

A Celebration of Baptism

Sermon delivered on August 9th, 2015

By: Pastor Greg Hocson

Text: [Romans 6:1-5](#)

Introduction

Since the beginning of Grace & Truth, I have been asked about church membership and baptism. I have been asked the following questions - how do I become a member and when are we having baptismal service? I am praying that, in the sermon this morning, I will be able to answer some of the questions you might have regarding church membership and baptism.

As I have already announced, following our Church Organization Service on August 30th, is Baptismal service. But what is Baptism and how important is it?

Our Church Constitution states the following:

Any person who evidences a change of attitude toward God by faith in Jesus as the Son of God who died and shed His blood on the cross to atone for sins, accepts Him as his own personal Saviour with all his heart is willing to obey Him and His Word, may with this act of baptism, portraying the death, burial and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, be received into membership upon the vote of this Church. ([John 1:12-13](#), [3:3-8](#) [Romans 6:4](#), [Acts 2:41](#))

I love to ask questions. I like to know the reasons **why we do what we do**. I like to know **why we believe what we believe**. I don't want anyone of us to blindly follow. **I want us to believe**, not because some church or minister says so, but **because the Bible says so**. I want us to believe because we are **fully convinced** that it is the truth. We do not want to do things just because other churches have done it or are doing it. We want everything that we believe and practice to have a **solid biblical basis and foundation**.

Let us start by asking the question, what is Baptism and what does the Bible say about it? As we consider Baptism, my prayer is that we will see the **glorious significance and meaning of baptism**. May God the Holy Spirit help us to understand and appreciate its deep teaching.

I - What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just a **religious ritual**. It is not just a **church tradition**. Baptism **does not mean regeneration**. It is not to wash away sins. It is not a way of salvation. **It has nothing to do with entrance to Heaven**.

The New Testament teaches very plainly that we are not saved by works but by faith.

[John 3:16](#)

Acts 16:30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31: And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Galatians 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Some might ask and wonder why Jesus ordained the act of baptism. **If salvation is by grace through faith, why institute an ordinance that cannot wash away sins?** Why institute an ordinance that cannot save? Though Baptism cannot save, do not think that Baptism is not important. Baptism is not to be taken lightly. **Do not entertain low thoughts about baptism.**

1. Baptism is an Ordinance

There are two ordinances that our Lord instituted for His church, namely Baptism and Lord's Supper. Like the Lord's Supper, Baptism is an ordinance, meaning, the Lord Jesus commanded it. He ordained it and it is to be an ongoing practice of the church.

Jesus' final words to His disciples were ...

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

The Lord before He ascended back into Heaven, commanded the church, to teach all nations - to make disciples. And **making disciples includes baptizing them.**

Baptism is a command. It is not optional. It is not to be taken lightly. It is to be obeyed. It is to be performed and practiced until Christ returns at the end of the world.

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

The best way to show our love to Christ is our obedience to His commandments.

2. Baptism is a Proclamation

Just like the Lord's Supper, it proclaims the Gospel. It is a proclamation of the death and burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins.

1 Corinthians 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2: By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3: For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins** according to the scrip-

tures; 4: And that **he was buried**, and that **he rose again the third day** according to the scriptures:

In baptism, we declare that we believe the Gospel. We believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins. It is a declaration that we believe that **when Christ died and was buried, it was on our behalf.** He is our Substitute. He is the propitiation for our sins. Jesus Christ took our place, took our sins, suffered, bled, and died on our behalf a sacrifice for sin.

This is one of the reasons baptism is not to be taken lightly, for it is a proclamation. It is a declaration.

3. Baptism is a Celebration

What are we celebrating?

1) Our Death and Burial

In baptism, not only do I acknowledge that Christ died for me, but that I died in Him. In baptism, I acknowledge that I am dead and buried myself. **Baptism is an acknowledgment of our own death in Christ.**

3: Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were **baptized into his death**? 4: Therefore we are **buried with him** by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5: For if we have been planted together in the **likeness of his death**, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Here is a great truth about baptism. Baptism pictures our death and burial. It represents the death that we experience when we are united to Christ. This is why we are immersed: it's a symbolic death and burial. The meaning of the word **baptizo** in Greek is essentially "**dip**" or "**immerse**" or "**submerge**."

By nature we were dead **IN** sin and under the dominion and power of sin, under wrath of God but **grace has changed all these**. Having been born again we are **no longer** dead **IN** sin but we are now, dead **TO** sin; dead to its guilt, power, dominion, and penalty. This means Satan, sin and death no longer have a hold on me or power over me.

1 Corinthians 15:55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56: The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57: But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

No longer under condemnation; no longer under the dominion and power of sin, surely there is reason to celebrate.

But that is not all!

2) Our Passing from Death unto Life

In baptism, not only do I celebrate the death, burial and resurrection of Christ; not only do I celebrate my death and burial with Christ, but also, **in baptism, I celebrate my passing from death to life.**

Baptism pictures my passing from death unto life.

3: Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4: Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: **that like as Christ was raised up from the dead** by the glory of the Father, even so we also should **walk in newness of life**. 5: For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also **in the likeness of his resurrection**:

Though Jesus died, He did not remain dead. He died unto sin once. By that one death He satisfied the demand of the law, and having satisfied that demand, He could legally claim a complete justification from sin.

But we are baptized into Christ's death, and by that baptism buried with Him, in order that we also might participate His restored and glorious life.

That is why when a person is immersed into the water, **they do not stay under the water**, they come up out of the water. This pictures their resurrection unto life. **It pictures the newness of life in Christ of the one being baptized.**

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death,"—for what object?—"that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Be buried in Christ! What for? That you may be dead for ever? No, that you may be raised into newness of life! - C. H. Spurgeon

Colossians 2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

We are raised up with Christ to walk in newness of life. That's what happens when a person believes, when a person is born again - the old person died and a new person live. And **this is the operation of God**. This is what we we celebrate, this is what we portray when we immerse a person into water.

4. Baptism is an Identification

It is an announcement. In baptism we unashamedly announce to those around us our association with Christ and His Church.

1) Identification with Christ

In baptism person takes a public stand with God and righteousness against the devil and sin. **Baptism makes clear where a person stands and what he believes.** Baptism is "*coming out of the closet*." Every body seems to be coming out of the closet, why not the believers.

God calls His people to come to Christ openly and courageously. He wants to see believers to come to that point of public testimony.

Matthew 10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33: But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

2) Identification with Christ's Body

Baptism identifies you and me with Christ and the Church which is precious to Him, Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

It means association with Christ's body.

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Baptism is an act by which a man makes open profession of faith in Christ as his Saviour and Lord; an act in which he makes full renunciation of self and sin, and unites himself to the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12).

In baptism, I am saying - **I am not ashamed** of the One who died for me. I am not ashamed of the One who saved me. I am not ashamed of the One who twice gave me life - physical life and spiritual life. I am not ashamed of the One who changed my life.

II - Who is to be Baptized?

Here at Grace & Truth we strongly believe that baptism in the New Testament is only for genuine professing believers. This is what we call it "Believer's Baptism."

Constitution and By-Laws states ...

Any person who evidences a change of attitude toward God by faith in Jesus as the Son of God who died and shed His blood on the cross to atone for sins, accepts Him as his own personal Saviour with all his heart is willing to obey Him and His Word, may with this act of baptism, portraying the death, burial and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, be received into membership upon the vote of this Church. (John 1:12-13, 3:3-8 Romans 6:4, Acts 2:41)

If you carefully read the New Testament you will find that Christian baptism is believer's baptism. It must follow salvation.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Believers and believers only are to be baptized. Baptism is an expression of faith and therefore only for believers. It is an expression of the faith of the one being baptized. **It is not something that an unbeliever can do. It is not something than an babies can do.** That is why we do not baptize babies. Babies are not capable of repentance or faith.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39: For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call. 40: And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. 41: **Then they that gladly received his word were baptized**: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42: And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Acts 8:4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. 5: Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. 6: And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

Acts 8:12 But **when they believed** Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, **they were baptized**, both men and women.

Acts 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. 36: And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; **what doth hinder (prevents) me to be baptized?** 37: And Philip said, **If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.** And he answered and said, **I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.** 38: And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

Baptism signifies an identification with Christ and His completed work on the cross and can pertain only to those who have professed faith in Christ for salvation.

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9: For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10: And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 11: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him **through the faith of the operation of God**, who hath raised him from the dead. 13: And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14: Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15: And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

III - Closing Thoughts

I hope you see why we born again Christians are not to take baptism lightly, because it has tremendous applications and implications. It is a command, a proclamation, a celebration, an identification with Christ and His people. It is the first step of obedience.

Baptism is a picture. It is a symbol. It signifies the Gospel and its transforming power over our lives. It states the fact of an event that has already transpired beforehand. It is an outward symbol of an inward reality - a genuine salvation.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2: God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3: Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4: Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5: For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

I like what Paul is doing here. He writes to those who have been baptized and reminded them its meaning and implications, just in case they don't know or have forgotten it.

When I got saved I was only 20 years old. After I got saved, **I was baptized and did not know very much about its meaning and implications.** But as I grow in my Christian life, I learn more and more of what it means. And as I was preparing this message, I was reminded of God's intense love and mighty power of God to save.

This message is a reminder to those who are saved and have been baptized the Bible way. As we think about baptism may it cause us to have a deeper love and appreciation for God, for all He has done for us in giving us that privilege to be part of His family through repentance and faith.

Are you a believer?

If you have not yet come to faith in Christ, if you not yet believed Him with your heart, if you have not put your faith and trust in Him, come to Him! Christ died for sinners like you and me. He rose again to forgive and to give eternal salvation to those who repent and believe. **Look to Jesus Christ and believe.**

Have you been baptized by immersion since you believed?

If you have believed and trusted Jesus Christ for your salvation, He calls you to express that faith in baptism.

Baptism is like a wedding ring. It is not the wedding ring that unites us to our spouse. What unites us to our spouse is our love and our vow. And so it is with baptism, it is not baptism that unites us to Christ. Baptism, like a wedding ring, is a symbol. **What unites us to Christ is the faith of the operation of God.**

Colossians 2:11 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him **through the faith of the operation of God**, who hath raised him from the dead.

How about it? Come and believe. After you have believed, come and be baptized. Come and publicly testify that you have died to sin and alive to God and Christ? Come and identify with Christ and His Church!

Matthew 10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33: But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

May the Lord give you the courage to come out and say, *"Let me be buried in baptism that I may show to all around that I believe that Jesus Christ died, was buried and rose again and all these He did for sinners like me. I am one with my Lord in His death and burial for my sin, and I am one with Him in His resurrection for my justification."*

AMEN!