

This week has been an interesting week. I know every week's an interesting week for me. The world is so different than where I thought it was going to be at this point. So, each week is exciting and interesting. This week, I had three conversations with three separate people about reading the Bible and what it means. Whether we should take it literally or whether we should take it as literature, whether it's directly the word of God or if it was written by man, and I can honestly say my answer five years ago, before I started up here, is completely different than what it is today. And I never thought that would have happened. But being here, being a part of this life, being a part of a fellowship with all of you has changed my views in so many things that I never thought would have happened. And part of that, great opportunity, we get to share today with our baptism. So many times, we know that baptism is important, but we don't necessarily reflect upon it the way that we should. It's something that we do as children in our faith, in a lot of faiths for different reasons. Whether we're thanking God for the child, whether we're thanking God for the opportunity of life, whether we're praying that God will forgive the child's sin before it is even done anything. But that's our faith. Other faiths you don't baptize until you're much later. So in their form of Confirmation, they get to choose to have their faith. They get to choose when it's their time to have their sins forgiven. We get to choose when they get to walk with God.

When I was at the Joint. Annual meeting a couple weeks ago, we went through a re-baptism. And at first I was a little offended. I'm going into a church that I don't belong to, a church that I do not necessarily agree with, and I'm being baptized by somebody I don't know. And I wasn't sure if I was going to go through with it because I was being put into a very uncomfortable place for myself. Up here every week with all of my friends and family, I get to express my love for God. I get to express how much all of you mean to me.

And that day I was in a room of strangers. We all had the same belief in God. We all shared that same point, but we were still strangers. And it didn't feel right. And when I got up there, I realized that they weren't strangers. I realized that we were all sharing part of that Covenant that God gave us. But I had to take a second to get over myself and to see it in the eyes of a child, again. The new and wondrous part of life That new and wondrous part of God's faith.

If you remember a couple weeks ago, well not a couple weeks anymore, it's like six weeks, we did the blessing of the backpack. And I asked the kids, why. Why we did? Our scripture that day was on God's armor. And when I told them that we were blessing their backpacks because it was their shield. In the scripture reading we talked about how the image that God was giving us was of somebody that was very strong and resilient, and in our world today that is the children.

They have to go through so much more than we had to go through growing up. Last week there were nine school shootings, just last week. And it's gotten to a point that we don't even talk about them anymore. It's not news. Nine school shootings, one

child was murdered. These kids go through things we can't even imagine. But they don't lose their sense of self. They don't lose their innocence. Everything is still exciting and new to them every day. Everything is exciting. Do You know why we can't even imagine that anymore? Because we're so jaded.

We have our own ideas of what the world is supposed to be. We have our own ideas of who we are supposed to be. We can't even accept one day just to go and do a re-baptism because we're so identified within ourselves. But these children see the world in a light that we can't imagine anymore. And that's what God is trying to tell us. It's what Jesus is trying to tell us in this part is to accept. We know that one day, we're going to find God And all of his plans that we don't understand, he's going to explain to us. But if we go in thinking like we do as adults, we already know the answers, we're going to miss everything that he's trying to tell us. But if we go in as children, open to learning, open to hearing, open to receiving his love, we can do it again. We can find what he means.

In confirmation this morning, we've been talking about different parts of the Bible, different stories. We've been spending a lot of time talking about Noah and the creation stories. And it's fun being in confirmation because just seeing those lights go on. Cuz we talk about rainbows, rainbows are an easy one. We see them everywhere all the time as a reminder of God's love for us. Because it's water and we forget about how important water really is in the Bible. God made it rain to wash away all the sin on Earth for Noah. He waited patiently for him to build the ark, waited patiently for him to gather all the animals, and then he baptized the world.

And one of the two confirmands said, "So, if it rains, is that re-baptizing us?" Yes, tt's a great way to look at it. It's that vision that the youth have that we don't always see. We get baptized every time it rains. We get to feel God's love for us every time we take a shower, every time we take a bath. We have the option to feel that love and to think about it in a way that a child does. And today we need to celebrate somebody who has made that choice and gets to be a part of that world forever. Let us pray.