

“Proclaim the Name!” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Trinity Sunday June 4, 2023

- I. **Matthew 28:19-20** - ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.
- II. **I am a child of God.**
 - a. That’s a bold statement when you think about it.
 - b. Last week, after the confirmands received their blessing, the choir sang a beautiful song called, “I Am A Child Of God” by Mark Shepperd.
 - i. It reminded me that I’m what God says I am... not so much what I think I am.
 - ii. Too many times we have a false perception of ourselves.
 1. Sometimes it’s a false perception of greatness – that I’m better than I think I am.
 2. Sometimes it’s a false perception of insignificance – that I’m worse than I think I am.
 3. Either way, we really need to ask the question, “What does God say?”
 - c. I’ve used this illustration before in our Lambs’ Lessons, but it makes the point very well...
 - i. In Disney’s animated movie Toy Story, Woody (a toy cowboy) confronts Buzz Lightyear (a toy astronaut) with the fact that he is only an action figure and not a real space hero.
 1. Woody shouts, “You’re not a space ranger! You’re an action figure—a child’s plaything.”
 - ii. Buzz tries all kinds of things, but fails... especially to fly... and it was in that moment that Buzz realizes the truth of Woody’s statement.
 1. Grief-stricken and disillusioned, Buzz hangs his head in resignation, and says, “I’m just a stupid, little, insignificant toy.”
 - iii. Later on, Woody tries to comfort his friend by pointing out the love of the boy who owns them both.
 1. “You must not be thinking clearly... Look, over in that house, there’s a kid who thinks you’re the greatest, and it’s not because you’re a space ranger; it’s because you’re his.”
 - iv. As Buzz lifts his foot, he sees writing on the bottom of his little space boot.
 1. There in black permanent ink is the name of the little boy to whom he belongs.... Andy.
 2. After he sees it, Buzz breaks into a smile and becomes more determined than ever.¹
 - d. What is the trouble with Buzz?

- i. First, he thinks more of himself than he really is...
- ii. Then, he finds out that he's much different than he thought...
- iii. Finally, he finds out what he's worth because of the name he's been given... Andy's toy.
- iv. It's not so much about how amazing he is, but how much he's loved.

III. **What makes us children of God?**

- a. Some of us think we are special people with all kinds of talent – and that might be very true – but not why God calls us His children...
- b. Some of us think we are losers with no talent – which is not true because God gives all people gifts that can be used for His kingdom – and regardless of our level of talent, God calls us His children anyway.
- c. So, as strange as it sounds, many people are mixed up about what makes them a child of God – they believe it has to do with their own value.
- d. Yet, we need to go to the Scriptures to see where value comes from...
 - i. After Adam and Eve introduced sin into the world, other than Jesus, every human being born has inherited sin.
 - ii. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” (ESV)
 - iii. King David writes in Psalm 51:5, “For I was born a sinner-- yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.” (NLT)
 - iv. Romans 3 says, ¹⁰ “None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹² All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” And, ²³ “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Romans 3:10-12; 23 ESV)
 - v. Jesus says in John 3, “that which is born of flesh is flesh” – meaning that sin corrupts all, but we must be born of the Spirit. (John 3:6)
 - vi. And finally, in Ephesians 2, Paul writes, “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins,” and “were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” (Ephesians 2:1; 3 ESV)
 - vii. It's safe to say that we have no good in us, no matter what kind of talent and gifts we think we have.
 - 1. It's also safe to say that we cannot be the right thing, or do the right things to get on God's good side... to become His child.
- e. No, we cannot “be the right thing” – but as Ephesians 2 says, ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ-- by grace you have been saved.” (Ephesians 2:4-5 ESV)
- f. What makes you a child of God?
 - i. God's love and grace, as the Father chose us in Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- IV. **Today is Trinity Sunday**, and we praise God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- a. This name – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was placed on us in baptism and through our faith to change our very identity.
 - b. Once we were not saved, nor a child, nor anything but objects of God’s wrath (Eph. 2:1) and enemies of God. (Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21)
 - c. Yet, somewhere in our past, the Father’s grace and forgiveness, which came through the work of Jesus on the cross, was transferred to us through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - i. The Father sent the Son (John 14:26)... and the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit. (John 16:7) – and because God loves us and does not want us to be thrown into hell, He put His name on us.
 - d. I often say that baptism is where God signs the adoption papers, but it is when the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are put on us (not on our feet like Woody and Buzz) – but on our bodies and our spirits.
 - i. Some of you worshiped during Confirmation Day last Sunday – and it was a celebration of young people who spoke out about their faith in Jesus, and the powerful work of God in their baptisms.
 - ii. They, along with us, can claim that we are children of God because He loves us and brought us to faith.
 - iii. Faith is the key to receiving all these good gifts, and it is by faith that we see the works of God and believe in Him.
 - e. No worthiness... or unworthiness makes me acceptable or unacceptable to God... because He says that He’s not interested in your lacking or your plenty... He is interested in calling you His own.

- V. **The Great Commission is all about proclaiming the name of God.**
- a. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are to be placed on people in baptism, as God claims His children from an eternity separated from Him.
 - b. Being called a child of God means that my fate is sealed – He now says that I’m saved by grace because I trust and have faith in Him.
 - c. The Good News is that God’s nature is not only to love, but to send.
 - i. The Father sent His Son to die and rise again for us.
 - ii. The Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit to find us and give us faith.
 - iii. And now, we are sent to proclaim the name of God to all nations.
 - d. When understand how merciful and loving God has been to us – whether we were filled with pride or felt like we could never measure up – it makes sense that we would share this gift of life and salvation with others.
 - e. A disciple is a follower, and Jesus tells us to make followers using the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in baptism, along with teaching what He told us to do.
 - f. Nowhere does God say that we must do it alone, or that we are in charge of the faith that saves – no, it is all about God and His presence and work.

- i. We are just going along, proclaiming the name that saved us –
 - 1. The Father and His divine mercy
 - 2. The Son and His all-availing sacrifice
 - 3. And the Holy Spirit and His seeking and saving
- g. Yes, our God is worthy of our worship and praise – and certainly worthy to proclaim His name to all who will listen. Amen.

¹ Source: Toy Story (Disney, 1995), rated G, directed by John Lasseter