

What I Want to Be

The Lutheran Church baptises infants. This is a scandal. Of course, it is presumed the infant can't believe, right? But what does Jesus say? "*Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin...*" (Mark 9:42). The Greek word for "little ones" is "mikros." It's where we get the word micron. How big is a micron? It's tiny, not very big at all. So, when Jesus speaks of "*these little ones*" He is talking about a baby in arms, a new-born, and Jesus says they believe in Him. So for all those who are 'wise,' are you going to poke Him in the chest and say, "*Jesus, they can't believe.*" What right do you have to say such a thing to your Lord? Shame on you! Because you may be undergoing the very judgement of which Jesus goes on to say: "*Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea*" (Mark 9:42). These little ones belong to Jesus. They believe. How dare we say they cannot when He says they can and do believe?

Family life is always a challenge. Your first child comes along. What if, when he is about 3-4 years old, you say to him, "*Now we're going to let you decide if you want to be a member of our family or not. It's all up to you. You know, we'd kind of like to have you but still it's your choice. If you want to pack up and go live with the family next door, you're welcome to do that. This would not upset us a bit. Have a great life. Make your own choices. Go for it, kiddo!*" What would be the response of the 4-year-old that hears that speech? At first there may be some glee because the family next door has a dog. But after thinking about it, your 4-year-old is going to gasp and think, "*They don't want me. I'm not part of the family.*" Would that be good? Would you want to hear that from a parent? "*You have your choice. You don't have to be a part of this family if you don't want to be.*" Those are words of rejection. If we are children of the Father, He does not want to leave us making "our own choice" about joining the family.

What father lets his children decide if they want to belong? Now what does our Father do? He says, "*You are My child. My name is on you.*" And this, by the way, is why marriage as one man and one woman, created by God, is not to be changed, and is so important. Why? So that the child knows whose they are and where they belong.

The point is who we are in relationship to God: We are named by Him at the font. In the name of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That is who you are! And that's true from infancy, when you're baptised as an infant (or later in life too!), throughout your entire life. Our loving God does not want you to wonder whose family you belong to. He wants you to know that you belong to His. And that He's going to the most extraordinary lengths to make sure that is the case and to make it happen. I don't want to be anything other than a child of God. The Bible never says, "Be adults of God!" It just isn't there. There are no adults of God. There are only children of God. That's what I want to be!

Martin Luther

"John the Evangelist rejects the physical birth and position in life, no matter how high and noble, because it contributes nothing toward our becoming children of God. He also repudiates the Jews, to whose lineage Christ the Lord belonged, for boasting of their blood and presuming that their descent from Abraham would stand them in especially good stead. This they are accustomed to do to the present day, interpreting all the sayings of the prophets to mean that God performed great miracles, exterminated kingdoms and monarchies, out of respect for the blood of Abraham. Thus they claim to be preferred by God before others. But birth from a particular father and mother does not make one a child of God.

"If it were possible for a hundred thousand emperors to have been our progenitors, this would not accord us the slightest advantage in any filial relationship with God, since this would not give us birth for heaven. Yet God does not belittle physical birth and position in life; He preserves each with all its due dignity in the world. Yes, He commands that children honour their parents, though the latter may be poor beggars, that subjects obey the government, and also that parents and government use their office for the welfare and good of children and subjects and administer their office well. But all this does not earn them regeneration for life eternal."

Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, 1.13