

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen

Just a few minutes ago we were blessed and privileged to have the baptism of Alice Jade Bodi.

- What a special event that was.
- Alice Jade Bodi died to self and was recreated as a child of God.
- United with Christ in His death and resurrection.
- Anointed by the Holy Spirit.
- Christ dwells within her.
- And she has now been given the mark of the cross both upon her forehead and upon her heart for entry into the kingdom of God.....both now, and for all eternity.

What a great and blessed and joyful day this is.

- That precious little bundle of joy that was given as a baby to the Bodi family has now been given to God.....
- As He again blessed this family and in particular, this morning, little Alice.

That precious little bundle of joy was brought to the baptismal font in the arms of her mother.

- That VERY SMALL precious little bundle of joy, all of 3 months and 8 days old.....
- With all the helplessness, vulnerabilities and lack of adult comprehension that goes with being a little child.....given all these blessings.

But it does not end there. It does not even end with little Alice Bodi.

- That's the way it is for each of us also.
- I hope/trust each of us this day took the opportunity to treasure your baptism and renew your baptismal vows.

Little Alice, with all her helplessness, vulnerabilities, and lack of full comprehension represents each of us also.

- Each of us, on our own, is exactly like little Alice.
- Each of us are helpless, vulnerable, lack of full comprehension, and unable to do it on our own.
- Just as Alice was carried to the font, each of us are carried in this life and to our eternal home in Christ.

But.....we don't always see it that way, do we?

- This thing called PRIDE gets in the way.
- I can handle this. I can do it on my own.
- I know what I am doing. I got things under control.
- I'm in control of my life.
- I'll get help when I need it. And I'm doing okay right now.

Unfortunately pride is at the center of all of us.

- It is a "me" society.
- We are told, you can do anything you want.
- If you put your mind to it, you can do it.
- Stand on your own 2 feet. Be your own person.

And this thing called pride goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden.

- And this thing called pride is at the center of the downfall of mankind.

Luther considered pride the mother sin of man.

- As satan was cast from heaven because he wanted to be like Jesus.....
- Luther says, "God could not bear pride in heaven, but in hell."

Now go back to Eden.

- The serpent said to Eve, "For God knows that when you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God.
- And with that, we have man wanting to be like God, man wanting to be the god of himself, man wanting to be the god of another man, and the fall into sin.

And God abhors such sin.

- When Luther said God could not bear pride in heaven but in hell he added.....
- "If you want to go there, then continue to be proud."

Jesus speaks to this in our Gospel reading for today. He tells the parable of the Great Banquet.

- All were invited to the wedding banquet. We all are invited to be the bride of Christ.
- He said that when they came to the wedding feast.....they chose the place of honor.

And then the one who invited them came and said.....

- Give you place to this person, and then you will begin in shame to take the lowest place.

But rather, when you are invited, go and sit at the lowest place.

- And when the one who invited you comes to you and says, “Friend, move up to the higher.”
- Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you.

And then Jesus concluded this parable and teaching moment by saying.....

- “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Pride hurts us on all fronts. Pride spoils all.

- Think about in our relationships.
- Who of us has not raised our eyebrows at the person we call “a know it all.”
- That person has to give an opinion or come across as the expert on what seems to be everything.
- Listen to them talk. You will hear the word “I” a lot.

Many clever and accurate sayings have been written that speak to this. Let me give you a few.

- Pride is the only disease known to man that makes everyone sick except the one who has it.
- None are so empty as those who are full of themselves.
- Or.....an egoist is someone who is always “me-deep” in conversation.
- CS Lewis wrote, “There is no fault that makes a man more unpopular, and no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves.”

And that pride also hurts a person’s own security and inner peace.

- A person caught up in themselves has to always be in competition.
- Pride by its nature is essentially competitive.
- Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man.

The pride of man is to be the king of the mountain, the one at the top of the ladder.

- Always pushing to climb past and over another.
- And kicking down any that come up behind them.
- And all this is summarized and comes together in that pride hurts ourselves.

Let me give to you an old fable that perhaps is a bit humorous but illustrates all this.

- There were 2 ducks and a frog that lived on a farmer’s pond.

- The ducks and the frog were the best of friends, they played together all day long.

But when the hot summer days came, the pond began to dry up.

- The ducks realized that they would have to move.
- They could easily fly away to another place, but what about their friend, the frog?

Finally the ducks decided to put a stick between them.

- Each would hold one end in its bill while the frog hung on to the stick by its mouth.

And so the 3 friends lifted off and set out for another pond.

- When they took off and were flying, the farmer saw them and said.....
- “How clever! I wonder who thought of that.”
- The frog quickly opened his mouth and said, “I did!”
- And that was the end of the frog.
- Pride does go before the fall.

None of us can do it on our own.

- And this becomes particularly tragic in spiritual pride.
- Our letting it creep in that we can do it on our own.....that we know what we are doing.....
- That we don't need God every single day of our life is sort of like.....
- “The flea that said to the elephant he was riding after crossing the old bridge.....did you notice how WE shook the bridge?”
- Pride is the devil's prey.
- None of us are safe against the monster of pride.

In reality, each of us are like little baby Alice who was carried to the baptismal font today. And we need to return to that baptismal font every day.

- We are as helpless, vulnerable, weak, and lacking in full comprehension and understanding as a 2 month, 10 day old child.
- We each daily must return to the baptismal font for forgiveness of sins, strengthening of faith and life in Christ.

So, what are we to do?

- Return to Christ and walk with Him.
- It is He who carries us to the baptismal font.

Look at the life of Jesus in regards to humility and pride.

- He left the throne of God as King of kings to humble Himself to take on human form.
- He was born in a lowly manger. A feeding trough for animals.
- He was BAPTIZED in the Jordan River to begin His public ministry.
- And He died on the cross in the lowest, most humiliating and scornful of forms of execution so that He might bring glory to the Father and salvation to you and me.

If you look in the Bible.....check out the words baptism and teaching.

- They always go together.
- We are to be in God's Word.
- We are to be in God's House.

Do you remember what was included in the Baptism this morning?

- The Lord's Prayer.
- And how does it begin?
- Our Father.

We all are little children. And think about a little child with their father.

- How is a little child safe and protected and cared for and in joy?
- When they are close to their parents.
- A child is never to wander very far from their parents.
- A child is safe in the loving arms of their parents.
- A child is properly cared for when they are close to their parents.
- And, a child will do well when they listen to their parents.

A child is even nurtured and fed by their parents.

- In a few moments you will again be invited to partake in another Sacrament.
- Where you will receive the very body and blood of Christ.
- Where He will dwell in you. And you in Him.
- Humbly come before this altar in the openness of a little child and receive the nourishment and strength offered to you.

The place of best security and peace and joy for a little child is in the parent's home.

- This is your home. Be in God's House.

Recently we have begun a big push of encouragement here at Hope.

- There is never a bad time, but with the start of fall and fall activities now is a perfect time to reconnect, reinvigorate, and return in full humility to the Lord.
- You will be welcomed to church, you will be welcomed to Bible study, you will be welcomed to social events and even boards and committees, with open arms, just like a parent does that little child that is a blessing to them.
- We are all “Dependent Little Children.”

So this day, learn from the illustration given to us today with little Alice in Holy Baptism.....

- Take your pride, your thoughts of doing it on your own, your thoughts of your okay, and your thoughts of you being able to make it on your own and put them in check.
- Take the things and desires of this world and put them where they belong.....below Christ.
- Every day, every week, make humbling yourself, submitting to Him to have a relationship with Him a top priority.

Humbly yet boldly rely and rest in the arms of our Lord.

- He will take you from the place of shame and give to you the place of honor.
- He will say to you, “Friend, move up higher.”
- He will give to you the place of honor at His feast today, tomorrow, and for all eternity.
- He will take you from the baptismal font to eternal glory.
- Amen.

(Please stand) And now, may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Today, as we have included the confession of the apostles creed in the baptismal ceremony we will not have the confession of the Nicene Creed as normal but rather continue on with our prayers.