

## Remember Who You Are

Who are you?

Have you ever thought about that question?

I don't mean, "what is your name," "what do you do for a job?" or "What grade you're in?" I don't mean "where you're from?" I mean, deep down, who are you at your very core? What makes you, you?

That's obviously a complicated question because we all have a great depth about us. There's a lot about all of us that make us who we are. But when I think about the very essence of who we are, I think about two things.

First, I think about the movie the Lion King. How many of you like that movie? I love it.

After Simba's father Mufassa dies, Simba runs away and, in doing so, he not only physically runs away but he runs away from who he is. He forgets who he is and who he is meant to be. In one of the most important scenes of the movie, the wise monkey Rafiki invites Simba to remember that his father still lives on in him. As Simba stares at his reflection in the water, he hears his father speak to him.

"Remember who you are. You are my son."

Simba remembers who he is. He is the son of Mufassa, the rightful king so he decides to return to the place from which he had run away. He decides to be who he is. He remembers who he is.

The second thing I think about when I think about that question, "Who are you?" is baptism. In the Scripture, we see Jesus comes to be baptized, and as he is coming up out of the water, God speaks. But God doesn't tell the people to do anything. Isn't that interesting? I mean if God is going to go to the trouble to speak, he might at least tell us some great truth or some great commandment. But instead all God says is, "You are my Son, the beloved. With you I am well pleased."

God is speaking as a proud parent. There are not many passages of Scripture where God actually speaks to somebody. God speaks through prophets or apostles or teachers, but rarely does God actually speak. When God speaks it must be something really important, something crucial. So let us ask ourselves, "What is so important that causes God to speak here?"

It's simply this: God is a proud parent.

Have you ever been around people who are so proud of their kids, that they can't stop talking about them?

“Let me tell you about my kid. She made such good grades and she is playing on the soccer team. And she did this...And she did that...And I’m so proud of her...And I can’t shut up talking about her...And, oh yeah, did I mention that I love her.”

You get the idea.

I think that’s what God is doing here. God is so proud of Jesus, that God can’t shut up. It’s like God is saying, “That’s my kid. Son, I love you. I’m proud of who you are and what you are doing.” That’s the part of the story that we read about. But that’s only part of the story. If we were to read on to the end of Matthew, we would see Jesus telling us to baptize people from every tribe, nation, and language. Think about what happened when Jesus was baptized. God couldn’t shut up talking about how proud God is. Even though Jesus already knew, God wanted to tell him again how much God loves him, that Jesus is God’s Son. Friends, God does the same thing for us. Through Christ, every single one of us is a child of God. And through baptism, we remember who we are. We remember that we are God’s children. That’s really what baptism is about. It’s about who we are at the very core of our being.

One of the deepest truths about all of us is simply this: God loves you, you are God’s child, and God is proud of you. Baptism reminds us of who we are. It reminds us that we are part of God’s family.

But here’s the thing: being a part of a family comes with responsibility. When you get married, you no longer live just for yourself, but you also live for your partner. When you have a child, you no longer live just for yourself, but you live for your child. When you enter into any kind of covenant relationship, you no longer live just for yourself but you live for your community.

My favorite part of our baptismal vows is that it’s not just the person being baptized who makes a commitment, but the whole church does. We have promised to love and support and pray for everyone who has ever been baptized in our church. And that’s especially true about our kids and our babies. Whenever we baptize a baby, we are promising to support their parents in whatever way we can. We will love the child, pray for the child, and help form the child in the Christian faith.

I’ve heard so many of you tell me how much you’ve enjoyed our intergenerational services. It’s been great seeing our kids lead us so beautifully. For all of you who are kids, you are such an important part of this community. I hope you know that. But I want to remind all of us of the promise we’ve made to them. We’ve promised to help them grow, to support them, to love them. And today, I want to invite you to do that in a tangible way. Since we’ve come back from the pandemic, we’ve struggled a bit to find enough volunteers for our Sunday school and youth group. It’s understandable. We’re all busy. It’s hard to take on something else. But here’s the thing – if our church is truly going to reclaim our identity as a place for kids to grow and thrive, we need you. Not just the board of Christian Ed...It takes all of us. It’s what we promised whenever we baptize a kid.

After service, we have several sign up sheets here in the sanctuary, in Huntington Hall, in Johnson Hall. If everyone who is able could volunteer one or two times before our summer break, think of all the meaningful relationships that could form between kids and adult in our church – think of all the ways all of us could support our kids. We'll take care of the logisitics –

So friends, on this Sunday when we remember Jesus' baptism by John, let's remember who we are and who God has called us to be.

God has named each of us as beloved. God has claimed you as God's child. God is proud of you. And God invites us to love and care for each other as we choose to live not only for ourselves but for God and for each other.

Remember who you are.

Remember who we are together.