
Infant Baptism

Feb 17, 2019

Kernel:

- To provide parents with clear explanation of their baptism/discipleship options.
- to give us a context to consider child baptism and make good discipleship decision in our families and in our church.

Faith of parents has significance for our children

Genesis 12: 1-3 & 7

*Now ^mthe LORD said¹ to Abram, "Go from your country² and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²ⁿAnd I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³^oI will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and ^pin you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."³
⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, ^v"To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.*

- Abraham -Gen 15:9 - "he believed the Lord and he counted it to him as righteousness"
- Because of Abraham's faith - God would give the land to his offspring.
- Because Abraham believed and responded in trust and obedience to God's word - there was blessing for his children.

In our journey to a sacramental understanding - we have to consider and think about baptism of our children.

- My background is Mennonite - Anabaptist - Baptized again as adults - a defining element
- There was much judgement, assumption in my understanding of infant baptism

Teaching I was raised with - focused on what I was doing?

A sacramental understanding - what is God doing?

Both are important.

A biblical foundation for these decisions:

2 options for our children: - slide

Option 1 - Dedication

- Dedication - - based on the faith of the parents - welcomed into the community.
- Catechism - (around age 10, depends on child)
- Confession of their faith
- Baptism, Prayer for the Spirit & communion

Biblical support for this dedication practice is not particularly overwhelming

- Mark 10:13-16 - Let the little children come to me
- It's beautiful and significant, but its not directly a welcoming of these children into the church community

More connected to Parents desire to bring their children to God from infancy within the modern salvation model of the individual prayer/decision for Christ - The Billy Graham model

Who would have been raised in this model?

Option 2 - **Infant Baptism**

- Baptism, prayer for the Spirit, first communion - on the faith of the parents, welcomed into the community
- Catechism
- Confession of their faith
- Confirmation

This process actual fits my own journey better - my decision at age 4 arose from by limits understanding of the faith that was in my home - in my parents.

Same process, just the steps in different order. (**leave up the slide**)

- Both start with the faith of the parent - if there isn't evidence of faith - we cannot proceed
- Our goal in both cases - mature, healthy disciples

Who was raised in this model?

Why might we consider the second option?

Oikos - the household picture - the head of the house and everyone in that household

There are household baptisms - Acts 16:15 And after she[Lydia] was baptized and her household as well," also the Phillippian jailer

"Paul and Luke could under no circumstance have applied the oikos formula, if they had wished to say that only adults were being baptized." Jermais p21

The book of Acts: the advancement of the church, first generation believers, there are not second generation child believers

The baptism - circumcision parallel - Col 2: 11&12.

In him also ^yyou were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by ^wputting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹²^xhaving been buried with him in baptism, in which ^yyou were also raised with him through faith in ^zthe powerful working of God, ^zwho raised him from the dead.

Paul makes a connection between the two.

Circumcision - the O.T. initiation into the community ritual

The practice of the church through the ages.

Adult only baptism a reactive decision in the context of the reformation - 1500 -

- good reason in that context -
- reactive choice are not necessarily the best ongoing choice.

At least from 200+ - instruction by the church fathers to baptize the children. It is the accepted practice - the continues to be for the vast majority of the Christian church

More details readings on this - let me know.

Implication for us:

1. Parents have 2 options to consider but similar responsibilities,, desires and goals , regardless of where they choose to begin.
 - New infants - dedicate or baptize
 - Parent to train their children in the faith
 - Paper outlining these options - at the back
2. Somewhere from at 8-10 onwards - formal catechism of the children in our congregation - age depends on the child, material was designed for 10 - we will adapt - Talk to Wanda or Brett - starting a class shortly
3. Children 3 - 8, a group of people in-between 2 practices
 - different level of their understanding and engagement in faith
 - they must be free to respond to what they are able to understand
4. Either way we will respect and value individual family choices

Our unity is in our common pursuit and focus on Jesus

Eph 2: 17-20

And he came and ^xpreached peace to you who were ^yfar off and peace to those who were ^znear. ¹⁸For ^athrough him we both have ^baccess in ^cone Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer ^dstrangers and aliens,⁴ but you are ^efellow citizens with the saints and ^fmembers of the household of God, ²⁰^gbuilt on the foundation of the ^hapostles and prophets, ⁱChrist Jesus himself being ^jthe cornerstone,

We will take our joint responsibility to our children seriously and hold it together.
Prayer for our children and parents