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April 25, 2004

Blessing the Children Daniel 1 Mark 10:13-16

Today is a wonderful occasion for us.

We have adopted a new member into our church family.

We officially welcomed Daniel Paul Koops as
our youngest member (9 days old), and
promised to help care for him and
support him in his walk with God.

And just like his biological family;

Alexander, Shaelyn and Dana, and grandma, we rejoice,
we get out the cake and the balloons, we organize a potluck lunch
and we begin making the adjustments for him to
fit into our community, so that Daniel belongs.

Baptism is an unusual event.

It seems to be a symbol, a ritual, a sign people invented.

I don't think baptism was mentioned in the OT.

And then early in the New Testament

John the Baptist out of the blue starts baptizing people.

Dunking them into the waters of the Jordan River.

He even baptizes Jesus.

And then Jesus tells us we should do the same.

What is this all about? Why Baptize?

What does it mean?

What happened here this morning to Daniel Paul?

And should it have happened at all?

The bible speaks about baptism in a number of ways.

First in the ministry of John the Baptist

we realize that baptism is a preparation.

It's the beginning of something.

At his circumcision party when John was eight days old

John the Baptist's father said

"You my child will be called a prophet of the most high,
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way
for him, (that is what baptism is a preparing the way
for Jesus) to give people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins." Luke 1:76-77

Baptism is a ritual that

marks the beginning of Jesus coming into your life.

It is the beginning of

living the new life of salvation and forgiveness.

The water represents the washing away of our sins.
It symbolizes the cleansing of a bride for
her husband on the wedding day.
It points to the purification of someone
who wants to enter the temple of God to be with God.
And notice this is done by the prophet of the most high.
This is done by a representative of God.

But that is not all baptism means.
If that was all,
Jesus would not have insisted on being baptized.
Jesus didn't need the forgiveness of sin.
He had a deep relationship with God. One with God.
He didn't need to be washed to get into the presence of God.
When Jesus was baptized two important things happened
a voice from heaven spoke and
a dove from heaven came down.
God said at the baptism:
This is my son whom I love;
with him I am well pleased. Mt 3:17
In baptism God symbolically speaks to the community and
to us as individuals and says: You are my child.
I love you. I have special plans for you.
I am setting you apart for a special purpose.
I'm giving you my spirit.
And so Baptism is a confirmation and a reminder that
God loves us and has a special purpose for us.
In baptism God commissions us.

And finally,
Jesus tells us we should baptize people.
In Mt 28:19 Jesus says
go and make disciples of **all** nations
baptizing them into the name of the father, Son and
Holy Spirit and teaching them.
This was the last thing Jesus said to his disciples.
"Baptizing people into the name of" is adoption.
Welcoming people into the family.
Adopting them as brothers and sisters and
teaching them, showing them,
what the new life in Jesus looks like.

Now the question is: is baptism or
the reality baptism points to something we do?
Do we wash away our sin?
Did we wash away Daniel's sin?

Do we do something to trigger God's love for us?
Do we do something to change the mind of God
toward us?
Do we adopted ourselves into the family?
Did Alexander and Shaelyn fill in an application so
that their son, Daniel, would be adopted
into the family of God?
Do we decide to become God's children?
Do we determine what we will do for God?

Although baptism is something we do,
baptism is a symbol that points to God's action in our lives.
God washes our sin away, God chooses us,
God loves us, God adopts us as his children,
God sets us apart for his purposes,
God fills us with his spirit,
God stirs faith in our hearts.

Sometimes we get confused about what baptism is.
We think it is something we need to do or decide.
Some people think it is a matter of us dedicating
ourselves and our children to God service and
that we are responsible for their faith;
and that you can only be baptized when you have
real faith or are ready to live the Christian life.

And that's why the disciples in the story we read from
Mark 10 tried to keep the children away from Jesus.

The children were not mature enough to make up
their own minds about life and about God,
they didn't have faith,
they weren't even sorry for their sins or
know what God wanted them to do.
So the disciples rebuked their parents for bringing
their children to Jesus and sho-od them away.

But Jesus was indignant,
that is nice way of saying Jesus was angry.
He said to his pious, well meaning,
God protecting, gate keeping disciples:
"Let the little children **come** to me. Do not hinder them,
for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

The kingdom of God belongs to people like Daniel Paul.
As a matter of fact, Jesus says,

we all need to become like Daniel Paul,
to receive God's gift of love and grace
with no ability to do anything to make it happen,
because in baptism we remember that it is all about God.
Salvation is all God's doing.
Only children allow themselves to be taken into the
arms of others and to be touched and blessed.

Do you want to be touched by Jesus?
Do you want to have the hand of God on you?
Do you wish to sit on the lap of Jesus and
to be blessed by him?
Do you want to enter the kingdom of God
to have eternal life?
Do you want the spirit of God to fill you and
make into a new person?

When you become like a little child,
helpless and needy for the love and provisions of others,
the love and provision only God can give
you've got what it takes.

Whether you are a baby or an adult, a child or teenager,
young adult or a white haired senior,
if you come to Jesus or let others bring you to Jesus
your sins will be washed away,
you'll be welcomed into the family of God as a
brother or sister, and
you will be given the name,
God's family name and all the blessings that
that name entails,
especially the inheritance of eternal life.

You may be wondering why I read from
the book of Daniel this morning.
Daniel was baptized as a baby,
circumcised on the eighth day,
he became a brother in the family of God,
a child of God and
it made a tremendous difference
in the way he lived his life
and the way he impacted the lives of people and nations.
Because of God's claim on his life
he became a man of prayer, and vision, and
wisdom and faith.
He became an instrument of salvation and blessing

in the hand of God.

Paul, the great NT apostle was baptized as an adult (Acts 9:18).

When God touched his life and put his hand of blessing
on him Paul became a changed man.

A man of prayer, vision, faith, and tremendous
missionary zeal.

He too became an instrument of salvation and
blessing in the lives of others.

In Daniel and Paul we see what the hand of God looks like,
how the blessing of Jesus makes a difference.

And that is our prayer for our youngest member,
Daniel Paul too.

Baptism is just a sign, a symbol, a ritual that
points to what God does and can do and
has done in our lives.

And so when there is baptism in our church family we
celebrate and get out the cake and
organize a potluck lunch.

For all those who receive this message of love and are
baptized are added to that number who are being saved.

If you believe this message
that your salvation is all about God,
and all you need do is to receive his love and
his name as a child you qualify for baptism.

and you would like to be baptized or have your children baptized I invite you to speak to
me after the service about setting up a date for your adoption into the family of God.

Lets pray.

Gracious father, we thank you for the forgiveness of sins through your son Jesus and we
thank you for your eternal faithfulness to your promises and for assuring us that we are
your loved children. Give us wisdom and love to live as your people, and help us in
caring for and supporting Daniel Paul. Also bless Alexander and Shaelyn as Daniel's
parents. Helping in modeling the Christ-like life.

And especially be with Daniel Paul. We pray for him. We pray that you O God will be
with him. Touch him with your spirit hold him close to you so that he may respond to
you grace and your love with faith. Fill him with your holy Spirit and make his life
fruitful like Daniel and Paul before him. Give Daniel Paul the strength to endure trials.
And when Christ returns May we all as your people celebrate your greatness and your
goodness forever in the joy of the new creation. In Jesus name we pray. Amen