

Proper 29 – Christ the King – November 24, 2019

*Jeremiah 23:1-6 Psalm 46 Colossians 1:11-20 Luke 23:33-43*

*the Rev. Deborah Kempson-Thompson*

Paul Peterson tells the following story to

illustrate the peace of mind and

reoriented perspective that comes with baptism:

*A wealthy businessman was [surprised] to see*

*a fisherman sitting beside his boat,*

*playing with with his grandchild.*

*Why aren't you out fishing? asked the businessman.*

*Because I caught enough fish for one day, replied the fisherman.*

*Why don't you catch some more?*

*What would I do with them?*

*You could earn more money, said the businessman.*

*Then with the extra money, you could buy a bigger boat, go into*

*deeper waters, and catch more fish.*

*Then you would make enough money to buy nylon nets.*

*With the nets, you could catch*

*even more fish and make more money.*

*With that money you could own two boats,*

*maybe three boats.*

*Eventually you could have a whole fleet of boats*

*and be rich like me.*

*Then what would I do? asked the fisherman.*

*Then, said the businessman, you could really enjoy life.*

*The fisherman looked at the businessman quizzically*

*and asked,*

*What do you think I am doing now? ”<sup>i</sup>*

Baptism in Greek is not a gentle word.

It means to shake vigorously in water

in order to make clean.

Baptism is the outward and visible sign of that

inward and spiritual grace of being made

clean slates upon which the hand of God

will write.

God will map our hearts and minds with

guidance and encouragement for a new journey of life.

There is a peace after baptism that

passes all understanding—

not freedom from conflict

but the ability to rest in

God's presence that is

a river of living waters,

refreshing us

and moving us along our

journey to Paradise.

*Paradeisos* – paradise – means garden.

The scriptures today point to restoration

of human life as dwelling in a garden—

like the Garden of Eden—

a garden free from pests,

a garden filled with plenteous fruits.

A garden where all created life is transformed

and lives in peace.

The criminal crucified on the right side of

Jesus recognizes this.

He recognizes that Jesus is the Christ,

the anointed one of God

at whose baptism

heard the Holy Spirit proclaim to him,

*This is my beloved one  
in whom I am well pleased.*

Candidates and sponsors, especially,

listen for this same proclamation today as the

waters of baptism cleanse

and make us all ready to receive

the life of Christ

in a new and formidable way.

Paul Peterson puts it this way,

*Those who are baptized in Jesus  
do not need to strive after a new life.  
They have already attained new life  
through dying with Christ.  
But they do need to nurture that new life  
so it can grow and mature.  
That's what church is for.  
That's what Bible study is for.  
That's what prayer is for.  
It is like the Parable of the Sower.*

*Many of those seeds sprouted up, but  
only a few grew into maturity.  
The rest withered and died.<sup>ii</sup>*

In his book, *Come on in, the Water's Fine!*

Billy D. Strayhorn

relates “a story written by French writer Henri Barbusse

tells of a conversation overheard in a trench

full of wounded men during the First World War.

One of the men,

who knew he only had minutes to live

says to one of the other men,

“Listen, Dominic, you’ve led a very bad life.

Everywhere you are wanted by the police.

But there are no convictions against me.

My name is clear, so, here, take my wallet, take my papers,

my identity, take my good name, my life

and quickly, hand me your papers that

I may carry all your crimes away with me in death—

The Good News is that through Jesus,

God makes a similar offer.

Something wonderful happens to us when we are baptized.

When we are baptized, we identify ourselves with Jesus.”<sup>iii</sup>

At baptism,

our born again lives are wrapped

within the folds of

Jesus’ seamless garment

and we are marked as God’s own forever.

We are welcomed into the household of God

located on the outskirts of Paradise.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://thedisciplers.com/sermon-illustrations-about-baptism/>

<sup>ii</sup> *ibid*

<sup>iii</sup> *op cit*