

November 15, 2015

Sunday Evening Service

Baby Dedication for Elianna Acosta

*"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate." (Psalms 127:3-5)*

This evening, Issan and Ashley Acosta are dedicating their child to the Lord, and by doing so they are really committing themselves to the task of rearing this beautiful little girl in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

You may be wondering why we, as Baptists, do not baptize our children. We believe that baptism is an outward reflection or identification of an inward decision. In the Bible, every candidate for baptism was a person that had placed his or her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, in the Book of Acts, the Bible records a story about an Ethiopian Eunuch who was speaking to Phillip the Evangelist and inquired about baptism:

*"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts 8:36-37)*

It is my prayer, and the prayer of Issan and Ashley, that their children would receive the Lord Jesus Christ and His gift of salvation at an early age, and at that time they would follow the Lord in believers' baptism.

We dedicate our children to the Lord, and by doing so we are stating that we are committed to raising these children in an environment that will instruct them about the Lord, and teach them to love and serve Him.

Baby Dedication is not a sacrament.

It is not even an ordinance.

It is a public declaration of your devotion as parents to raise your child for the Lord. What you **say** here today is really immaterial; but what you **do** with your child for next twenty years and beyond will make all the difference in the world.

## **Biblical Examples**

### **Hannah**

*"And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." (1 Samuel 1:10-11)*

*"And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there." (1 Samuel 1:26-28)*

Hannah literally gave her child, Samuel to be raised in the house of the Lord, which was at that time the tabernacle in Shiloh. Samuel was actually reared by Eli, the priest.

## **Joseph and Mary**

*"And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;" (Luke 2:21-22)*

## **Conclusion**

By dedicating Elianna to the Lord:

- 1 You are confirming your love for God.

Illustrate – Abraham and Isaac

- 2 You are clarifying that this child belongs to the Lord.
- 3 You are committing to raising this child for God.

*"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)*

- a Love her unconditionally, because she belongs to God, and God loves her too. The great failure of this generation is that we have failed to assure the children that God has given us to raise that He loves them.

Illustration - Children just don't succeed by accident. There are specific elements and ingredients that must be present:

According to a recent study, young men with high self-esteem shared some common childhood influences. There were three major characteristics of their families. (1) The high-esteem group was clearly more loved and appreciated at home than the low-esteem group. (2) The high-esteem group came from

homes where parents had been significantly more strict in their approach to discipline. By contrast, the parents of the low-esteem group had created insecurity and dependence through their permissiveness. Their children were more likely to feel that the rules were not enforced because no one cared enough to get involved. (3) The homes of the high-esteem group were also characterized by democracy and openness. Once the boundaries were established, there was freedom for individual personalities to grow and develop. Thus, the overall atmosphere was marked by acceptance and emotional safety. (Dr. James Dobson, *Focus of the Family Bulletin*, July 1994.)

- b Pray for her daily
- c Teach her the Bible
- d Be the right example
- e Lovingly discipline her

*"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."* - (Proverbs 19:18)

*"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."* - (Proverbs 22:15)

*"Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell."* - (Proverbs 23:13-14)

Illustration - Owne Wister, an old college friend of Theodore Roosevelt, was visiting him at the White House. Roosevelt's daughter Alice kept running in and out of the room until Wister finally asked if there wasn't something Roosevelt could do to control her.

"Well," said the President, "I can do one of two things. I can be President of the United States or I can control Alice. I cannot possibly do both." (*Bits & Pieces*, December 9, 1993, p. 16.)

- f Protect her from spiritual harm as well as physical harm. Keep your children as separated as possible from the world.
- g Bring her to church with you
- h Wet her appetite for loving and serving God – make serving God look good. "Have a "get to" attitude, not a "have to".
- i As parents, continue to grow spiritually yourselves.