**Sermon Notes August 2, 2020**

1. Baptism is the outward expression of an inward faith.
* Baptism signals to a purposeful decision to die to self and then to live Christ.
1. Old Testament Examples
* Exodus through the Red Sea
* Crossing through the Jordan River into the Promised Land
* Water used in cleansing rituals for purification
1. 1 Corinthians 10: 1-4

“… all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.”

1. Evangelical Covenant Church is a sacramental church.
* We acknowledge both baptism and communion as a special means of grace in by which God is the one moving and the human is just the participant.
* A Sacrament is by definition a mystery. is involved when we participate in the sacrament.
* 2 Sacraments-Baptism and Communion (Eucharist)
* We affirm parent’s decision to baptize their children.

1. A **sacrament** is something Christ participated in, Christ instituted, and Christ commanded us to participate in it.
* A mysterious act of love and grace.
* Can we possibly know the depths in which God intervenes in our life?
* To fully understand itis limiting God.
1. Baptism
* Infant Baptism looks forward to a decision to follow Christ
* Believer baptism looks back at the decision to follow Christ
1. Infant Baptism in Acts
* Acts 16:14-15 & Acts 16: 16: 31-33
1. Infant Baptism practiced by Early Church
* The earliest reference to infant baptism was by Irenaeus (c. 130–202) in his work *Against Heresies*.
* Irenaeus speaks of children being "born again to God." This reference has been described as "obscure."
* Three passages by Origen (185–c. 254) mention infant baptism as traditional and customary.
* Tertullian writing c. 198–203 advises the postponement of baptism of little children and the unmarried, he mentions that it was customary to baptize infants, with sponsors speaking on their behalf.
* Apostolic Tradition, sometimes attributed to Hippolytus of Rome, describes how to perform the ceremony of baptism; it states that children were baptized first, and if any of them could not answer for themselves, their parents or someone else from their family was to answer for them.
1. New Testament References for Believer Baptism
* Romans 6: 3-7
* 1 Corinthians 12: 12-13
1. The Evangelical Covenant won’t divide over this issue. We let people follow their convictions.
* A believer ought to follow the command to be baptized. Not being baptized after belief is an act of disobedience.

**Life Group Questions**

1. The Evangelical Covenant Church affirms 2 Sacraments (Baptism and Communion). There is a key distinctive between a Sacrament and Ordinance, even though some people use these terms interchangeably. An ordinance says the act is just a “sign.” A Sacrament is more than a sign; it is God literally moving and participating with the person involved in the sacrament. Why is this a big deal within Christianity?

 How did you grow up being taught? Does the ECC agree or differ? Can there still be harmony? (The ultimate answer is yes….but how do you get there?)

1. Did the two scripture passages in Acts 16 help clear up some ambiguity for affirming infant baptism? Why or why not?
2. Clearly, scripture (Christ) commands us to be baptized and to baptize (Matthew 28:16-20). Why do you suppose some believers shy away from being baptized?
3. At Countryside Covenant, the primary practice for baptism has been believer only. Why do you suppose this has been the case?
4. In being consistent with baptism and communion as a sacrament, the Eastern Orthodox Church practices infant baptism along with infant communion on the same day. Infants who have been baptized receive communion from that point on.

**HARD QUESTION**: Since the ECC is a sacramental church (both baptism and communion), why do you think some parents chose to withhold communion until their child is “of age?” If it truly is a means of grace, why withhold it? Is this scriptural one way or another?