

# O Gracious Lord, with Love Draw Near

Sunday at 8:00 & 10:45 | Monday at 7 PM

The Baptism of Our Lord – 2019

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: We have this major problem ➔ **God is holy, but we are not!** Since we have all sinned, *we have separated ourselves from God and are helpless to restore the broken relationship!* Nevertheless, God still loves us! Therefore, He took action *through His Son* to remove all sins; then, He took further action *through Holy Baptism* to personally give us the benefits of Jesus' work! Today, on this Sunday we call The Baptism of Our Lord, we remember these unique realities of Jesus' baptism:

- ✓ He had no sin, so, through His baptism, *He willingly identified Himself with our sins!*
- ✓ Jesus is *the Christ – the anointed one*; He was anointed with the Holy Spirit right after His baptism!
- ✓ God is ONE, and yet *three Persons*; when Jesus – *God the Son* – was baptized, *God the Holy Spirit* came down upon Him, and *God the Father* spoke from heaven!

When I think about my baptism, I remember that *I AM baptized!* In other words, *by God's grace*, I am still trusting in Jesus as my Savior, I am still clothed in the sinless life of Christ, and I am still in possession of God's gift of eternal life! *I encourage YOU to believe and say all of the same!*

Our focus today is on a hymn in the baptism section of our hymnal; it's called: **O Gracious Lord, with Love Draw Near.**

The words were written by Rev. Stephen P. Starke<sup>1</sup> for people being confirmed; so, as you hear the words, *think about a pastor praying for God's blessing upon your life in Christ!*

1. **Let us pray: O gracious Lord, with love draw near  
To these, Your children gathered here;  
The Spirit's gift in them renew:  
The gift of faith that clings to You.**
  - a. With love draw near: Because God loves us, *He supplies all that we need* ([Philippians 4:19](#))!
  - b. Children: God is our Father because He made us, *but especially because He has brought us back into His family through Jesus* ([Matthew 6:9-13](#))!
  - c. Faith: That is *God's gift to us* by which we trust in Jesus ([1 Corinthians 1:30a](#)). Since our faith is so important, let us feed our faith – *by studying the Bible* ([Psalm 1:1-3](#)) and exercise our faith – *by living the Bible* ([James 1:22](#))!
2. **Let us pray: Sustain the work You have begun  
In these united to Your Son,  
For in that pure baptismal flood  
They have been cleansed by Jesus' blood.**
  - a. The work God has begun: When we were dead in our sins, *God made us alive in Christ* ([Ephesians 2:4-5](#)), and He is continuing to work in our lives by *His Spirit through His Word* ([Philippians 1:6](#))!
  - b. Cleansed by Jesus' blood: Jesus did the work on Good Friday ([John 19:30](#); [1 John 1:7](#)); then God gave us the benefits of that work *through baptism* ([Titus 3:5](#)) and *through the Bible* ([1 Peter 1:23](#))!

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cph.org/p-20602-o-gracious-lord-with-love-draw-near.aspx>

3. **Let us pray: Deliver them from ev'ry wile** [*scam*],  
**From all that would their hearts beguile** [*entice*],  
**From worldly ways and Satan's lies,**  
**That they may not Your Word despise.**
- Deliver them: We live in a world full of schemes and scams, *which seek to draw us into sin and away from Jesus* (1 Corinthians 15:33); so we stand in constant need of *spiritual discernment and spiritual strength* (Matthew 26:41)!
  - The Word: As the devil tempted Adam and Eve to doubt what God said, *so he is still using that method today* (1 Peter 5:8)! We break the third commandment when we despise preaching and God's Word; in other words, *when we choose other things OVER preaching and God's Word* (Luther's Small Catechism, Third Commandment Explanation)!
4. **Let us pray: Lord, keep them firm in their intent To You, Your Word and Sacrament.**  
**O make them bold, their faith to share**  
**And make them strong, each cross to bear.**
- Word and Sacrament: As we look into a mirror to check our physical appearance, *so we are called to look into God's Word to check our spiritual appearance* (James 1:23-25); we do that here each week *through Word and Sacrament!*
  - Share and Bear: When we truly know the punishment we deserve, and the joy of forgiveness in Christ; *then we will be equipped to tell others* (1 Peter 3:15)! As we do so, some will rejoice *but others will persecute us* (2 Timothy 3:12)!

5. **Let us pray: O Father, grant that by Your grace  
They may Your will each day embrace;  
With fruits of faith their lives now bless,  
Till they at death Your name confess.**
- a. God's will: It's laid out in His Word, *so may the Bible be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105)!*
  - b. Confessing: It's good that *today* we are confessing Jesus as Lord (Matthew 10:32-33); now, *by God's powerful and ongoing work in our lives*, may we *continue confessing Him* in word and deed *all the way to the end* (Matthew 10:22)!
6. **Let us pray: Then robed in white before Your throne,  
Your holy saints, by You foreknown—  
Predestined, called, and justified,  
Shall, crowned in light, be glorified.**
- a. Foreknown: God is so awesome that He chose us *before creation* to be His own; then, *in time*, He made us His own *in Christ* (Ephesians 1:3-6)!
  - b. Glorified: That is coming for all who *die in Christ!* Another word for “glorified” is “overvalued”; think about that, *we are poor sinners* and yet *God values us in Christ to be rich saints* – whom He will greatly love *forevermore* (Romans 8:30)!

**This Week's Challenge:** Look up, think about, and pray about the 22 Scripture references included in this sermon!

**Let Us Pray:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, *cause us to rejoice in Your goodness*, and *be ever-near us* – until we are finally in Your most blessed presence forevermore! *In Jesus' name!*