



The Rev. Alan Sutherland, Rector

July 5, 2009

Proper 9B

By Reverend Donna Barr

Today is Henry's day! I would bet that this is only the first of many days in his life where his parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins will be together celebrating an important moment in his life. I can imagine now kindergarten graduation, soccer awards night, talent shows, high school and collage graduations, marriage and on and on. How wonderfully important that families come together to say we love you and we are blessed to have you in our life. So that is what we do today....Henry's biological family, his godparents, and our community at St. John's and even the entire family of God come together today to say we love you Henry and we are blessed that you are in our lives.

Today, we as the body of Christ, become the vocal chords for God, not unlike when Jesus heard a voice from on high, the voice of God, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." That line comes from Isaiah 42 and is actually a description of the Suffering Servant of God, a picture of what kind of Messiah Jesus will be for us, one who will give his life for us. "It means touching, living, going, doing, caring for people. Here is my Son, the servant. Still wet from his baptism, Jesus left the Jordan and went about doing God's business. Every crying person, every brokenhearted person, every hungry person, every diseased person, every alienated person, every suffering person was his business... To serve the needs of every human being. By that analogy, is our direction too. It is Henry's direction. That is why Martin Luther used to say to people, particularly people who were facing a difficult situation, "*Remember your Baptism*". It is a reminder that it is not enough to simply ask "What do I want out of my life?" We must go on to ask, "What does God want out of my life?"

So today, unlike all those other days of celebration, this day must surely make the most difference in Henry's life. Certainly this means more than just recalling an event in one's personal history. Something bigger is involved here. But how can I and all of us who were infants when we were baptized "remember" our baptisms. How will Henry remember today?

First we must remember that all of Henry's life will not be celebrations. In fact many days will consist of problems, perseverance, and challenges. In our scripture today, Paul writes to the church at Corinth describing his own obstacles in the faith. No one was more aware of his weaknesses and challenges as Paul. By his own account, Paul suffered and was constantly in danger all for the sake of the gospel. God knows that problems in life are part of being human. Every one of us, like Paul, suffers from some throne, and every one of us has days of when we are weak, or insecure or in need. Even little Henry will have his days. The good news is that none of this disqualifies us from serving God. Even Paul can attest that God's grace is sufficient.....always sufficient.

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Established in 1847

210 North Main Street Versailles, KY 40383 859.873.3481 info@stjohnsky.com www.stjohnsky.com



The Rev. Alan Sutherland, Rector

July 5, 2009

Grace is something you can never get but only be given. Fredrick Buechner writes, "There's no way to earn it or deserve it or bring it about any more than you can deserve the taste of raspberries and cream or earn good looks or bring about your own birth. A good sleep is grace and so are good dreams. Most tears are grace. The smell of rain is grace. Somebody loving you is grace. Loving somebody is grace. The Christian faith asserts that people are saved by grace. There's nothing you have to do. There's nothing you have to do. There's nothing you have to do. The grace of God means something like: Here is your life. You might never have been, but you are because the party wouldn't have been complete without you."

The tradition of infant baptism lifts up and celebrates the fact that we were beloved before we even knew better. Someone was watching over us, taking care of us, and helping us to find the way before we were remotely aware of it. That is one of the root meanings of grace, that God loves us before we deserved it, before we could do anything to merit it, God was for us and with us. And in every instance of our lives, his grace is always sufficient.

So Henry thanks for your life and your party today. We are grateful to be invited! Remember your baptism. Remember that we are put on this earth to make it a more humane place, to fill it with love and care for all people. Remember your baptism, when things are morally compromised and ambiguous, when the world around you is cynical and inhumane, and when you are weak and in need of God's grace, remember what your business is. Remember whose you are. And remember that you are a beloved child of God; that we love you, and we are blessed to have you in our life.

Amen

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Established in 1847

210 North Main Street Versailles, KY 40383 859.873.3481 info@stjohnsky.com www.stjohnsky.com