

SERMON 922

Saturday, March 7, 2015

A Celebration of Baptism:

James Boyd, Roman Haack, and Ellison Thomas

987th Week as Priest

814th Week at St Dunstan's

79th Week at Epiphany-Tallassee

LIVES OF INFINITE IMPORTANCE

Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN.

I have an important announcement to make: *Your life is of infinite importance to God.* That's right. Your life; James and Roman and Ellison's lives; all of you who are parents, and godparents, and grandparents; every friend and stranger—in short, every person's life is of infinite importance to God.

Perhaps I have to convince you. Maybe you have never considered such an idea. Or you have, and you simply rejected it out of hand. Perhaps you have experienced rejection, or great suffering, or enormous disappointment in your life. I would not be surprised. Everyone I know has known suffering and pain. All of us have experienced failure and sorrow—or we will.

But that is never the end of the story. There is always more than meets the eye. God is not through with any of us, and we all have another chance—and another, and another, and another.

God is not going to give up on you, even if you give up on yourself and everyone else. God is not going to reject you, even if you hate everything and everybody.

Your life is still of infinite importance to God, and he yearns for your love, your good mind, your earnest heart, your deep devotion. He wants you to be in love with him as he is in love with you—completely, totally, head-over-heels in love with you.

Why would I say such an outrageous thing? Well, because it's true, and beautiful, and good—which is the very definition of God. You are not being punished by God, or pushed away, or walked on with hobnail boots. No, you are being called. You are blessed, brought home on shoulders high, celebrated, praised, longed for, known for your better self, accepted and loved as you are, believed in, hoped for, prayed for—all this and more, much more. You are loved by God.

The baptism of these three beautiful children is one of the ways that God shows us these things. I'm sure you have no problem at all believing that *they* are blessed,

hoped for, and loved. Well, the truth is that we are not that different from James, or Roman, or Ellison. We are all children of God. We are all marked as Christ's own forever. Which is the second and final way I want to convince you of the infinite importance of your life to God.

In the fullness of time, God came into the world *as a child*, a tiny baby. No longer could we consider God as aloof, distant, or jealous; no, now and forever more, God would be with us in the person of Jesus Christ. And he gave us a scandalous expression of his love in his death on a cross. And he followed that ultimate sacrifice with the greatest expression of hope that the world has ever known or will know, in his resurrection from the dead.

That's what we remember and celebrate and know to be true in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. And that, dear friends in Christ, is how you now know that *your life, and all of our lives, are of infinite importance to God.*
AMEN.