18.9.22 – Matthew 3:13-17

Jack Anthony Wilks Baptism

9.45am Stowe church

Baptism talk

**Matthew 3:13-17**

**13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”**

**15 Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.” Then John consented.**

**16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”**

**Intro.**

* Can I ask, who was here at Stowe Church on 24th July 2021?
* Because the last time many of us were here at Stowe church might have been to celebrate Liz and George getting married.
* Now if you were her, do you remember what happened? Liz and George made promises to each other… in fact if you remember clearly George couldn’t wait to say I do!
* But as they exchanged promises… they also exchanged rings.
* Can we see them Liz, and George? Do you still have them on?
* Now these rings didn’t make George and Liz married. Rather, they were a sign/symbol that they gave each other to express and show their love and commitment to each other – the giving and receiving of the rings marked the beginning of their married life together.
* Their rings and indeed anyone who is married here, your ring is designed to reminds you of some truths of your marriage

1. **It reminds you of what you promised** – circle, this idea of continuous never giving up, faithful love
2. **It reminds you of who you now are** – your status – not single but married = therefore you live different, you have a new life to lead.
3. **And it reminds you who you belong to** – in marriage, in the most wonderful way possible, you no longer just belong to yourself, but you belong to someone else as well.

* Now if that is what happen at a wedding, what about at our baptism here today?
* Because today is a happy day where we get to baptise Jack Anthony Wilks… but what is happening as we baptise him?
* Well, something similar is happening here… Because when someone receives God’s promises of faithful, forgiving love, then there is a physical response that we make. When we pledge ourselves to God by putting our faith in His Son Jesus… then God calls people to show that commitment in being baptised.
* In Jack’s case he can’t make that response himself, he is too young, so his parents and God parents are going to make that commitment on his behalf!
* So, baptism is a bit like receiving a wedding ring, because just wearing a ring, doesn’t mean you are married. Similarly, it’s not baptism, getting splashed with water that makes us a Christian – it’s faith in Jesus.
* BUT just like wedding ring, baptism is a sign, it’s a symbol that expresses and shows us a pictures of what God’s love towards us is like and how we are to respond to Him.
* So, baptism… this service we are all part of today is a picture that is going to be a reminder to us. The symbols, or oil, water, candles lights… just like a wedding ring, they are meant to remind us of what baptism is about… Baptism

1. **Reminds us of what God has promised** – In baptism, we hear of God’s amazing, forgiveness and his faithful love for us.
2. **Baptism reminds us who we are** – It tells us what our true identity is. In baptism, Jack’s family are saying he is a follower Jesus and that is how we will bring him up. It says that Jack’s is a beloved child of God… Did you catch it in the reading, as Jesus is baptised in the river, God the father says **“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”** As Jack is baptised, his Parents and God parents are making promises for him, that one day we hope and pray he takes on for himself. And in the act of baptism, Jack is welcomed into the family of God, Jack has a new status as part of God’s family.
3. **And baptism reminds us of who we belong to** – In baptism Jack will be anointed with oil, and as I do that I say that Christ claim you as his own. That people who are baptised are publicly stating that I belong to Jesus, they are on his team and parents’ and God parents you are promising today to bring Jack up, as someone who belongs to God. That is an amazing and serious commitment. Today the whole church here will promise to be part of that commitment to love, encourage and support Jack on that journey.

* So today… just like a marriage day, is the beginning of a journey NOT the end… In fact this baptism day is the start of a life time for Jack learning to live as someone who is part of God’s family, as a forgiven child of God, Jack has a new life to lead!
* Baptism helps us remember the good news of Christianity. It reminds us what it means to be a Christian, to be a follower of Jesus.
* Baptism is a symbol that helps us understand something. As we baptise Jack today and as God parents, make promises on his behalf, we hope and we pray that as his parents’ God parents, friends family and church family here at Stowe. We pray that Jack will grow up knowing:
  + That in Baptism God promises Jack love and forgiveness
  + In baptism – Jack has a new identity, he is part of the family of God
  + And in baptism – we know that Chris claims Jack as His own, that he belongs to Jesus!

* Let’s pray