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Lent Midweek #6
Zechariah 13:1-2
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The Refiner's Refinery

An oil refinery processes crude oil. A refinery takes crude oil and processes it into gasoline, diesel fuel, kerosene, and jet fuel to name a few products that are made from crude oil.

There is another kind of crude oil. It's the grime and dirt of our hearts. It's when someone snaps at us and we snap right back at them. It's when we're short on time and we lose our temper. It's when we see a child as a burden rather than a gift from God to be loved. It's when we pass on gossip and listen to slander. Is there somewhere we can go when our hearts are contaminated and polluted?

Zechariah says yes! He says: "On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness." Zechariah gives us a fountain to purify and cleanse our hearts from all the rotten stuff in our hearts.

A fountain gives fresh, 'living' water. Zechariah's fountain of living water refines and purifies the muck of our hearts. God's refining fountain is open twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. And there is no charge for His purifying water.

God has provided a fountain of living water. Why would provide this fountain? The answer is because we are all dirty, really dirty with sin. We are thoroughly polluted with seven sins. They are deadly. There is Lust. I want what I want and I want it right now. There is Envy. I want what you have and I want it right now. There is Greed. I want more of what I have and I want it right now. There is Sloth. I have no drive or desire and I certainly don't wait to do anything with my life – right now or ever. There is Wrath. I'm full of anger and rage and

I'm going to dump it on you right now. There's Pride. I'm better than you, richer than you, younger than you, and smarter than you right now and forever. There's Gluttony. I'm going to indulge myself with whatever and I will do it right now.

God has provided a fountain of living water. He has provided this fountain because we all desperately need it. God has provided His fountain of living water at the cross of Calvary. As the Savior, Jesus Christ, hung dead on the cross a soldier approached His body. The soldier took his spear and plunged it into the Redeemer's side. When the soldier did that there was a sudden flow of blood and water. A gushing river of life surged from the Savior who hung on the cross. Living water flowed from the One who cried out: "I thirst." Jesus Christ was crushed and cursed and pierced by the dirt and grim of our sin.

God has provided a fountain of living water for us because we need it. We need it because of our sin. God has provided this fountain at the cross. The question is, how does this fountain of living water, provided by the Savior at the cross purify us? How does the water from the Savior get to us? The answer is Holy Baptism.

Holy Baptism connects us to the Redeemer's Refinery and His fountain of living water. Like a conduit, baptism links us to fountain of purifying water. Baptism delivers the gifts of Jesus Christ's sin atoning death on the cross of Calvary for us. Baptism announces that sin is freely and completely forgiven. Baptism says that guilt is gone, our debt is paid in full, that all our sin is forgiven. Baptism says that Hell is conquered and Heaven is open to us. Baptism gives us heavenly citizenship. Baptism empowers us to hear Jesus Christ's voice calling us back, bringing us home, and renewing our spirits so we flee to Him for refuge. Baptism enables us to build on Him alone, trust in Him alone, and wash in no other fountain.

But this refinery and fountain won't do us any good if we look at it and think, "I wish my wife and kids would get under that water!" That looks something like this: "Well, I may not be perfect but I'm a whole lot better than my dad ever was!....I'm just as good as the next guy. I pay my taxes, coach Little League....Me, a sinner? Come on! I'm pretty good, especially compared to them." This is justifying my sin instead of repenting and turning to the Savior and His fountain and refinery.

We have an open fountain of living water that cleanses all sin. We have it because a gracious God has provided it in Jesus Christ. We need it and in love God has provided it. He provided it at the cross of Calvary and He gives it to us in Baptism. The blessings of that fountain of our baptism are available each and every day.