

Father Jesus thank you for this day and all of its blessings, thank you for waking us up to see another Sunday as we gather here today bless the words that come out of my mouth that they may be found favorable in your sight and let us all leave here with something new in our hearts that we may hold on to until next Sunday. AMEN

An elderly woman had just returned to her home from an evening of church services when she was startled by an intruder. She caught the man in the act of robbing her home of its valuables and yelled "stop! Acts 2:38! (Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven.) The burglar stopped in his tracks. The woman calmly called the police and explained what she had done. As the officer cuffed the man to take him in, he asked the burglar "why did you just stand there? All she did was read a scripture to you." "Scripture?" replied the burglar. "She said she had an ax and two 38mm."

Today, as a youth I am honored to be the preacher at the baptism of Isaiah who is now going to be a member of our youth in this church of God. Fourteen years ago I was brought to the altar to be baptized surrounded by my parents and Godparents.

To the Godparents, this responsibility is not just for today. It is a job that you have to be active until Isaiah is ready to take on his own faith journey when he is confirmed. When I say you should guide him through his spiritual journey I mean you should help him.

Let me appeal to you just as Abraham did to God for the righteous people of Sodom and Gomorrah:

1. Make sure he attends fellowship in church regularly
2. See that what he does resembles the church of God positively
3. See that Isaiah attends bible study
4. Teach Isaiah to call on God when he is having a problem

In so doing Isaiah will be a positive influence to his peers in this sinful society of ours.

Theme Forgiveness through Baptism
Text Acts 22:16 (New International Version)16

And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

What is forgiveness?

The Webster's dictionary defines forgiveness as the excuse for a fault or offense or to pardon
What is baptism?

- *Baptism is when we are reborn.
- *Baptism is an act of faith.
- *Baptism is when we are added to the body of Christ which is the church.
- *Baptism is the washing of regeneration, and renewal of the Holy Spirit.
- *Baptism is the starting gun of a race of a new life.
- *Baptism is when the old dies and the new arises. In this manner we become saved.

In the church, in order to be forgiven you must first be baptized into the Christian community of Christ.

Your baptism is the beginning of your faith journey which is long and filled with temptations and obstacles.

There are 3 types of baptism:

*Water - sprinkling, pouring, and emersion: the actual washing of sins with water - the Anglican Episcopal Church uses sprinkling and holy oil as their routine method of baptism

*Holy Spirit (confirmation) - when the spirit of god places the believer into a union with Christ and other believers into the body of Christ

*Fire (Pentecost) -the Holy Spirit like the day of Pentecost when fire descended upon the disciples and they were blessed by the speaking of different tongues.

In Acts 19, Paul discovered some disciples of John the Baptist who were still adhering to his message, long after he had been executed. In Acts 19: 3- 5, Paul asked them, "'into what then were you baptized? ' And they said, 'Into John's baptism. ' And Paul said, 'John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus. ' And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Note what happened here. Even though these disciples had been baptized with John's baptism, they were baptized again in the name of Jesus. Obviously, since they were re-baptized, there is a difference or a distinction between the baptism of John and Christian baptism which is the baptism in Christ.

In the movie roots Kunta Kente was baptized into adulthood when he was circumcised and he officially entered into manhood.

As a baby your godparents as well as your parents guide you through this baptism of water, and then when little Isaiah is ready he will be baptized by the Holy Spirit on confirmation day.

As youth we stumble on a lot of things such as gang activities in schools, peer pressure, and failure to study, cultural conflicts, outfit decisions, parental pressure, racial difference, religious difference.

But in the things of God we also have problems such as coming to church unprepared, not being attentive during the service, sleeping in church after a burned out Saturday night saying evil things to one another and many more things that other youths can endorse. We all forget that God who is our hope and light has made us to love one another and to acknowledge him as our savior. This is what a Christian youth should have in mind. We see gangs inside of schools and drug users on the streets we should be thankful that we have taken the higher road with Jesus Christ who said he will never leave us nor forsake us. We believe that he has something in store for us which are unknown but we do know one thing, which God will give us positive things that we desire that will compensate for all the other bad things in the world.

As for now little Isaiah is under supervision but when he becomes a man in the church we all may look back at this moment as a beautiful beginning in his journey with Christ.

As in the gospel when the disciples asked Jesus how to pray, I can see little Isaiah asking us to teach him how to pray, he is reaching out to us. Let us reach out and grab his arms and teach him to put God first in everything he does.

Then we may look at him and say he is truly a child of God.