

The Covenant of Baptism

Sermon January 16, 2022

Scriptures: Isaiah 43:1-7 & Luke 3:15-22

Golden Verse: *“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.”* Mark 16:16a

A few weeks after I was born, my parents and my two godparents took me to be baptized. I am very thankful they did. Once, I had a chance to take a look in that old book in which I saw my name being registered as a baptized child and I saw the minister’s name who officiated my baptism.

My wife and I decided to do the same for our children. We carefully chose godparents and asked my wife’s father, our children’s grandfather, to baptize our children. Those days were very special for us as we gathered with many friends and family members to celebrate the blessed occasions. Our children were the focus of those occasions. Of course, they don’t remember any of it, but they saw the pictures we had taken.

Dear Beloved, when we brought our children and grandchildren to be baptized, those occasions were not for the parents, but for our children, as we entrusted them into God’s hands, the best place they can be.

Why do we baptize children?

A question often asked of those who argue against infant baptism is: What good does it do the infant, since the children are not aware of what is happening in baptism or why? They cannot see the benefit of baptism. Would it not be better to wait until they are adults, and come to living faith and they will decide to get baptized? Jesus was an adult when he was baptized, and in Acts we read that 3,000 adults were baptized.

Baptism is a sign of the covenant. Baptism is a covenant between God and our children. In the Old Testament, children were included in God’s household by circumcision. There are two other significant stories in the New Testament, where the Apostle Peter baptized two households including their children.

God recognizes our children as members of His family. God takes the covenant sign seriously. God ordered the covenant sign in the Old Testament, and Christ ordered the baptism as the covenant sign in the New Testament. Christ said: “Go and make disciples and baptize them.” He did not say: “Do this if you want.” All those children and adults, who are baptized, are part of God’s covenant people. Baptism is just not a symbolic ceremony or old ritual. Baptism is a sacred sacrament. In baptism, we receive sanctifying grace.

The apostles baptized entire households, including infants, toddlers, adults, and teenagers.

I am encouraging all our friends as parents not to miss this blessed occasion to bring their children to be baptized and to make them the covenant children of God. The Bible is teaching us that God considers those children who are part of His covenant to be members of the visible church. God will bless the parents' efforts on behalf of the child.

As parents, we do our very best for our children.

As parents we feel responsible to provide love, food and shelter for our children. We work very hard for them. We give ourselves to them. We paint their rooms. We buy them the best car seats. We help them with schooling, learning, and researching the best schools. We invest all our efforts in our children. But we would be at a loss if we did not help them to develop their spiritual life by passing to them our faith and helping them to connect with God. Baptism was the greatest gift we could offer our children.

Faith should be so vitally important to us that we would not raise our children without teaching them about Christ, so as adults they should come to faith. We love our children very much, but there is somebody who loves them more. Jesus died on the cross for them to save them. Baptism is the sign of Christ's love.

By baptism, we are united with all others who are baptized.

From that moment we were baptized, we became part of the Body of Christ. When we were baptized, we were incorporated into the Body of Christ, members of the Universal Christian Church.

When we bring our children to be baptized, we make an oath that we will raise them in a way that they should know Christ from our words and actions. As adults, they should have a choice to choose Christ as their Saviour. As parents, we are expected to raise our children in faith so that they can accept Jesus, and faith into which they were baptized. We pray that we raise our children to choose Christ in everything in their lives. But, if they don't, they are still baptized.

Why does our innocent little infant need this indelible mark of baptism?

Our biggest enemy, the devil, will do everything to separate us from Christ, and often we see the devil is more powerful than we are. But if we are baptized, we know that Christ's sign is on us, and nothing can separate us from Christ Jesus. When we are experiencing temptations, even if we fall, we have to remember that we are baptized, and we belong to Jesus. We are God's children. We have to remember that, through

Christ, we are God's children. Jesus is with us in every situation and not even sin can separate us from Him.

Once, the reformer Martin Luther was fighting with the devil, who placed pressure on Martin making him sad and disappointed about himself as a human being. Then Martin said: "I AM BAPTIZED, which means I belong to Christ, no matter how weak I am as a human, as a sinner."

Dear beloved, our weaknesses and our sins cannot take away from us this wonderful name we received in baptism. Your name is GOD'S CHILD. You are wonderfully made, dearly loved, and precious in His sight (Psalm 139). YOU ARE GOD'S CHILD, SAVED BY CHRIST.

As an infant, we were unable to profess faith, but God approached us with love, exactly as our parents did. They loved us before we knew about their love. God has chosen to love us before we knew about Him.

Let us encourage ourselves and our children in turning constantly towards Christ. Let us lay our life into Jesus' hands. Let us learn every day about the love of Christ, presented to us through the Bible and the Holy Spirit. Let us make all the efforts to follow our Saviour. Let us raise our children and pray for them with the power of the Holy Spirit.

If your children left the church, if they are angry and bitter about God and faith, tell them that God, as a good parent, always will love them. Tell them that you gave them the best gift you could in asking the Church to baptize them.

We hope that we raised them well enough that they choose to continue to grow in faith and flourish in a life with Christ. And, if they are blessed with children, we pray they bring them to the baptismal font as well to Christ Jesus who loves them with an immeasurable love. Let it be. Amen