

## Lenten Series 2006: Baptized into His Death—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—3/29/06

### Title: Baptized into the Family

Text: Gal. 3: 27-29 and John 19: 25-27

Intro: Ills.: birth certificate — document of belonging but not of own choosing

Theme: In Jesus' death and through our baptism we have become part of the Christian family in which we show the devotion and commitment.

### ***Becoming part of the family is a choice made for you***

- Just as you were born not by your choice; so you were born again in baptism by God's will
  - A. *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. John 1:12-13*
  - B. Like the disciple John with Mary, Jesus' mother, Jesus brings us together as an unlikely but not random family
    - 1. John and Mary could never have pictured three years before being at that moment at the foot of the cross
    - 2. Look around—everyone here is your family in Jesus— Jesus is calling you to be in relationship with one another
- By the power of new birth in our baptism we choose to love not based on whether we deserve but because we are loved.
  - A. *"We love because he first loved us.. This is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 19,21*
  - B. That is why Paul in describing our birthright through baptism follows up by saying, *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."* Gal 3: 28
    - 1. There is no room for prejudicial or preferential treatment within Christ's family
    - 2. His blood on the cross which covered us in our baptism broke down the dividing wall

### ***Being a part of the family being immersed/baptized in going through joyful and tough things together***

- Made a part of his death by our connection to his family
  - A. Church would be so easy if we did not have to deal with broken people (including ourselves)
    - 1. By its very nature, when we become involved with Jesus, we become immersed in his life—all or nothing
    - 2. *"Sell all that you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."* Mark 10: 21
    - 3. John took on a life-long commitment (*from that day forward he took Mary into his home. John 19: 27*)
  - B. This kind of baptized relationship challenges us but. . .
    - 1. *With men this is impossible but with God all things are possible."* Mark 10: 27
    - 2. **Ills.: Grieving brings ministry**
- When we are united with Christ in a *death like his* (in baptism), we also are united in the joy of being joined together
  - A. There is a supernatural joy which God gives us when we are committed to his son and then committed to his family
  - B. *If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion . . .then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose . . .Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus . . .but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross! Phil 2: 1-2, 5, 7-8*
  - C. We become one in mind with Christ, and so our goal is to do whatever it takes to bless His church through our life
  - D. We become one in heart with Jesus and so we are able to share his unconditional love for those still outside his family

### **Grieving brings ministry**

On July 23, 1992, the local police chief in Beattyville, Kentucky, told Rosemary Smith and her husband, Luther, that two of their sons—Jeremiah, 15, and Drew, 18—were dead. The brothers were returning from a concert in Indianapolis, Indiana, when they crashed their vehicle. Darkness like nothing she had ever known settled over Rosemary. Yet, she found solace in her faith. While following the hearses to the burial site, she heard church bells toll 33 times. "As I sat there and counted," said Rosemary, "it hit me that when Jesus died he was 33, which was also the combined ages of my sons." Not long after her loss, Rosemary began a ministry called Fellow Travelers, a ministry to other grieving parents who have lost a child. "I feel this is my mission on Earth," Rosemary said of the ministry. "I now have a higher purpose than what I was doing, and the death of my sons took me there." Every day, Rosemary reads the newspaper and searches the Internet for child obituaries. She either calls the families or sends them special packets consisting of books on loss, a music CD, a three-ring notebook of inspirational messages, and more. She gets about 50 e-mails a day from people requesting one of her packets. More than 5,000 packets—paid for by Rosemary and her husband—have been sent all over the world. "We are here to help other people," said Rosemary. "It gives me great joy thinking God is using me to help others."

**John 19:25-27**

<sup>25</sup>Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup>When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," <sup>27</sup>and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

**Galatians 3:27-29**

<sup>27</sup>or all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup>There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup>If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.