

Rev. Anthony T. Bertram

JESUS' BAPTISM IS OUR BAPTISM

Matthew 3:13-17; Epiphany IA-Baptism/Lord; January 10-11, 2026

There's a saying, "What's yours is mine." The way it's usually used is to claim something that does not belong to us. It could rise to the level of theft, but at the very least it blurs the lines of ownership. Socialism and Communism reject private ownership as a classist abuse of power. No one has exclusive ownership of anything they say.

While it is true that the Book of Acts describes the early church members as "having all things in common" (2:44) and selling personal possessions to care for the poor among them, God's Word nowhere says that the poor have the right to take from the rich what they want or need. The Seventh Commandment is clear, "You shall not steal." God's law wants private property protected. I don't have the right to say to you, "What's yours is mine," and take it from you. That is sinful theft.

On the other hand, how God works in Baptism is a form of "What's yours is Mine." God claims what belongs to us and, when we are baptized into Christ, we claim by faith, "What's Yours God is mine." Despite this, no stealing is going on, no blurring of lines between what belongs to whom. God has communion with us, but He is no Communist. We have communion with God as He willingly shares all He has with us, but not by us taking or demanding what we want.

We celebrated at Christmas that God became man in Jesus Christ. God's Son took on what belongs to us, human nature, but in its original form without sin. Jesus could say of His human nature, "What's yours is Mine," but what is the point of God becoming man in Jesus Christ? It was not the rich "slumming it" for a while to experience what it's like to be poor. Any number of books, movies and TV shows have that as the plot line: the prince or princess pretends to be a commoner; the rich person is forced to live in poverty, In the end, they go back to what they were before. That is not what God's Son did at His incarnation and birth. When He took on human nature as His own, it was to save us from what we had become, sinful humans, and it was for eternity; Jesus remains true man forever.

How God was working our salvation in Christ confused John the Baptist. "Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?'" God had called John to baptize sinners who confessed their sins, repented of them, and received forgiveness in this Baptism. John recognized himself as a sinner and knew that Jesus was not. Why should a sinless Man, Jesus Christ, be baptized in repentance for the forgiveness of sins? Jesus should be the One baptizing John, the sinner, right?

No, that is not right. "Jesus answered [John], 'Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then [John] consented." What does Jesus mean by "fulfill all righteousness"? Righteousness is something that God has, not sinners like John or us. To be righteous is to have God's perfection and holiness, which no sinner can claim. Jesus said that His Baptism would fulfill or complete righteousness for all people, by which He meant sinners like us. By being baptized, Jesus said He would accomplish righteousness for us sinners.

Jesus declares to us by His Baptism, "What's yours is Mine, so what's Mine can become yours." What did Jesus take that is ours? We already heard that Jesus took on our human nature at His incarnation, but without any sin in Him. When He was baptized, He took on our sin as well. "What's yours (sin) is Mine." Jesus became a sinner with our sin. This is St. Paul's point in 2 Corinthians 5: "For our sake He [God the Father] made Him [Jesus, His Son] to be sin who knew no sin" (2 co 5:21a).

Jesus became guilty with our sin at His Baptism. Jesus also took on our punishment for sin at the same time. You know where we are heading with this. If Jesus was now a sinner, He would have to die, which He did on the cross. (There could be no crucifixion without Jesus' incarnation.) And because Jesus in Himself had no sin but was righteous and holy as the spotless Lamb of God, the sacrifice of His sinless body and blood was acceptable to God as a substitute for our sinful flesh. We deserve death because of our sin. Jesus took what we

deserved, suffered our consequences, and paid for our redemption and forgiveness — because what is ours became His.

This means that the opposite is also true: What belongs to Jesus becomes ours in Baptism. 2 Corinthians 5:21 goes on and makes this clear: "so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." Since Jesus became filthy with our sins when He was baptized, when we are baptized, we are cleansed of all sin. Since Jesus suffered and died on the cross for our sins, Baptism becomes a cleansing flood for us. "The blood of Jesus [God's] Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn 17b). Baptism washes away our sins; Baptism forgives our sins.

Jesus explained to John that His Baptism fulfills all righteousness for us when we are baptized into His death and resurrection. In stead of the guilty verdict we deserve from God because of our sins, we receive the verdict Jesus deserved: innocent, righteous, holy, sinless. At His Baptism, Jesus took on our sins, was found guilty of them by His Father, and sentenced to death in our place, "so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." When we are baptized into Christ, we can say rightly, "What's Yours, Jesus, righteousness, is now mine."

What else that belongs to Jesus becomes ours? "And when Jesus was baptized, immediately He went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'" The Holy Spirit is given to us; we are declared to be God's beloved sons and daughters; and heaven is opened to us.

The Holy Spirit who came down like a dove and rested on Jesus at His Baptism is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, "who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified," as we confess in the Nicene Creed. When we are baptized, that same Spirit becomes ours. The Holy Spirit works in us faith in Jesus, the Son, and we become children of the heavenly Father. With great joy we can say to Jesus, "What's Yours, the Holy Spirit, is mine."

All three Persons of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, were present and active at Jesus' Baptism. Jesus, the Son, was baptized to fulfill all righteousness for us, the Spirit descended and remained on Him, and the Father spoke and declared Jesus His beloved Son, with whom He was well pleased. We are declared God's beloved children when we are baptized into Christ, and that our heavenly Father is well pleased with us as much as He is with His Son Jesus.

How can God be pleased to have sinners like us as His children? St. Paul stated in Galatians 3: "For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (3:26-27). To "put on" is to get dressed. To "put on Christ" is put on clothes that cover our nakedness sinfulness. The baptized wear the white robe of Christ's righteousness over their unrighteousness so that when God our Father looks at us, He sees us as He sees His perfect Son, without sin. Jesus is God's Son; the baptized are God's children. "What's Yours Jesus, sonship, is mine."

When Adam and Eve sinned, they were barred from the Garden of Eden Paradise, and then they died. Because we are now children of the heavenly Father, heaven is now ours. Jesus opened the door to eternal paradise in heaven where only the righteous can dwell. Jesus died with our sins and fulfilled all righteousness for us, which is seen in His rising from the dead to life again and ascending into heaven. When we die and rise with Jesus in Baptism, we become heirs of heaven having the hope of eternal life. "What's Yours Jesus, heaven, is mine."

"Jesus' Baptism Is Our Baptism." This works in two directions. Jesus took what was ours, the sinner's baptism that led to His death on the cross, and He gives us His own righteousness. We give Him what is ours in Baptism, our sin and death, and we receive what is His, forgiveness sins, rising to life even as He rose from the dead, and eternal salvation in heaven.

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Jesus declared at His Baptism, "What's yours is mine," so when we are baptized into Christ, we can say, "What's Yours, Jesus, is mine." Amen.