



**Mark 1:4-11
(NRSV)**

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness,

proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Opening

- 1. Pray:** God of grace, thank you for giving us belonging and calling. Help us to recommit to follow Jesus together and to reaffirm our baptismal call. Amen
- 2. Share:** What is the most interesting or memorable baptism you've ever witnessed or participated in. What made it stick out to you?

Dive Into the Text

1. Mark's version of this story is much more concise than other Gospel versions. What are the key points that Mark considers important to convey? What is missing from this version of the story?
2. What is the distinction between John's baptism and the baptism that the Messiah will offer?
3. Why is it significant that Jesus is baptized in this story?
4. What does the confirmation of the Holy Spirit say about Jesus?
5. How does this story tie to our own baptism?

The United Methodist Baptismal Vows

Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are initiated into Christ's holy Church. We are incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation and given new birth through water and the Spirit. All this is God's gift, offered to us without price.

Q: What does it mean to be initiated into the church and incorporated into God's acts of salvation?

On behalf of the whole Church, I ask you: Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin?

Q: What does this look like in our daily lives?

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?

Q: What does this look like in our daily lives?

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the Church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races?

Q: What does this look like in our daily lives?

Definition of Disciple:

A follower of Jesus who puts faith into action, is growing in grace, and being perfected in love.

Q: How can we commit to live this out in our daily lives?

Go Deeper

1. Remember that you are baptized and be thankful: Share about your baptism (if you have been baptized) and what you know about it, if anything.
2. Baptism is a commitment made on our behalf as children, if baptized as an infant, and confirmed in adolescence or adulthood.
3. Review The United Methodist Baptismal Vows: Discuss what it means to live into these vows each day today as followers of Jesus. (See side panel to left).

Close in Prayer

Close your time together in prayer.