

The Message for Feb 12, 2012

1 Corinthians 3:6-11

Take A Breath

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(Read Text)

Today we're talking about the seeds of faith that are planted in us and watered by God's grace to produce good fruits for Jesus. Today we celebrate with Sara, Jena, and Lisa as they receive a new life in the waters of baptism as forgiven sinners. They now have a new identity and a new purpose for life as disciples of Jesus.

We could say that baptism is our ordination. The word "ordained" means "to give orders for" or "to be appointed for" something. We tend to think of ordination for those of us who have gone to seminary, met all the requirements, passed all the tests, jumped through all the hoops, and then called to be a pastor in the church somewhere – to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments.

The word *ordination* wasn't used until the 14th century in reference to the clergy as separated from the laity. We've created two groups of people in the church – clergy and laity – professionals and amateurs. But the Bible suggests something else when it comes to ordination and never suggesting two groups in the church. The Bible reveals that we have been ordained in baptism as ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Every member is a minister.

That's what Paul is telling us in our reading from Corinthians for today. Each one of us is a servant of God working together as ministers of the Gospel by creating a healthy, life-giving environment, the church – Jesus' orchard, where the seeds of faith are to grow and produce good fruit in us. We all contribute to the health and wellbeing of this faith environment says Saint Paul.

It all begins with baptism. Why baptism? What difference does baptism make in our lives?

I want to share a YouTube video with you here this morning that will answer those questions for us. But first allow me to introduce this video. Baptism is where our faith story begins. Pastor Kehrli talked about that last week. He talked about how each one of us has a God story to tell by the way we live our lives.

Like all good stories, there is a story behind the story of our baptism. It's the Exodus story. God freed our ancestors from slavery in Egypt through the waters of the Red Sea to the freedom of new life in the Promised Land. Likewise in baptism God frees us from the slavery of our sins to the freedom of a new life in the Promised Land with Jesus now and forever.

Here's the thing -- our baptism doesn't deliver us from our sins, Jesus and his cross does. Baptism becomes the foundation for our lives. Dying to ourselves and living for him. With that in mind, check out this video entitled, "Why Baptism?"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlqGzvEjMNo>

I love how he jumps into the water at the end of that video. It reminds me to run and jump into the abundance of God's grace everyday, recalling my baptism daily so that I continue to grow in the faith.

It also reminds me that I am a forgiven sinner because of my baptism. Say that with me – *I am a forgiven sinner because of my baptism.* And that has made all the difference for life.

Question: how might we go from this place to show the world that we belong to Jesus? How might we continue to grow in the faith daily? How might we produce the good fruits of faith wherever we go?

Truth is -- I haven't always done that so well. Maybe you haven't either. I've been a bad apple at times. I haven't always produced the good fruits of the faith – the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, generosity, and self-control. I strive to produce them but I fail at times. And I learn from my mistakes.

We probably all fail to produce these good fruits of the faith at times, which reminds me there is only one group of people in the church -- the "forgiven sinners group." We are in this together – all for one and one for all.

In spite of our sinfulness God has placed the seeds of faith in us. May those seeds grow and be watered daily so that the world will know that we belong to Jesus. We are his disciples. What kind of fruit are you producing? Amen.