

**Sermon: “ Water-washed and Spirt-born” –January 11, 2009  
Scripture: Genesis 1: 1-5, Mark 1: 4-11**

**Forty years ago, on Christmas Day, 1968, Frank Borman, James Lovell, and William Anders circled the moon, and looked down at Earth, and read from the Book of Genesis: In the beginning, God Created..... and it was good! Just seven months later, Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins stepped on the Moon on July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1969.**

**Our passages read this morning from Genesis and Mark tie together the majesty of God’s activity:**

**God Spoke and the world was created  
God spoke and Humanity was redeemed**

**God speaks today with continuing creative and redeeming possibilities for our lives. Life is Good! What are we listening for? What are we hearing?**

**I have been moved in recent years by Celtic spirituality. These are the ancient traditions born of the people of faith in Ireland, Scotland and Wales. There are two major differences between Celtic spirituality and Mediterranean spirituality**

**Deepest within us is goodness – not Original Sin that needs to be expelled first. Creation is a blessing and part of heaven, not separate. Earthly “life” and Spirit “life” both good and inextricably intertwined.**

**In our lesson from Mark’s gospel, a voice comes from heaven at the baptism of Jesus saying, “you are my Beloved Son with whom I am well pleased”**

**Like the words of creation, “Let there be light!” God spoke by that river that day and inaugurated Jesus into his redeeming ministry of love and salvation. The words were for Jesus a confirmation - a vocation – indeed a calling to a new beginning for him and for all of humanity.**

**Mark’s message is threefold:**

**1 – the coming of Jesus ushers in a new age with signs of the heavens splitting, the Spirit descending and the voice of heaven speaking.**

**2 – The voice declares that Jesus is the Son of God, both sovereign and servant.**

**3 – Jesus is then commissioned to usher in this new age.**

**Mark tells the story, however, not just to mark the divinity of Jesus but to also speak to the church of his time. In the political world, Rome was in charge, and this was time of horrendous persecution of Christians. It felt like the end of the world to this small fledgling movement of Christ’s disciples.**

**Mark's declaration is that it may be the end of the world as they know it, but they are part of a new age, the kingdom of God ushered in by Jesus himself. He was the Messiah. And when we move to a slightly later theology from John, we learn that Jesus himself is the Word made flesh – God spoke and humanity was redeemed! Jesus did not merely speak the truth. He is the truth. Jesus did not simply speak of a way to follow, He is the Way! He didn't flash a light to show the path, He is the Light! He does not merely show us how we may have life, He is Life itself. He is Love, Divine Love. God's self in our midst!**

**Like Jesus, we have been water washed in Baptism and Spirit Born as the apparent chasm between heaven and earth has been bridged with the descent of a Dove, the commissioning of a Savior, and the promise that we are God's beloved.**

**We have just crossed over the threshold of a new year. How have you met the new year? It seems that no two Januarys are ever the same. the new year is always unique. Sometimes we enter the year reluctant to give up last year; other times, we can't wait for that new beginning. Sometimes we are worn out and too weary to look for a new vision or too worried and anxious to catch the possibility of renewal and hope.**

**What an appropriate time to hear the good news of God's creative forces at work in the majesty of creation and the wonder of baptism.**

**What an appropriate time also to listen carefully and take new appreciative stock of the gift of life. I want to transition into a short video that Malcolm is going to help with. Gail Chase sent this to me and I was so moved I immediately thought about how I might share it with you. So, sit back and take it in. Let it speak where it might.**

**Video Powerpoint: Tips for the New Year**