

# **“The Children Ask”**

Grove Presbyterian Church

October 2, 2011

## **Children’s Talk = Sacrament of Baptism Questions**

### **Why do they put water on the babies head?**

#### **Why do we use water?**

- 1) Jesus was baptized with water, the Jordan River
- 2) Water used by Jews for purification rites so they could be admitted to worship
- 3) Water cleanses
- 4) Water is source of all life

### **Why are babies baptized?**

#### **Do only infants get baptized?**

Adults and youths too – more a matter of when ready

We like infant baptism for four reasons:

- 1) Bible has lots of incidents where whole households would be Baptized. A family affair, babies too – context of the womb in which babies are biologically formed. So baptism is the womb, the context of faith in which they will be incubated into adulthood.
- 2) Hebrews the sign of covenant, of belonging was circumcision. For Christians both men and women can equally belong to the covenant.
- 3) Infants don’t do anything to deserve, earn, or merit this gift, they just receive the grace.
- 4) If a profession of faith is required for Baptism, don’t tell me (as a professor in seminary once said) that babies don’t believe in the source of life when you see them move toward their mother for nourishment.

### **Why do people get baptized?**

Variety of reasons and motives, many of which have nothing to do with church:

- 1) cute, get to present and show off their baby
- 2) custom and tradition similar to sweet sixteen parties -- let’s get the baby done (medium rare, medium, or well done?)
- 3) for some fear and superstition, as if child won’t go to heaven if not baptized

Most difficult for session is to get a request for baptism when a parent wants baptism having shown no commitment to Christ and His Church.

What we want is understanding how baptism is our response to Jesus saying, “you are mine.” Baptism is our public declaration that we live for Jesus as part of his Body which is the church. Baptism marks us as chosen to serve God.

### **If someone is not baptized are they still a Christian?**

- 1) Is someone married if there hasn’t been a wedding?

2) What is a Christian? Can you be a Christian without participating in a church? Is there such a thing as a solitary Christian? It is one thing to admire or even imitate Jesus, but that isn't a public commitment; it is another thing to join up with the Christian movement and be part of a community of faith.

### **Is the water cold?**

Sometimes

### **Do babies cry when they get water on their heads?**

Why don't we find out...

### **Ministry Minute: The Head of the Church**

*Why: orientation as to the fundamentals of what we hang onto*

How our church Constitution begins. Frames everything else that follows.

2) Christ alone is the authority that governs our lives. What we mean when we say Christ is Lord. All that Jesus is – selflessness, unconditional love, forgiveness, grace, sacrifice, justice, truth – is Lord of our lives.

3) Which tells us what isn't Lord: me, work, the church, government, family, Penn State, the past, the present, the future – they are not Lord.

4) Only Jesus is number one, and if we keep him number one; his life and will in us is similar to the way our brain governs our bodies; with Jesus as our head, then the rest of our bodies (heart, hands, feet, other parts) will be guided the way that's best.

### **Old Testament Lesson Deuteronomy 6: 4-7**

### **New Testament Lesson -- I Corinthians 11: 23-29**

### **Recognition of 50 Year Members**

### **Sacrament of the Lord's Supper**

#### **Why do we do the sacraments?**

1) Sacrament show God's love to us. Visible Word, Bible in action, of what is true but invisible: spiritual. God is worshipped in Spirit and in Truth, reminds us that God isn't a being but being-hood.

2) Jesus wants us to do them so we remember what God has done for us in Jesus, and what God is doing for us in Jesus.

3) Jesus is present with us, has been, will be.

4) Word sacrament means an oath. First, God's oath to us, to which we respond with oaths of our own.

#### **What is communion?**

1) Public reaffirmation of our Baptism promises

2) Coming attraction of our future: hope of life after death

3) Share Jesus – Us as the body of Christ together, Jesus in us.

Not really blood and body – Spiritual Presence

4) Reminds us of the heavenly banquet

5) We remember all that Jesus did and does for us. Sacrifice.

**How many sacraments are there?**

1) Change at the Reformation about 500 years ago. We Protested that when you read the Bible you see only 2 events that reveal God to us: Baptism and Lord's Supper

2) Two for us Protest-tants, though 7 for Romans Catholicis

**Can you only take communion on Sunday?**

Usually, but Session can approve it for other occasions. Session and the Pastor oversee how it is conducted so that it isn't done for our purposes, so that we don't get cute or manipulative with it, but conduct it according to how Jesus tells us to commune.

**Can you only take communion in church?**

Answer here is easy. Yes. Mindful that the church isn't this building but the people.

How do we define church: where the word of God is spoken, where prayers offered, where sacraments celebrated. And it must include all, not just for some.

**Why is bread and wine the symbols?**

1) What Jesus used. Central parts of the Passover meal

2) Wine is symbol of the spiritual life, symbol of Israel, symbol of the blood of Jesus.

Bread is symbol of the staff of earthly life and the Body of Jesus. Not that we really eat flesh and blood. Spiritual presence.

3) We are what we eat. Nor is it really with our teeth we eat. We eat with the mouth of faith. Feeding our souls rather than our stomachs.

**Why are the pieces of bread and cups of juice so small?**

1) Symbolic meal, Love feast, too many for potluck supper