

he wants us to be intimately involved in his life. That's why we have the Holy Spirit.

God hasn't birthed us to have a relationship with an idea called love. God in Jesus, through our baptism, births us to have a relationship with him, a relationship which is characterised by our family DNA of love. After all; God is love, and now as his children we have the same DNA, loving others is simply being true to who we are in Christ Jesus.

God has birthed us so that he can have a relationship with us; so he comes in the person of the Holy Spirit. That's why you can't become a Christian by simply learning facts and figures. You can't have a relationship with facts and figures, for that, a relationship, you

need another person. So Jesus sends the person of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. That's God himself, so that we can enjoy each other's company, getting to know each other as we share life together.

That's also why you can't be a Christian in isolation. The whole point of Jesus is to bring people into relationship with each other and with God, that as one big happy family we might share life together, discovering the wonders of life together, facing the challenges of life together, celebrating life together. And you simply can't be together on your own!

This week take some time and invite the Holy Spirit to open up for you all that took

place when you were baptised and ask him to reveal how that affects you life today. Also with the Holy Spirit reflect on Dad's words at your baptism; "You are my child, whom I love, with you I am well pleased". And then take the time to share this with another member of Jesus' family. That's one way to build life together, as Jesus has always intended life to be.

Let us pray.
Jesus send the Holy Spirit to open our hearts and minds to all that took place when we were baptised. Grow greater depth and maturity in our relationship with you and with our brothers and sisters in you, so that we might be all that you have dreamed possible. Amen.



Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am

Pastor: Tim 0427326553

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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

10 January 2010

CHRISTMAS 2—A NEW NATION

Luke 3:15-17, 21, 22

Today's Gospel reading was about Jesus' baptism, and because we are part of the 'Body of Christ' it also is about our baptism, our birth into God's family, our anointing as a person God has chosen to bear his image.

So whatever is proclaimed over Jesus at his baptism is also said over us. What did God the Father say; "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22) What beautiful words God the Father spoke when you were baptised; "You are my child, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Do you ever wonder if your Heavenly Father loves you? Your baptism is a constant

reminder that the answer is always; yes. In Christ Jesus the answer is always the same; 'you are my child, whom I love'. There is no doubt about it, because our Dad doesn't change his mind about such things. There is nothing more certain in all the world. From God's perspective, in Jesus, all he sees when he looks at you is one of his loved, precious children.

What sort of Dad do we have? Is he one who would be cruel? Certainly not. Is he one who would lie to us? That would go against his very nature. As Jesus states; 'I am the truth'. Dad just simply doesn't lie; he always speaks the truth, and speaks the truth in love. We can trust him with our lives. Is he a Dad

who would neglect his children? Never.

That's one aspect I like about the Old Testament reading. It reminds me that no matter what happens Dad doesn't neglect his children but is always with us, is always with me. "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; - Dad is with us - and when you pass through the rivers they will not sweep over you - because we have Dad at our side and we can rely on his strength." (Isaiah 43:2)

We never need to feel alone and unloved because in Jesus, God, our Dad has declared; "this is what the LORD says; he who created you... you're a creation of God, not a mistake, or just something that happened - he who

formed you. 'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned (called) you by name; you are mine.'" (Isaiah 43:1)

Jesus has redeemed us, his claim to love us isn't empty words, but words that are full of his action. Jesus has paid the price so when he speaks his words have substance. And one thing about love is that; "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment." (1 John 4:18)

In Jesus I know there is nothing to fear, even when he exposes areas in my life where I've made mistakes and need correction. I don't need to fear Dad's correction, because he isn't punishing me, but his discipline grows me to greater maturity, that I might love as he does. Dad, in Jesus, never lashes out in anger to punish me, but always

acts in love. That means when I do something stupid, he won't overlook it, but he'll get me to see the hurt and pain I've caused, the loveless thing that I've done, so that I can change and mature. Because the last thing Dad wants is for me to become the product of my stupidity,

"You are my child, whom I love, with you I am well pleased."

the product of my hurt, bitter, angry, greedy, resentful feelings. Thank God for that.

The other great thing that is spoke at your baptism in Christ is; 'with you I am well pleased'. What a powerful phrase. 'With you I am well pleased'. That means you don't have to do anything to impress your Dad, he already is. You don't have to spend your life trying to get your Dad's

approval, you've already got it.

I've heard of people who have lived their whole life trying to get their parents approval, or recognition in some way. I've heard of people who live seeking to please people, doing all sorts of good things so that

others will approve of them. That's a legacy of the fall. Adam and Eve die when they eat the forbidden fruit and are left with

lingering doubt. Am I good enough? Do I have Dad's approval, or do I have to do more to prove myself? What horrible slavery, living to prove yourself.

Thank God, that in Jesus, we have nothing to prove. Dad is well pleased, and that's before we've done a thing. That's because Dad doesn't what you a slave to your insecurities, trying to prove yourself to him. After all that's

impossible, because it only leaves you with an empty relationship. Once you've proved yourself, you've got to keep doing it, because you're only as good as your last effort. What a horrid way to exist.

Thank God, that in Jesus, we start with the security of Dad's approval. You are the child he is well pleased with. Now he wants you to join him in a lifetime of discovery, not to prove yourself, but to give full expression to the image of God that you bear. To enjoy and celebrate life with Dad as together you discovery life, life lived to the full. What a wonderful freedom Dad wants his children to live in and discover. In Jesus we start secure, we have nothing to prove, only life to live, to celebrate, to discover with Dad, and the rest of the clan.

The other main feature about Jesus' baptism

was the descending of the Holy Spirit. The reading from Acts for today reminds us that this is an essential part of Jesus' baptism.

Peter and John encounter a group of new believers who hadn't received the Holy Spirit. This obviously was an

You are Baptised into Christ

adoration to the norm. So "Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." (Acts 8:17) This reminds me that baptism is much, much more than some nice naming ceremony, or some quaint religious rite. Something life changing happens, God units himself with us, and takes up residence with us.

The Holy Spirit isn't some power force that

we plug into, but it is the very person of God come to live with us. God doesn't promise to unit himself with us that we might share the discovery of life together and then not show up. God shows up in the person of the Holy Spirit. In baptism we receive the Holy Spirit, God present, there so we can share his life with him. There so we can discover fullness of life with him. There so we never walk alone.

What a life changing event baptism is. Though I must admit that at times I don't always play my part, or I take the Holy Spirit for granted and forget to spend time together. Sometime I wonder off and do things my way, on my own and leave the Holy Spirit out of it. Of course that's not what God wants to do at all. That's why we have the Holy Spirit, because God never takes us for granted, but