**Wednesday Night Bible Study**

**Wednesday 04 May 2022**

**Queens Chapel UMC \* 7410 Muirkirk Road \* Beltsville, MD 20705**

**Instructor: Rev. Dr. Will Butler**

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**The Gospel of Luke**

**Luke 3:21-22**

**Baptism**

**(Part 2)**

Q: May we have our baby dedicated instead of baptized?

* United Methodist do not believe in dedicating a baby.
* The theological understandings of the two services are very different.
* **Dedication is a human act** -- something we pledge or give to God.
* **Baptism is a divine act,** **a pledge and gift God gives to us.**
* Baptism of infants includes the affirmation of the vows of the baptismal covenant by parents, sponsors, and the congregation.
* **Infant Baptism is a part of a lifelong process of discipleship through the Parents.**
* Discipleship is not just about teaching/gaining information from the Bible—it’s about how we teach our children how he/she should live, think and act as a Christian

* Discipleship is not just about Christian Education—it’s about leading our children into spiritual transformation
* The Baptismal vow the parents and god-parents take in part is:

“Will you nurture these children (persons)
in Christ's holy Church, that by your teaching and example they may be guided to accept God's grace for themselves, to profess their faith openly and to lead a Christian life?”

* Baptism of a child celebrates **what God is doing and will do in the life of the infant through the teaching and spiritual guidance of the parents**

Q: Isn't it better to wait until they are older and let our children decide for themselves whether or not they want to be baptized?

* Truthfully, we do not wait for our children to decide about being in the family of God than we wait for them to decide if they would like to be a part of our family.
* As parents, we make many decisions -- in matters of health, safety, education, for our children.
* Of course, they may later reject what we have done for them. But this possibility does not relieve us of the responsibility to do all that we can for them spiritually, as we do in other aspects of their lives.
* When they’re infants, God holds the parents responsible for the child’s physical health, spiritual nourishment and safety.

**Example: Joseph & Mary’s Responsibility for the baby Jesus**

**The Physical health: Luke 2:7**

 “And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

**The Spiritual Nourishment: Luke 2:21-24**

 21 Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived.

 22 Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

 23 The law of the Lord says, “If a woman’s first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the Lord.”

 24 So they offered the sacrifice required in the law of the Lord—“either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

**The Physical Safety of the Child: Matthew 2:12-16**

 12 Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

 13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

 14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt,

 15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.

Q: How about christening?

* United Methodist do not christen babies. The use of the term christening for the sacrament probably comes from two sources:
* *chrism* is the word for the anointing oil traditionally used in baptism as a sign of the sealing by the Holy Spirit
* In the past, children were sometimes actually given their (Christian) names in baptism.
* In United Methodist baptism, parents are not asked for the name of the child, but the pastor does baptize with that name.