

# BUCYRUS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH JANUARY 13, 2019

## “YOU ARE MY CHILD”

Pastor Mike Corwin

TEXT: LUKE 3:15-17 & 21-22

GOD’S WORD: ISAIAH 43:1-7

### **I – PARENT AND CHILD:**

I have had the pleasure over the last couple of years of getting acquainted with Pastor Becky’s daughter Olivia. I have watched her grow and seen the marked improvements in her life as she has come to Ohio and been treated by some amazing specialists at Children’s hospital. I have also watched her blossom as the people of this church, and our youth, have surrounded her with love. But I’ve also taken note of how protective her mother is. No matter who has Olivia she knows who has her and where she’s at. She has alarms on her phone to tell her when to give her needed treatments. She watches what she gets to eat, makes sure she stays plugged into her school with her, and spends as much time as needed with her to learn new skills like the latest one of learning to cook. And I know this can’t always be easy. I’ve spent just an hour with her while her mother was in a meeting and I have to tell you she will wear you out! She needs your attention every second of the time you are with her.

But there’s another side that I never want to see. That’s the real protective side. I have no doubt in my mind that if you ever tried to harm this little girl there would be consequences that would make the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah look like an afternoon tea party! I think that if anyone brought harm to Olivia or threatened it in any way they would see what kind of monsters come from Tennessee!

And she’s not the only one like that. I watch our other parents and it seems that most if not all of you have this side to you and I think you should. I think this protection mode is one every parents needs and should use when it’s called for. I think this is a parental trait that should stand out in a family’s life. I think a child should know that mom or dad or bother has their backs and will do everything in their power to keep you safe from all harm and alarm.

### **II – ISAIAH 43:**

If this is the vision of a loving and caring earthly parent, how much more do I want it to be the one I have of my heavenly parents. God says in the Psalms that he can be both my mother and

my father. And I want him to have this caring compassion that will carry me through this life and in to the next. I want to tell you today that he does.

I see it in the reading from Isaiah this morning. The Israelites had been defeated by others and taken into captivity. They were spread out all over the place. They were Exiles. Isaiah has spent the previous chapter's prophesizing about how bad the people were, how they were reaping their just rewards for the way they had treated the Lord God and turned away from him instead of towards him. But then he turns and offers the people hope from God. "BUT NOW" he says – it's time to call you back. It's time to let you know you are my children. That I haven't forgotten you or turned my back on you. He recites verse after verse about how he will protect them from various dangers. But the most telling one that I want you to see is verse 1(a):

*Don't fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name; you are mine.*

Does that not tell you how much God loves his children? That even when we misbehave, when we don't do as we should, that when we sin against him he does not forget us. He may discipline us, may aim us back in the right direction, but he never quits loving us.

Then look at verse 4(a):

*Because you are precious in my eyes,  
you are honored, and I love you.*

Are your children precious to you? Well guess what – God's children are all precious to him too.

### **III – ISAIAH 49:**

The prophet didn't stop there in chapter 43. Let me share with you another, even more powerful, vision of this love and how precious you are in his heart. In the 49<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Isaiah we find these words:

Yet Jerusalem says, "The Lord has deserted us:  
The Lord has forgotten us."

"Never! Can a mother forget her nursing child?  
Can she feel no love for the child she has borne?  
But even if that were possible,  
I would never forget you!

See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands."

Isaiah 49:14-16(a) (NLT)

Do you understand the extent of love and protection your heavenly Father has for you? That he knows each and every one of you and calls you by name. That he loves you so much he sent his

one and only Son to be a sacrifice for your rebellion so you could be loveable! God pulled out all the stops to be able to make you his child and protect you even from yourself.

#### **IV – TEXT:**

As we move from the birth narrative of Jesus and start entering in his life narrative I see this message conveyed to us again. We know why Jesus came and what some of the prophecies meant now. But there are things we need to take note of as we look at these Scriptures.

Today, continuing in the Gospel of Luke, let's look at his baptism in the narrative as I continue to show you how much God loved you and sent Jesus to prove it.

#### **Luke 3:15-17 & 21-22 (CEB)**

<sup>15</sup> The people were filled with expectation, and everyone wondered whether John might be the Christ. <sup>16</sup> John replied to them all, "I baptize you with water, but the one who is more powerful than me is coming. I'm not worthy to loosen the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup> The shovel he uses to sift the wheat from the husks is in his hands. He will clean out his threshing area and bring the wheat into his barn. But he will burn the husks with a fire that can't be put out."

<sup>21</sup> When everyone was being baptized, Jesus also was baptized. While he was praying, heaven was opened <sup>22</sup> and the Holy Spirit came down on him in bodily form like a dove. And there was a voice from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness."

In this morning's passage we see the transition from John's public ministry to the public ministry of Jesus. The people had flocked to John and some had become his disciples. They had come to believe that John was possibly the Messiah they had been waiting for. We know from our previous weeks that John was a special child. He had been given to Zechariah and Elizabeth to raise for the purpose of calling people to repentance and proclaiming the coming of the Messiah. And he knew what his position in life and power was. People were coming to him to find hope and promise but he was not the Messiah.

He makes sure the people all know this. He tells them that the real Messiah is coming and is much more powerful than him. That he can baptize with water as a sign of forgiveness but that the real Messiah will baptize people with the convicting/convincing/comforting power of the Holy Spirit. He tells them that the Messiah is due a whole lot more reverence than he is that he isn't even worthy to untie the laces on his sandals.

We are shown this power...this holiness...this divinity as Jesus is baptized and starts praying. As he prays it says that the heavens opened up, the Holy Spirit descended upon him from heaven

and his Father proclaimed, “You are my Son, whom I dearly love, and in you I find happiness. We’ll come back to that in a minute but first there is something else I want you to take notice of.

In verse 21 it says that “When everyone was baptized, Jesus also was baptized.” I need you to catch the great significance of that little verse. Jesus didn’t need to get baptized because he was a sinner who needed to repent. He was God’s Son, he had never sinned, nor would he ever sin. He was God who became human. Emmanuel, God with us. The people were coming to John to be baptized because they were broken. They were damaged by the world and their life in it. They saw no way out of the oppression of the rulers of the day. They had all but completely given up on themselves and on God.

Jesus came and was baptized with them, stood in line with them, went through the same ritual with them, because he was identifying with them. Here was God saying the same thing he had said to Isaiah. I remember you, I love you, I care about and for you, and I’m in it with you! Don’t give up...there is hope...and you find it in my Son who has brought my love to you in ways you can’t even understand yet. You are still my children and still precious in my sight and my heart.

#### **V – BAPTISM:**

We have none today but we have some new babies coming in the next few months and I look forward to getting to baptize them. It is one of the things that brings me great joy as a pastor. I believe that every time we baptize a person the heavens open up and God’s Spirit descends upon that person and God in heaven says “you are my son or my daughter...I dearly love you...and in you I find happiness. What a beautiful image of how precious we are in God’s heart.

This is so powerful that as we took in new members this morning that part of the liturgy tells the candidates and us to “Remember your baptism and be thankful.” We should be thankful because that baptism marks us as a child of God. That God’s Holy Spirit is active and working through that water and brings us into God’s family. That baptism solidifies you as being in the image of your heavenly parent who has your name written on the palm of his hand.

We do not rebaptize in the Methodist Church. We believe God gets it right the first time. But we should all remember our baptism and how special it was and how special we are because of it. As you leave the service today I invite you to stop at the rear of the sanctuary and look into the large bowl of water where you will see the image of God in his child. You may feel free to touch the water and touch your head with it as you remember your baptism and be thankful.

The question today is this...HOW ARE YOU LIVING IN RESPONSE TO YOUR BAPTISM? Have you made it easy for God to love you?

AMEN