

The Meaning of Baptism

Preacher: Harold Summers

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References: **1 Corinthians 10**, John 4:1-2; Matthew 28:18-19; 1 Corinthians 10:1-2; John 1:32-33; Romans 6:3-4; John 3:3

Announcements and Welcome

The day that I was baptized in this tank—and frankly, I get pretty excited when I see others being baptized. Praise the Lord for what has happened today. These five people have said, "I trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior. I want to live forever."

All right, I'm going to give you some announcements, and then after that, I'm going to try to explain a little bit more about baptism. I think, frankly, in the days of the Lord Jesus, people understood baptism a whole lot more than they do today, and I'll explain that to you.

But right now, just some announcements for you. First of all, we're going to have lunch this afternoon. You are all invited. Don't go home; stay for lunch. Now, the question is, what kind of a lunch are you going to have? The answer is I really don't know, because every time we have a lunch like this, people bring different things. But what usually happens is that people take a picture of the lunch before they eat it 'cause it's so nice. So you'll enjoy it today. If you don't like this, you're going to have that. It's very, very simple. So stay for lunch today, especially if you're new and you haven't been here before. We'd like to meet you, and you'd like to celebrate with those who trusted the Lord. So that's our plan for this afternoon.

We'll have our usual Bible study tonight in the book of Ezra and in Nehemiah. And on Tuesday night, we're going to have a prayer and Bible study time, and on that occasion, Vic Van Hadden will speak to us.

On Thursday night, we're going to have a special meeting. We don't usually have a meeting on Thursday night. We will this week because next week we're going to have Daily Vacation Bible School, and it's going to be a good time. We're going to study the word of God together. There's some brochures like this—much larger—on the back table, and the theme this year is Evidence for the Faith in the Bible. Do you believe the Bible? Do you **really** believe the Bible? Why would you believe the Bible? Is there enough evidence to convince you that you must read the Bible? And the answer is, of course there is. A lady yesterday said, "I don't

care." How tragic. But the evidence is there. Come along. This is for children, and teens, and youth, and adults, parents, and everybody else. Come along to our Daily Vacation Bible School Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday—not this week, but the following week—10 o'clock in the morning until noon, with a special lunch on the Friday. All right, so prayer meeting Thursday night, 7 o'clock here at the chapel. We're going to pray that God will bless at that time.

Next Sunday, David Dunlap will be speaking. He's going to be speaking along with his wife at the Daily Vacation Bible School the following week. He'll be here next Sunday speaking to us.

On Saturday, we're going to have a special session here at the chapel, 10 o'clock in the morning until 3 o'clock in the afternoon with a light lunch. The theme is How to Train Children in This Day—how to train them from a biblical perspective at this time. If you're a parent, if you're a Sunday school teacher, if you would like to help train children—and I hope you all say, "Yes, I want to help train children"—then we're going to have a session on that. David and Faith will teach us. We'll have a question-and-answer time. It'll be a good time together. It'll be on Zoom. If you can't come in person, then try to come on Zoom and encourage others to come. It's not just for 16th; it's for anybody who would like to learn it. Come along. It's this coming Saturday.

All right, I think those are probably all the important announcements at this time. Actually, there are so many special meetings, we made up a little sheet. I made it up; it's very, very poor and unimaginative. Among other things, it does say what the meetings are and when, and you can get a sheet like this at the back, on the back table, if you haven't already got one. And you take it so that you can come, and you can pray that the Lord will bless.

I think those are all the announcements now.

If you need, we have a Chinese class downstairs as well. Upstairs, there will be a simultaneous translation. You need to enter Zoom; you need to have a phone to enter Zoom. There will be simultaneous translation. If you need a phone to translate, you can find our brothers in the back. We can tell you how to enter. If you need a Chinese class, you can go downstairs; there will be a Chinese class. So if you need a phone, you can bring your own earphones, then I can give you Wi-Fi, then I can help you go to Zoom, you can go to simultaneous translation. So you can choose. If you need a Chinese class, go downstairs.

Okay, it all gets to be very complex. Those of us who are going downstairs, the Sunday School scholars, they go and leave now, and the rest of you will be upstairs. So make sure you go.

The Command and Meaning of Baptism

All right, while they're leaving, I'm going to ask you to turn in your Bibles, please, to the book of John, chapter 4.

[John 4:1-2 NKJV] - ¹ Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),

Jesus baptized people. Who baptized the more people, John or Jesus? And the answer is Jesus baptized more people than John. If you were living in the days of John the Baptist, do you think you would have understood what baptism was? Well, yeah. John the Baptist was probably the most popular man in the country, and he was a baptizer. And people said, "What do you do when you're baptized?" And so they went down to the River Jordan, and John baptized the people there. And so we all know what baptism is, because baptism wasn't just sprinkling. Baptism was going right down into the River Jordan and coming up again.

So John the Baptist baptized, Jesus baptized, and they all knew what baptism was.

Now turn over to Matthew 28. What is supposed to happen in the Christian church? Matthew 28, and verse 18 says:

[Matthew 28:18-19 NKJV] - ¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

So why do people baptize today? First of all, John the Baptist baptized. Secondly, Jesus baptized. Thirdly, Jesus told the people who were Christians, His disciples—He told them to baptize. And when you get over into the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles and following, they were all baptizing people.

Is baptism important? Yes. And important in what sense? Baptism is important in the sense that it shows the sincerity and the **commitment** of the person who is baptized. There's wisdom in baptism because somehow, if something happened in your life, you've got to stand up and be counted.

I heard once of a man who loved a woman. He said, "I love you."

She said, "How much do you love me?"

"Oh," he said, "I love you so much that I'd like to spend some time with you."

She said, "If you love me, then you can marry me. But if you don't have any commitment, and you don't really love me—you just love yourself—then you're going to have to go elsewhere, mister. Because you see, I want a marriage. I want you to live with me for life. That's what it's all about. Don't pretend that you love me if you're not prepared to make the commitment."

People could say, "You know, I believed in Jesus."

That's very good. What'd you do about it?

"Well, not very much."

Why not? If you believe in Jesus, then you're going to do something about it. Now, what are you going to do? The first thing you're going to do is obey the Lord Jesus when He says you should be baptized.

Repentance and Belief: Two Sides of the Coin

If you're getting baptized, is it because you repent of your sins? They said yes. And then I think John the Baptist said to them, "Excuse me now, but I want you to tell all these people: what were those sins?" We didn't ask that this morning, did we? Why? I'm not sure. Should we have? Maybe. John the Baptist did. When they were baptized by John the Baptist, they confessed their sins.

Now, what's the point of confessing your sins if you're not prepared to call them sins, or not prepared to turn away from them? The whole concept of baptism begins with this simple fact: baptism demands repentance from sins. And we get it over and over and over again as you read through baptism. Baptism begins with repentance of sins.

I like to illustrate it with money. I've just got a toonie here. It's not worth very much, but it's a good illustration. On one side, there's a picture of a polar bear; on the other side, there's a picture of King Charles. And baptism is something like that. Baptism has two sides: one is **belief** toward God, and the other is **repentance** toward sin.

Repentance is an interesting word, isn't it? Repentance means to turn around. If you're going this way like the world, it's a broad way, and you say, "I'm going my way. I'm going the devil's way. I'm going the world's way. I'm going the way of sin." But I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and because I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, I repent and I'm going the different way.

Repentance and belief. Repentance and belief—two sides of the same coin. You trust the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, you've got to repent of your sin, and you've got to go Jesus' way.

And some people say, "Well, I haven't decided." Why don't they decide? Peter, I said, "Why didn't you decide to follow Jesus?"

He said, "I don't know."

I said, "I know, Peter. You didn't decide to choose it because you didn't say, 'I want to get rid of my sins.' That's the only reason you didn't."

There certainly isn't a lack of evidence. All the evidence is on God's side. You read science today—every day you turn around, you see another reason why science has just proved that evolution is impossible. Evolution is impossible, so I'm not questioning. Science proves evolution is impossible. There's only one reason people don't believe the Bible: it's because they're not interested in repentance.

What did John the Baptist do? John the Baptist said, "Listen, there's a sincerity about all this. I preached in the wilderness; we're going down to the Jordan. You're going to be baptized, and when we baptize you, you're going to confess your sins." Does that make sense? Is that empty thinking? Oh, it's perfect sense.

Baptized into Moses: The Cloud and the Sea

So that's interesting. Though, we learned a few other things about baptism. I want to turn you to an interesting verse of scripture. Turn in your Bible to 1 Corinthians chapter 10.

1 Corinthians chapter 10, and we're just going to read a couple of verses together here: verses 1 and 2. Paul is writing to the Corinthians to explain to them what happened in the past. He says:

[1 Corinthians 10:1-2 NKJV] - ¹ Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ² all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,

What? That's baptism.

Now, do you remember this story? I think you do. They all came out of Egypt. They were slaves in Egypt, and Moses said to them one day, "You follow me." And they did. They followed Moses, and they followed out across the eastern side of Egypt. They got to the Red Sea, and then they went down into the Red Sea and up the other side.

Paul says that is baptism. They were baptized into the cloud and into the sea.

You remember the cloud was there. What did the cloud prove? The cloud came along. As they were leading from Egypt to the Red Sea, the cloud came in, and the cloud was a **guide** for them. It was a strange kind of cloud, but the cloud moved not according to the winds; the cloud moved not according to the weather patterns. The cloud moved because God was in the cloud, and God caused the cloud to go before them. And if they wanted to be under the cloud—frankly, prevent sunburn—they had to follow the cloud. So the cloud, first of all, provided for them guidance. They had to follow the cloud.

The people said, "There's the cloud. I am going to follow the cloud. I'm going to follow Moses because Moses told us about the cloud and he explained it to us, but I'm following the cloud. Where the cloud goes, I'm going to go." That was the baptism: "Where the cloud goes, I'm going to go."

What else do we know about the cloud? Well, it came between them and the Egyptians. So you've got all the Israelites fleeing and the Egyptians coming behind, and the cloud comes down in between. And the Egyptians couldn't see the Israelites; they couldn't get to them. And the cloud, in the middle of the night, it turned to fire, and they couldn't get through the fire; they couldn't get through the cloud. So the cloud then provided two things for them: guidance and protection.

These people got baptized. What were they saying? They said, "I have decided to follow Jesus. He's like the cloud, and I'm going to follow Him. What am I going to get? I will get guidance, and I will get protection."

And then they came to the sea, and they went through the sea—down on one side, up on the other side. And when they got to the other side, what happened? The Egyptians who came behind them, they got drowned in the sea.

Now, if you were baptized in the cloud, you know what it means. If you were baptized in the sea, what would it mean? Well, it would mean separation, wouldn't it? Ah, you're on the other side of the Red Sea. You're going to go back to Egypt for supper? No, you can't go back to Egypt; it's on the other side of the sea. "Oh, I've got some friends back there." That's fine, but you can't go back. What about the enemy? Oh, he can't even come forward. Right?

You trust the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you get protection and you get separation. And if you're not prepared to separate from the world, you're not going to follow the cloud into the sea. You're going to say, "I'm not prepared for that yet." You may have an excuse for not saying it, but it's only going to be an excuse, and you know it as well as God knows it.

So, the strange word baptism associated with Israel. Israel was baptized. How were they baptized? Number one, they were baptized unto Moses, who told them about and showed them all about the cloud and the Red Sea. And they were baptized though they didn't get wet. They were baptized just like these were baptized. And these say, "By God's grace, I'm going to follow Jesus. I'll follow the cloud." They say, "I want to be guided by the cloud." They say, "I want to be protected by the cloud." They say, "I am determined to be separated from sin in the past and the ways of Egypt, just like the ways of the world today. I want to be separated from that. I want to follow Jesus."

Baptism used to go this way; now it's going that way. The world behind me, the cross before me. I have decided to follow Jesus.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Is that all there is to baptism? Well, that's a lot, but there's something else that we don't always think about. So turn in your Bibles now to the book of John, chapter 1.

John chapter 1, verse number 33. John 1:32-33 says:

[John 1:32-33 NKJV] - ³² And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. ³³ I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

So there's baptism of water, we saw. Then there's a baptism in the cloud and in the sea. But now this is the baptism **in the Holy Spirit**.

What's that mean? It means that when you trust the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, the Holy Spirit will come down, not just to be in you, but to be upon you, and you will be in the Holy Spirit. That's going to make a difference. Jesus on the inside, the Holy Spirit on the inside, and you're walking down almost like in a bubble. I've never walked in a bubble, but I've seen people sort of walking in bubbles. How would you like to walk in the bubble of the Holy Spirit?

Do you think if you were to walk in the bubble of the Holy Spirit, He'd let you do a bunch of bad things? No, He'd say, "Don't do that." If you were walking in the bubble of the Holy Spirit, do you think He'd protect you from a bunch of bad things? And the answer is yes.

It's amazing. This particular word baptism is not baptism by or with the Holy Spirit; it's baptism in the Holy Spirit. When you trust the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you get a new life. Eric read the verses in Romans chapter 6. What did they say? Die with Him in baptism. Paul says in Romans, if you've been baptized, you are dead. If you've trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you're dead. Don't forget it: you're dead, and the Holy Spirit is surrounding you. You're walking in the Holy Spirit of God. What a marvelous concept. What a powerful concept. What a wonderful concept: in the Holy Spirit. That's how we were baptized.

Total Commitment

Now, Eric made mention earlier of the fact that some people say when you get baptized, you get sprinkled. So I could reach down here and get a little bit of water and I could sprinkle somebody. Does that mean they're baptized? That doesn't describe being baptized in the Holy Spirit, does it?

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a total life passion, a total life commitment, a total life experience. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "You must be born again."

What is the major problem in the world today regarding Christianity? Complacency. No commitment. No commitment; casual.

Peter said to me yesterday, "The reason I don't believe it is because there's so many different religions out there. So many people going here, so many people going there; there's nothing consistent."

I said, "Peter, the Bible's consistent. And there are just as many false religions out there as there are people who won't obey the truth of God. And you think the devil's only got one lie? The devil's smart; he's got all kinds of lies. What kind of a lie do you like? The devil will manufacture one for you so that you can pull out your doubts."

So what have we got about baptism? Baptism means from sin: **repent**. Baptism is from sin and it's from self: "I want to go my way." It's really going the devil's way, but the devil will convince you that it's your way. "I want to go my way." So baptism is repentance from sin and from self, and baptism is **obedience** to Jesus Christ. Baptism: from repentance to obedience. From sin to obedience.

Is baptism a big deal? Yeah. Some people—Eric said this morning—some people have waited a long time to be baptized, and sometimes for good reason and sometimes for not. But baptism is a marvelous thing. If you've been baptized, then your responsibility is to make it real. If you haven't been baptized, then your responsibility is to say, "Jesus is real. The truth

of God is true. The Bible is true. And I've got to quit playing games. This is true." They say, "I'm not going to delay any longer. I want to be baptized. I want people to know I have decided to follow Jesus."

Closing Prayer

Let's pray.

Lord, we want to thank You for baptism, and we thank You for these five who were baptized this morning. And we thank You for the others, Lord, who'd like to be baptized and, by the grace of God, will be soon. Lord, would You bless them? Lord, would You bless each one of us as well? Because we want to live baptism. We don't want baptism just to be a picture on the wall in our life; we want it to be our life.

Lord, we thank You. We pray that we will all say, "I choose to follow Jesus." Thank You for these blessings brought to us.

Lord, thank You for the promise of lunch today. Thank You for giving it to us. Lord, help us to be friendly, help us to enjoy one another, help us to enjoy Your good food, and Lord, help us to enjoy all Your great blessings. We give thanks for what's happened today. We pray that You will continue to bless us and build us. And as Eric said in the earlier message, Lord, would You see fit to build Your church?

We give You thanks in Jesus' name. Amen.