***Acts 22:14-16 Then he said, ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. 15For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’***

This morning, we’ve witnessed one of our most sacred services, that of Baptizing new believer in Christ. By Baptism, they have made a public profession of Faith in Jesus Christ. By Immersion, they have been ritually buried to the old life and have risen to new life in our Lord. Their journey begins, not driven by the pastor, but by the Holy Spirit that now resides within. Born of water once, today they are born again by the Blood of Jesus Christ.

Paul was a sinner, a persecutor of Christians. Acts 9 tells us that he was breathing threats and murder, as he left Jerusalem, bound for Damascus. He saw his calling as, “gather the Christians and bring them prisoners in chains to Jerusalem.” Christ had a different idea. Oh, Christ has a different idea my friends… than what we are breathing. Christ found Paul, then Saul, on that road and it was Paul that ended up in the chains… a heart chained to Jesus… and a life bound to His service. He gathered the lost and helped them find Salvation.

In Acts 9:17-18 we read *And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.* ***18****Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.* But in Acts 22:14 we hear from Paul about what Ananias said during that Acts 9 conversation. *Then he said, ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth.*God chose Paul, before the foundation of the world, to know His will. To see the Just One, Jesus Christ, even after Jesus had ascended! To hear the voice of His mouth. And that is exactly what Paul heard there, blinded, kneeling in the dirt of that Damascus road… trembling, astonished, “Lord, what do You want me to do?”

How many times have we been trembling and astonished, seeking the answer of our eternal purpose, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Logan and Kenneth, that is a conversation you must have with Jesus, not just once but daily. Baptism is not a doorway to ease. It’s a doorway to service, a doorway to purpose, and a doorway to relationship with Almighty God.

Acts 22:15 *For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.* Paul gives us the details of his calling. You will be His witness to all men. That is every Christian’s call. We are witnesses to all people of what we have learned, studying the Bible, listening to messages, reading devotionals, and remaining in prayer at all times. The Lord told Ananias that Paul was a chosen vessel who would carry His Word to Gentiles and Jews, Kings and Commoners. We too are chosen vessels bringing the Love of Jesus to whoever we encounter along our way.

Verse 16 *And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.* Acts 9:18 tells us - *Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.* Ananias asked - Why are you waiting?” Arise. Be baptized. Wash away your sins. Call on Jesus’ name! Today, we’ve seen Kenneth and Logan come forward, no longer waiting, but arising and being baptized, calling on the name of the Lord. In Luke 15:7 Jesus says *I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.* We too rejoice when a new believer joins our journey, as we’ve witnessed today.

Now, I ask any who have never received Jesus and been baptized, calling on His name. Why are you waiting? What more do you need? Arise and come! Now is the Day of your salvation! There will be no Baptismal Pool to stop by after you die. The decision must be made here and it is best to be made now. If you have never been baptized, never sought Jesus’ saving Grace, come as we sing. Let’s have another reason for Heaven to rejoice as Jesus says, “My precious sheep that was lost now is finally found.”