

Glen Ridge Congregational Church

The Rev. John Sampson

“People of the Watery Way” – In response to the baptism of Noah Cooper



“Expressions” by Binh Dong

Luke 10:25 - 37

July 13, 2025

Will you pray with me?

God, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts be acceptable to you, our rock and our redeemer.

Amen.

So today, what a joyful day to welcome Noah into the church of the followers of Jesus, the one we call the Christ.

What does it mean though to become a follower of Jesus, the Christ, the one we call the resurrected one?

It's beautiful that right off the bat we get this story out of the lectionary which tells us what it means to follow Jesus. Before the followers of Jesus were called Christians, they were called the people of the Way, the people of the journey, the people of the road because they understood themselves to be on a journey of spirit following the Christ.

Jesus meets a person who asks him, "How can I find eternal life?" And Jesus responds, "Love. Love is the way to find eternity." And it says in the scripture that the man wasn't satisfied and tried to show how smart he was. But I think it's a question we all have to ask. What does this love look like? What does love following the Christ look like?

In response, Jesus tells us a story which I think is maybe one of the most famous of all of the stories that he shares. He tells the story of a man who falls sick on the side of the road and all of the people, his own kinsmen, his own countrymen pass him. And in today's lingo, as they pass him, say, "Thoughts and prayers, thoughts and prayers. See you. Hope it works out." But the one, the Samaritan who comes, the person who comes from a group that is traditionally not always in sync with the Jewish people is the one who stops, cares for this man, brings this man to a place to rest, and pays all the bills.

This Jesus says is what it means to love. This is what it means to follow him.

Noah, you are blessed to be welcomed into the followers of Jesus. It is a wonderful day. But your parents have chosen a challenging road for you. A road in which you will be asked to love. To love even those who you may not see eye to eye with. And not just love with thoughts and prayers, but to give of yourself to care for all those who you will meet. To sacrifice of your own self for the blessing of others. It's a hard road. Sometimes we may cry on that road. But I think it is a beautiful reminder to all of us that to follow Christ is more than simply assenting to certain beliefs, to saying certain words. It is actually to love in a way that asks much of us throughout the journey of life.

A short message today, but I think a powerful message, a message which we do all need to remember. All of us who have been baptized have been called to this same road ourselves.

Amen.