

## Confirmation – May 5, 2024 – Isaiah 43:1 – You Belong to the Lord!

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Parents, did it shock you when the doctors allowed you and your newborn baby to just walk right out of the hospital?

Moms, the staff had you under constant observation the moment you walked in. Your baby was being monitored even more closely. Once the child was delivered it was weighed and measured, scrubbed and wrapped. The only way a child was allowed out of the nursery and into the mother's arms was after carefully matching names on wristbands. Visitors had to wear a special badge and could only gain access after the security doors opened.

But then suddenly, after 48 hours or so, they cut off the security wristbands, dropped the baby into your lap, rolled you down to the hospital entrance and announced: *"Time to go home! Good luck!"*

How did they know what kind of parents you would be? You might forget to feed the baby or change the diaper. You might leave them unattended on a changing table to grab the wipes. They never inspected your crib. How could they turn over this helpless infant to parents with no child-rearing skills? It seems so risky.

Then, wouldn't it seem even more shocking that God allows parents to care for a child? It also so risky! Here's the thing, there's an arrangement. Your child is God's child. He's loaning them to you. He says in today's Confirmation message: **But now, this is what the Lord says – he who created you, he who formed you: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine."**

It's as though God rubs their cute little cheeks, puts them in our arms and whispers, *"Here they are. I plan to spend eternity with them, but first I want them to live with you. Feed them. Clothe them. Love them. But most of all, make sure you*

*tell them that I love them too. Tell them what I've done for them and what I plan to do for them. That's your privilege and responsibility."*

Everything changes when we think of our child like this, doesn't it? It should! Hospitals entrust a child's precious life to you. God entrusts a precious soul to you. The soul's the main thing here. You made sure you kept an eye on that. That's why ...

- You baptized your child.
- You brought them to church with them.
- You pointed them to the cross.
- You showed them their sin and God's forgiveness.
- You gave them Bibles, while using your own.
- You made their Christian education a priority, even if it meant making sacrifices on your part.
- You spent time on your knees in prayer with them and for them.

Your child's soul is a huge responsibility! Does it shock you that God allowed you to care for his child? You haven't had to do it alone. Your family may have helped. Your church family certainly helped with Sunday school, a Lutheran Grade school, Vacation Bible school in addition to time spent here in God's House, or in devotions at your house. All with one purpose: so they would know Jesus better and their Christian faith would grow stronger.

Up to now, your parents have done all the spiritual heavy lifting.

- Today, you – not your parents or godparents – are publicly and personally confessing your faith.
- Today, you are promising your loyalty to Jesus.
- Today, you can begin to receive the Lord's Supper to keep your faith strong.

Those are big steps. But you won't be alone. Over the years of your young life, as you listened, learned and memorized God's Word, one thing kept being repeated and kept your attention: **YOU BELONG TO THE LORD!** You belong to him because: **He created you, redeemed you, and even calls you by name.**

(1)

First of all, you belong to the Lord because he created you. You learned all about creation in the First Article. You've confessed it here many times: *"I believe in God the Father almighty maker of heaven and earth."* He created the world and everything in it. You are in this world. He created you!

That truth puts to rest the ridiculous notion that: *"I can do whatever I want, whenever I want, however I want."* Besides being sinful, that's really being selfish. You didn't put yourselves together or even put yourselves here. The Creator put you here and then surrounds you with others who care for you.

His personal care for you extends to giving you air to breathe, food to eat, clothes to wear and a place to call home. He even protects you, too!

(2)

Your special place in God's heart goes much deeper than creating and caring for your body. You belong to the Lord because he sent his Son to carry out his plan of rescue and recovery for your soul. He redeemed you!

Your premeditated disobedience makes you a criminal. Sinful as charged. Punishable by an eternity in hell. Jesus, your defense attorney, takes your case and pleads your cause. As your Substitute he perfectly followed God's holy rules in your place. He redeemed you ... bought you back from sin, Satan and certain spiritual destruction. You learned all about that as you memorized these very personal words in the Second Article: *"He redeemed me a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me*

*from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil."*

No expense was too much. No sacrifice was too great. Jesus ransomed you with his holy precious blood. Jesus paid your debt. Jesus forgave your sins. Jesus got punished instead of you. You were a criminal. Now you've been fully pardoned. Because you belong to the Lord you can say: "I'm justified!" Or, as you learned: *"Just if I'd ... never sinned!"*

(3)

There's a special feeling you get when someone knows your name. You aren't, *"Heh you!"* or *"What's your name!"* to the Lord. You are his precious possession, his dearest treasure.

That didn't happen by your own hard work or good deeds. You didn't initiate this relationship. He chose you. You learned all about when you spoke the meaning to the Third Article, *"I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel and enlightened me with his gifts."*

Because of your faith-connection with your Lord, he follows you. Not to spy on you, but to make sure you are under his watchful and protected care. He even asks his angels to do the same. That's his [promise: You are mine! He won't go back on that.

Speaking of a promise. In a few minutes you'll be making your own promise. It's a promise to be loyal to the One you belong to. With the help of the Holy Spirit, you can keep your promise. Make being in the Lord's House a priority! Make dining at the Lord's Table a necessity! Yes, remember your promise, but never forget his promise ... **YOU BELONG TO THE LORD!**