

Finding your Roots

People are fascinated with discovering their family history and to see the contributions of their family line to the world. Asking the question, "Where did I come from?" and seeking out that answer is part of our human nature. We want to know who's who and how are we connected. Google makes it easy to see our ancestry. But there is another place, a better place to discover our more important roots. That answer can be found in the season of Advent where we are told "who" we are and "Whose" we are.

During this season, we look back at Genesis and see we are God's special creation, different from all other creatures because we have the breath of God, His very Spirit, in us through Adam. We see how that Spirit of God was dead within Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God trusting in their intellect and letting it be a substitute for the truth of God's Word. The Old Adam would need to be regenerated by the working of God the Holy Spirit through His Word and in the saving waters of our baptism.

During this season, we look back at the manger, where we see the Savior God, Yahweh. The Messiah comes in humble form taking on human flesh, connecting Himself to us as God to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. His name tells the story, Jesus, the One who came to save us from our sins. (Matthew 1:21)

During this season, we look back at the cross and see the Genesis 3:15 promise fulfilled. Our God obligated Himself to us out of love. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden has become the sacrificial wood of the cross, the wood of our salvation. "It is finished" Jesus said. No longer are we condemned because of sin, but saved by Grace through faith. And as we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

During this season, we look forward to His return at the end of time and are reminded that as redeemed sinners, our purpose is to love one another as He has loved us. As we live in this time of Grace, we are commanded to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that He has commanded. We are to remember that it is by the power of the Holy Spirit that we are equipped and empowered to be His salt and light to the world.

Who are you? A sinner by nature, conceived in sin, separated from God and condemned.

Whose are you? "God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It! I am baptized into Christ." Your sins are paid for because God keeps His promises in and through Jesus Christ. Because of Christ and for His sake, you are equipped by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word and Sacraments to live out His command in your vocation so that others may know Jesus.

In full confidence and joy, pray and sing:

God's own child, I gladly say it:
I am baptized into Christ!
He, because I could not pay it,
Gave my full redemption price.
Do I need earth's treasures many?
I have one worth more than any

That brought me salvation free
Lasting to eternity!

Sin, disturb my soul no longer:
I am baptized into Christ!
I have comfort even stronger:
Jesus' cleansing sacrifice.
Should a guilty conscience seize me
Since my Baptism did release me
In a dear forgiving flood,
Sprinkling me with Jesus' blood!

Satan, hear this proclamation:
I am baptized into Christ!
Drop your ugly accusation,
I am not so soon enticed.
Now that to the font I've traveled,
All your might has come unraveled,
And, against your tyranny,
God, my Lord, unites with me!

Death, you cannot end my gladness:
I am baptized into Christ!
When I die, I leave all sadness
To inherit paradise!
Though I lie in dust and ashes
Faith's assurance brightly flashes:
Baptism has the strength divine
To make life immortal mine.

There is nothing worth comparing
To this lifelong comfort sure!
Open-eyed my grave is staring:
Even there I'll sleep secure.
Though my flesh awaits its raising,
Still my soul continues praising:
I am baptized into Christ;
I'm a child of paradise!

In the NAME of Jesus. AMEN

God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It
by Erdmann Neumeister (1671-1756)