

"Remember your baptism, and be thankful."

For most of us, this is easier said than done. We were very, very young at the time; so young that we don't have any memories of our baptism or anything else in our infancy.

Today, the baptism of Chera Wertz will be remembered; and as we remember, the powerful promise of our baptism is on display. We will remember her baptism, and be thankful, for God in Christ has given us a fresh start.

Chera is a member of our church; to be a member we are required to be baptized. Chera is an elder in our church; to be an elder in the Presbyterian Church, we are required to be a member, which requires us to be baptized.

Chera thought she was, but on a recent visit home, she learned she had been dedicated not baptized.

Oops. What do we do now?

We make a fresh start. We live into the promise God makes through Jeremiah,

Jeremiah 31:31 (NRSV)

A New Covenant

³¹ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

Jeremiah 31:33 (NRSV)

³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Amazing things happen when we take God's promises seriously enough to depend on them. That's what we're doing today; we're

trusting that God's new covenant made by God and written on new hearts given by God is really true. We're taking God at God's word and applying that word to our lives, specifically, to our oops.

I have a hunch that Chera and I aren't the only ones who've made an oops lately; we're not the only ones who've said things and done things we shouldn't have or not said and not done things we should have. I suspect we aren't the only ones for whom "should" is a word of terrible power that deprives us of joy and robs us of peace. We aren't the only ones in need of a fresh start.

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A New Covenant

³¹ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. (with you and with me).

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³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

So as we celebrate Chera's baptism today, a baptism we will long remember, remember your baptism, and be thankful. Surrender your "should's;" let them go. Leave them here. "Remember your baptism, and be thankful;" for God has given you a fresh start. Amen