the first step along this pathway – a path that Jesus has already trod. It’s a symbol of new birth, a new breath, starting our transformative relationship with God. Perhaps we could look at it as the launching of our faith journey with Christ as we gather to learn, serve, and witness – each of these things can start as young children involved in Sunday School, or at a youth group, any age through our lives.

Discipleship goes beyond the initial act of baptism as it becomes an integral part of our life as servants of Christ. A disciple is more than a person who believes Jesus is the Son of God, we are people who are committed to growing closer to God’s heart, listening and learning to and from the teaching of Jesus as we become more Christlike in his characteristics. This is part of a long process of change requiring personal effort, surrounded by a supportive community.

The good thing about this is, we don’t have to work it out entirely on our own. Jesus is our model; he was there for his disciples teaching them how to live out his teachings and servanthood. His New Commandment outlines the nucleus of discipleship as loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind and loving our

neighbour as ourself. Serving Christ involves serving others, reflecting his love and compassion in tangible ways.

Part of being a disciple also means putting faith into action—feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, and supporting the marginalised. As we adhere to the teachings of Jesus, serving others as the hands and feet of Jesus in a world where love and hope is desperately needed, we deepen our relationship with Christ.

The challenge of being the hands and feet of Jesus is knowing you're also a witness of the Good News of Jesus. As we grow into our baptism, God speaks to us asking us to share our faith, becoming ambassadors of Christ. This responsibility is ours from the command to make disciples of all people teaching them how to be more Christlike.

Witnessing takes many shapes, it can be through sharing your faith journey with someone telling them of Christ love, grace, and compassion, in fact I would say embodying all the fruits of the Spirit. Regardless of how it occurs, the heart of witnessing is sharing the story of God's love and faithful activity in their life and inviting others into sharing your journey. By sharing how taking ownership of your baptism has changed your life, you can inspire others to experience the same life changing experience.

One of the things that is encouraging is that this doesn't need to happen in a vacuum – sharing the gospels, the story of the Good News with others emphasis the communal aspect of our faith. Even when we're sitting alone in prayer listening for God speaking to us, we're not alone because we have the Holy Spirit accompanying us.

Sharing fellowship, with others is such an important part of who we are as people of God, even the moment of baptism is a public act. When we embark on any form of missional activity it's done in the company of others using their own particular gifts and skills. We are called to support and encourage one another in all our tasks always concerned with growing our community of faith and spreading the Good News.

Christ's baptism marked his beginning of ministry, and for us it's the beginning of our journey when our lives are committed to Jesus. As we grow it also starts to shape our discipleship, service to God, our discipline of prayer, praise and worship, as we naturally share the Good News of Christ's resurrection with others, we are fulfilling Christ's commission and listen to God who is always speaking to us.

Amen Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, Jesus was baptised in the water of the Jordan River where your voice was heard by him claiming him as your beloved Son in whom you are well pleased. May your spirit also be set upon us, as we share your gospel of love with the world. May we hear your voice affirming us as we follow the path modelled for us by your Son Jesus Christ.

In his name we pray; amen.