

## Remember Your Baptism

Acts 2:37-42

I think one of the urgent and chronic diseases that humanity is suffering from is the issue of “loneliness.” That is why C. S. Lewis said, “[We are born helpless. As soon as we are fully conscious, we discover loneliness.](#)” (C. S. Lewis, *Joyful Christian* (1996), 186). Loneliness is a fundamental issue of humanity. This issue of loneliness is interwoven with “belonging” because the vacuum or absence of our sense of belonging easily leads to loneliness.

There was an article last week in TIME magazine on whether AI can help solve the chronic disease of isolation. [Kim Samuel](#), who is a Research Fellow at the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative at Oxford University, critiques Mark Zuckerberg's suggestion that AI companions could solve the growing problem of social isolation. However, she argues that “[AI cannot replace genuine human connection. Real human interaction, with its complexities and even discomforts, is crucial for psychological and physical well-being, fostering empathy, problem-solving skills, and resilience through mechanisms like "mirror neurons" that AI cannot stimulate. The author warns that normalizing AI companionship could lead people to deprioritize essential human relationships and investments in community infrastructure.](#)”

I read another article on Gen Z (those born between 1997 and 2012) individuals' crisis of meaning in life because of economic instability, mental challenges, and a life dominated by digital interactions and fleeting online validation.

We are living in an era of desperately yearning for “belonging.” With the development of social media, many are exposed to the public. However, it does not mean that they are exempt from the issue of isolation. They are starving for a community where they can feel secure and accepted, build up genuine relationships, share their lives, and find meaning and value in their lives.

That is why we must remember the meaning of our baptism, as baptism is all about “belonging” and “the meaning of life.” Baptism is a cure and antidote for the issues of “belonging” and “isolation.”

### **First of all, we belong to God through baptism.**

Today's scripture is about Peter's sermon to the crowd on the day of Pentecost. He said, “[Even though you crucified and killed him, God raised him up and exalted him to His right hand. All of us are witnesses. God gave Jesus the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today. God has made Jesus both Lord and Messiah.](#)”

When the crowd heard this message, they were cut to the heart and asked, “**Brothers, what should we do?**” (Acts 2:37). Peter said to them, “**Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.**” (Acts 2:38-39)

So, baptism is a Christian ritual performed in the church that acknowledges and proclaims our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. It affirms our helplessness for our own salvation and renounces our sin by fully depending on Jesus Christ's saving, renewing, and sustaining grace, which has been revealed through the cross with the help of the Holy Spirit.

By doing so, we belong to God. We are no longer the lord over ourselves. God owns us. We can come into the presence of God, assuring God's grace every single day. As we belong to God, we confess, “**I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.**” (Galatians 2:20 NIV).

**Secondly, through baptism, we belong to the church that is in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

We are not alone. Through baptism, we are invited to participate in a local church where we support one another, grow in God's grace, and actualize God's Kingdom in and through the church.

Let us read the following scripture together.

“**So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.**” (Acts 2:41-42)

That is why whenever we have infant or adult baptism at the church, we never fail to ask this question: “**Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and include these persons now before you in your care?**”

It is because it takes a whole community for any children or adults to become faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. We belong to one another and are accountable for one another. This kind of thing is possible because the church is in the power of the Holy Spirit.

“**May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.**” (Romans 15:13)

We also need to remember that our intimacy with one another is a reflection of our intimacy with the Holy Spirit. “**And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'**” (Galatians 4:6)

**Last but not least, we belong to God’s mission through baptism.**

The last verse of Acts chapter 2 has the following words, “**And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.**” (Acts 2:47).

The church members sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple every day and met in homes, sharing their meals with great joy and generosity. They practiced life evangelism, where their actions and their beliefs were intertwined. Their evangelism was inseparable from their everyday lives. As they experienced Jesus’ saving grace through the Holy Spirit, they followed the directions of the Holy Spirit. God added more and more to the church because the church was able to take good care of the lost souls.

**Donald McGavran** is called the father of church growth. He once said, “**It is God’s will that lost men and women be found, reconciled to himself, and brought into *responsible membership* in Christian churches.**” (Charles Van Engen, *Centrist View: Church Growth* (2004), 127).

Let me tell you about the meaning of responsible membership in the Methodist version from our *Book of Discipline*: “**To remain faithful members of Christ’s holy church and serve as Christ’s representatives in the world; To be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church and do all in their power to strengthen its ministries; To faithfully participate in its ministries by their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service, and their witness.**” *Book of Discipline* (2004) ¶ 217. Membership Vows.

Let me close my sermon. There was a baptismal service at a Megachurch in the Chicago area. A friend of mine who attended the service shared this story with me. Several people were standing in the front area of the sanctuary after receiving baptism. The senior pastor at the church was congratulating the newly baptized members. One of the recipients who seemed to have physical and speech challenges raised his hand in the middle of the pastor’s words and said, “Pastor, I have a question. Am I safe now?” All those who were there were shocked because no one ever interrupts the pastor during service. They had to shift their attention to the unexpected interruption. After a brief moment of contemplation, the pastor proclaimed, “You are safe. You are safe now and forever and forever.” This is because he belongs to God, he belongs to God’s community, and he is now invited to join in God’s mission for the world, which signifies that he now has his own belonging and meaning in his life.