



May 28, 2023

Abounding Grace: Belonging Covenant Family

Titus 3:4-7

For Discussion and Reflection

1. What did you think about the concept of a covenant family? What is the difference between the visible and invisible family? How did Genesis 17:1-8 resonate with you, especially Abram's name change?
2. Carefully read Ephesians 2:11-22 as Paul talks about God's household in Christ. Notice that he mentions the "covenants of promise." What are those covenants (plural) of promise (singular)? How does this text support the idea that God's covenant of grace spans the biblical narrative for all people?
3. In the Old Testament, the rite of circumcision was only offered to Jewish male children uniting them to the covenant family and the nation state. Consider Nehemiah's resistance of non-Jewish people (Nehemiah 13:23-28). In the New Testament, the rite changes because the church loses that national status, becoming the multi-national family of God. How does that help you understand the shift from circumcision to baptism?
4. The Old Testament sacraments were circumcision and Passover. The New Testament sacraments are baptism and the Lord's Table (communion). How are circumcision and baptism similar? How are they different? How does Paul speak to the similarity in Colossians 2:11,12? What does Paul mean by "circumcision made without hands"?
5. Baptism pictures our separation from the world and "annexation" to the Savior in spiritual union. Peter communicates this idea from Noah's rescue as a baptism that saves from destruction (1 Peter 3:21). How does he speak to this in Acts 2:38-41?
6. The NT highlights several "households" that were baptized: Acts 10:1-2; Acts 16:15 and 33; 1 Corinthians 1:16. The term household is significant because it specifically refers to a person's descendants. It doesn't imply, it refers to the person's offspring. Dabney says, "So that when it is said in the New Testament that the οἶκος [family descendant] was baptized (never the οἰκία [house dwellers]), the presence of children is forcibly implied." What are your thoughts on this argument? What does Paul mean when he says the children of believers are "holy"? (1 Corinthians 7:14)
7. Christians tend to focus on baptism as the "believer" making a pledge to God. The Scripture makes no such argument but focuses on God's pledge to the supplicant. Whether a believer being baptized to symbolize God's work in their life or a parent baptizing their child to petition God to regenerate their child, the pledge comes from God (Acts 2:38-39). Dabney says, "Infant baptism is a pledge to the parent as well as to the child." How does that perspective match the promise from God for salvation by grace? How does this affect your view of baptism?
8. Based on all that we have discussed over the last few weeks, how does baptism communicate belonging to God?
9. What has the Spirit taught you? How are you responding to his leading to grow in grace?