

So I am super excited this morning about, uh, the sermon we have this morning about what God is doing. Uh, cause I believe God is really doing some amazing things in this church, uh, with the people who come here in our community. I really hope that you can look at that, uh, look at what's going on and see what God is doing in, uh, in and around us. But this morning, I'm really excited about what God is doing inside of my heart. And I want to pose a question which has absolutely nothing to do with my sermon, kind of, maybe a little bit, eventually. But how do you know when God is doing something amazing in your life? You don't have to answer that question. You can think about it. But how do you know when God is doing something amazing in your life? A lot of times people will say, well, when everything just goes right. I mean, you know, hit all the green lights in town to work. None of the slow people on the road yet. I, you know, that person at work that annoys the life out of me is sick today. Thank you, Jesus. I'm like, gee, must be something amazing happening today, right? Well, that's not, that's not how I think about it. Here's how I know that God is doing something amazing in me. There has been a war in my inner man for the last week or two. Just absolute turmoil in my heart. And here's the reason. My flesh is desiring to do things that in the past I've not had a problem with. Like, ah, it's not so bad. I have trivialized things. But all of a sudden, I sense the Holy Spirit calling me and repositioning something within me for a deeper, more intentional walk. So that's how I can tell that there's something amazing happening because all of a sudden there's this uncomfortableness within me. There's this sense of not just letting things go, but actually starting to deal with some stuff. And here's the beautiful thing about God is that everything that he does is always a process. And I know we read miracles and we think, oh, God does these things so instantaneous. I wish he would do that for me. And while, yes, there are things that he does that way, about 99.9% of the time, there's a process that he brings us through because he has a reason for it. And I began thinking of this in light of baptisms this week. And, you know, wouldn't it be nice that when we got saved that he would just thump us on the head and just make everything perfect, every thought right, every action correct. And I could just, you know, be kind and courteous to everyone and just be like Jesus today, right now, everything, the whole enchilada. Wouldn't that be nice? Has anyone ever experienced that? I'm glad nobody raised your hand. I was going to call you a liar. Right here in church. So God uses a process to bring us to these things. And I love it because I equate it to, I know we're going to, We're going to talk about it just a little bit, but I equate it to being born again because he creates within us this new heart just as a baby who is born and he begins to walk with us and teach us as we interact with life, as we wrestle within our own souls about this and about that, about which way we should go. And just like a child, we will not always make the right choice. We will not always do the wisest thing. Sometimes we're going to do the most stupid thing we could think of. But he doesn't throw us out in those moments. Amen to that. But it's those moments that he patiently leads us. And for most of us, he leads us through the consequences of that said stupid decision that we made. He doesn't deliver us from it, but he walks us through it and brings us to a place of understanding that that I must learn to desire within myself the changes that he is asking of me. What's so beautiful about God, we understand that he wants us to be different, but he doesn't put his thumb on us heavy and make us do it. He presents a situation that brings us to a point of wanting to desire the things that he has for us. And that is one of the most beautiful things about God. Because God will show us the way, But at the end of the day, you and I must be willing and must humble ourselves to follow. Because it's not always going to be the direction you want to go. It's not always going to be the thing you want to do. And there's this passage in the Psalms that often gets mistranslated that says, He will give you the desires of your heart. Anybody know that passage? I thought about that this week. Have you ever inventoried the desires of your heart? Have you ever just thought about it for a minute and kind of scribbled some of the things that your heart desires? Most of us driving for just an hour in town, if we could record every thought and desire we have, whether they are expressed or unexpressed, we would leave a trail of chaos and destruction because of the desires of our heart, and they wouldn't be good. But thankfully, in God's goodness and grace, He does not give every desire my heart has. God is not some genie in a bottle that we get to rub and say, God, I want this and I want it now and I

want it this way. That's not how God works. Rather, he molds and he forms the desire that he created us to have, and then he places them in our hearts and brings us to a place of saying, you know what, God, I want what you want. I want the desires that you have. And that's where that context of the scripture comes from, that God will give me desires that my heart should have, not give me the desires of my heart. Because rarely is my heart following and desiring what God wants. So, in talking about this war in my heart, what I'm seeming to learn more and more now is that as I follow God, learn about Him, serve Him, pray, read my Bible, That's the evidence that God is doing something in my spirit. It's that wrestling within me. Man. It's hard to express sometimes. Where what my flesh wants... meets this concept of what God wants, and it's like two tides hitting each other and there's this fight that goes on. And that is an amazing thing to come to understand within you as you sense it and as you see it, where that war is raging, and I experienced this week, that's why I'm talking about this, where that war is raging and you choose to do what God has asked you to do, Instead of regretting later and choosing then. Man, I should have done that then. That would have been so much better. I had the opportunity this week to experience the satisfaction of giving into the Spirit, if you will, and denying the flesh and saying, hey, I'm going to do what God is asking me in this moment, not what I want to do in the moment. And it worked out so much better. Like, no regrets at all. It was really good. So this morning... You might be asking, what in the world does this have to do with water baptism? But it does. And I'll tell you about it. So as we open up our Bibles this morning, we're going to start in Matthew 28. We're going to leave Matthew 28 and come back to Matthew 28 several times. But we're going to be in Matthew 28. We're going to start reading in verse 19. The words of Jesus to us, his followers. So we're going to be in Matthew 28. It says, Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen. Amen. Let's pray this morning. Father, we thank you for your word this morning. Father, I thank you for this beautiful day that you've given us. God, as we come together and we learn and we hear about your words, as we prepare our hearts to go and have a picnic and enjoy some water baptisms, I pray, Father, that you would be with us this morning. God, that you would anoint my words to speak what you would have me to say, that you would anoint our ears to hear the Holy Spirit leading and teaching us what he wants us from us in our hearts. We thank you for this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I want to plant the question in your mind real quick before I start for you to think on as we go through our sermon this morning and discuss the subject of water baptism. So the question is this, why do we as Christians get so excited about water baptism? That's the question I want you to think on this morning. Because for as long as I can remember, Every time the church does baptisms, it's super exciting for the church. I've always had that when my dad pastored and we did baptisms. And even this past week, this is how you can tell you really enjoy something. Oh, boy. This is how you can tell you really enjoy something. You're actually willing to watch the whole reel and not just scroll through it. And so this week, I just happened to run across some reels of Japanese believers. So if you don't know, we have a real connection with Japan. But I got to see some reels of Japanese believers being baptized, and I watched every one of those for as long as I could. And there's just something exciting about water baptisms. For us as Christians. And as I shared, we're going to be baptizing today and I'm really looking forward to it. How many of you remember the last time we did baptisms? It was a year ago. It was very rainy. It was very cold. It was very wet. Today will not be any of those things. And I'm looking forward to getting in the creek. And I have a feeling maybe by the time I'm done, there might be a few more be like, hey, let's sign me up. But we've been talking about water baptism, and over the past couple weeks, I've been answering a lot of questions about baptisms and the importance of it and why we do water baptism. And even this past Tuesday night, during our Tuesday night prayer, one of the gentlemen who was here began asking questions and talking about water baptism. and it was just a good time to talk through some of it and and sorry Daniel I'm going to call you out but Daniel said you know I think I want to be baptized and so from Tuesday night Daniel agreed to be baptized and so we're going to baptize Daniel today with several of the other guys and a few ladies and we're really exciting

really excited about that so I decided that it would probably be good to just share a little sound a little electoral here at first, but I will get past it and it'll get, I was gonna say it'll get exciting, but I don't know if it'll get exciting, but. Maybe one day I'll be one of those preachers that jumps and shouts and spits and stuff. I doubt it. But I do want to do just a couple things, talk about water baptism, by defining what I believe Scripture means by baptism. So in Matthew 28, we have the word baptize. It's the Greek word baptismo, which means to immerse, submerge, to make overwhelmed, or to become fully wet. So that is why as a church and personally as anyone that I've baptized, it's always in a pool of water, baptized completely underwater, coming up out of the water. And that's why as a church we practice that. We don't sprinkle. We don't dunk heads. We don't wash hands. We don't wash feet. We baptize in water. Now, what I love about this church is we don't have a tank. Well, we do, but we packed it away, and we use this stream here, the creek here in East Helena. But something I also want to talk about, which I did in my class this morning before we go much deeper into baptism, is I want to express what baptism is not. There's a lot of misinformation about baptism in the world today, and in Bible college, I wrote a paper as a freshman. It was several pages long, probably at that point the longest research paper I had ever written in my life, and it was probably three pages long. I know, I have skills. Considering I write like 10 or 11 page papers now every week. But I received for the first time ever in my life, I was not one of those kids in school that achieved much in the scholastic area. I could piddle and twiddle and wiggle my thumbs and make C's on the rare occasion of B every now and then if I really, really tried. But I never did homework. I never studied. I never did any of those things. And so I never got good grades on things like papers. I hate it writing papers. But I wrote a paper in college, and it was the first one I ever received an A-plus on with excellent remarks on it. And I was like, yes! I was super proud of it, and I still am super proud. I think that's the only paper I've ever gotten an A-plus on. And it was titled, No Salvation in a Bath. And the whole paper was my treatise on the fact that there's nothing that baptism offers in the way of salvation. See, because I firmly believe baptism plays no part in our salvation. You do not, you are not required to be baptized. As I told the class this morning, I said it's not, if you're not baptized, it doesn't make you a second-rate Christian with your mansion in the south side of heaven. And on that same token, it's not a rewards card where you get to get points because you have it swiped. It doesn't benefit you any spiritually in that it makes you something better or less because you have or you have not done it. See, salvation comes solely from the work of Jesus Christ. Jesus died on the cross, shedding his blood in my place, allows me to experience forgiveness from my sin through my confession of faith in his completed work on the cross. That's it. If you choose to do that, if you choose to put your faith in Jesus and trust him for your salvation, that's it. Amen. It's done. The work is done. There's nothing else that has to happen for salvation to take place. Ephesians chapter 2 tells us this in verse 8. It says, You notice it doesn't say you have been saved by grace and baptism. No, you have been saved through faith, and that's it, as the gift of God. So the water that we dip you in doesn't do anything. I believe if the water had some type of transitional power or properties, I believe we would have the command to be baptized in the Jordan, or we would have the command to be baptized in some place type of body of water that has certain qualifying attributes to it. But that's not what it says. The eunuch in Acts, as Philip was with him, as he is expressed, gives this comment in chapter 8, verse 36. It says, there's water here. What forbids me from being baptized? Nothing. Now, I don't know about you. I have a picture of that body of water. They're in a desert. It's probably not pretty. I doubt it's even clean. But homie's like, hey, could I do this? He's like, yeah, this works. So there's nothing that says it has to be this or it has to be that. It just says that you have to be submerged. That's all the instructions that we're giving here. Because only the blood of Jesus is important to our salvation and the faith that we place in that work. So it's not due to baptism. Ephesians explains that we are not saved because we're baptized. Rather, we're baptized because we're saved. There is an order to it. You can't have one in front of the other. It doesn't work. You can't have baptism in front of the other. I should say it that way. But here's the second thing that baptism does not do. It does not remove or wash away sins from your life. There's a popular song on the radio right now that I totally think is theologically incorrect. And I

wish I knew the name of it, but there's a song she's singing about baptism saying she left it in the water. And I think she's talking about her sins. And my response to that as a pastor, I was like, darling, if your sins weren't gone before you got in the water, that water didn't do anything for you. You don't leave anything there. The water doesn't do anything for your spirit. And I know that this is probably a popular belief. There's lots of people, lots of veins of theological thought that says that this is somehow beneficial to you. But I would beg to say, if being dipped in water could remove sins, wouldn't it be a lot better if we use soap and a rag and really, really clean the dirty parts? Wouldn't that do a whole lot better to remove stuff from us? But that's not the way it works. Most of us take showers anyway, so it really doesn't matter. See, baptism isn't anything that finalizes or seals our salvation. Because if that were the case, why then was Jesus baptized? Did he have sins that he had to leave in the water when he was baptized? No, he did not. But yet Jesus was baptized, and our salvation is based upon one thing— That is the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross and my faith in Him to forgive my sins. That is all that salvation is. So then the question may become, why should I be baptized then? There's two reasons in Scripture I want to point out today. One, found in Luke 3, verse 21, says, "...when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized." And while he prayed, the heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven and said, you are my beloved son, in you I am well pleased. The first and simplest answer to why is because Jesus was. We should follow and be like him in life. See, Jesus didn't enter the water because he needed forgiveness. He entered them explicitly found in Matthew For us, fulfilling all righteousness, standing with sinners, and to begin his public ministry, it's something that God approved of saying, this is my son in whom I am well pleased. So there's a part of baptism that if we do, we follow in the footsteps of Jesus because he did it. And that is one of the major tenets of the Christian faith. We follow and love and believe in Jesus and we strive or we should strive to do our best to mimic and do the things that Jesus did. Now, we'll never do it perfectly. We're never going to be the full embodiment of Jesus on this side of heaven. But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't put some effort into it. I've said several times as we've gone through Hebrews, we don't just accidentally do the right thing. There is choices that has to be made. There is effort that has to be put into our Christian walk. And it's not that you earn any salvation through this. It's not that you make a better name for yourself. But kind of what baptism is and kind of what our life should strive to be like is to be like Jesus. To be like Jesus, guess what? You have to actively make choices to not punch people. You have to actively make choices to not grumble and complain. That happens real fast, real easy. You have to actively make choices to say, you know what, I'm not going to follow what my flesh wants in this moment, but I'm going to choose to hear the Spirit talking to me, and I'm going to choose to do what He's asking of me. And what's so amazing, that's often the exact opposite of what you would like to do in your flesh. So one of our major tenets is to follow and be like Jesus. And Jesus was baptized. Matthew 28 gives us the second reason why we should be baptized. Jesus commanded it of us. Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. So not only are we to follow Jesus' example, Jesus says, Do you see what I did? Now go do likewise with those others. So we are told to go into the world and make disciples of people. Notice that we are to make disciples first. What does that mean? Salvation comes first. We're to go and to evangelize, make disciples, and then we baptize. See, we follow the command and the example of Jesus. That answers the bulk of why we should be baptized. Anything else I think would just be taking up time. I think those are the two most important reasons. Now, I'm a very practical thinking kind of guy. And I, even at this point in my sermon, as I reread and I got to this point in my head, as I'm building my point, my question even began, like, okay, well, that's all good. But who cares? If it's not important, then it's not important. I should just move on. If it's just because, if it doesn't have anything to do with my salvation, well, then it's not that important. If it's to follow Jesus, yeah, I can understand that. But I mean, I fail in so many other ways. It's okay to not be baptized. So my final point this morning, I want to share the importance of baptism. And it circles back to my opening comments about the war taking place in my flesh with the Spirit. See, Paul talks about baptism

in Romans 6. within the context of grace and sin. It was a very compelling read this week. As I sought out these scriptures, I knew I was going to use Romans chapter six, but as I began to read these passages, the context, because in the end of chapter five, it talks about where sin is, grace abounds more. Then he goes into chapter six saying, what shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not. How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of you as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? I found this very fascinating as I began to read because I've never made this connection, at least in this context of the moment. how Paul talking about this willingness to sin because grace is there, saying, no, we don't just sin because God promises grace to cover our sins. There's this compelling act to say, no, we don't let sin abound. Do you know how you make sin not abound? You choose not to do it. That's how you don't abound in sin. It's this context of saying, you know what? I'm gonna do something different than what I feel naturally inclined to do. Because when we are left to what we naturally wanna do, sin loves that. It's like an amusement park. Everything is fair game. But yet when we say, you know what? I'm not going to let sin abound in my life. Paul says, the whole point and reason that we can say, I'm not gonna let that is because I have been baptized into the death of Jesus Christ. Put that scripture back up there, please. I love what it says there, because it says, do you not know that as many of you as were baptized? Guess what? There's another point to saying, how many of you were baptized? You can raise your hand if you want, I'll let you. How many of you were baptized? You shouldn't let sin abound because you were baptized into his death. You should be making choices to live your life to follow the example of Jesus Christ because you walked through this... I'm going to call it a tradition. I'm going to call it this following of Jesus in being baptized. It's important. There's weight to it. There's value to it. And here's the value that it has. Because... Actually, I'm not going to give you the value yet. I got one more thing to say. Here's the reality of it. Baptism isn't spiritual. Baptism is physical. So what that means is baptism is a, this is the word I was looking for and I just missed it. Baptism is a symbol. A symbol, anybody know what a symbol is? It's a physical representation of a belief that we hold. So there's something, if we have a symbol in our life that we love, So let's take the American flag. What a beautiful, we just celebrated our nation's birthday. That American flag is a symbol. How many of you love the American flag? How many of you love your nation? Amen. It's not perfect. It's not everything that it could be, but that's okay. We live in a great place. That American flag is just a symbol. It's a physical fabric meant to represent a belief system that we have. So if you love the American flag, there's a good chance you really love our nation, you love our Constitution, you love the freedoms that we have, you love the ability to live life as you do in America. You can define it however you want, the belief system you put, but the flag is just a symbol of the belief you hold in your heart. Baptism is a symbol And it's important because in this day and age that you and I live in, anybody can claim to be anything, and you and I have no way to know if it's true or not. We can create this persona online. There's a joke now where it says when someone... I've never done this, so if you have, there's no condemnation. But I see this thing all the time where they're like these online dating sites where they take the online picture that someone has, and if they meet them in person, they compare to see how true it is. It's a really bad example. I should have thought it through more. But it's that concept... of we can say anything, we can create anything, we can filter anything we want, but it's not always true. And it really becomes hard to know what or who someone is based upon words alone. I can say anything I want to say. It's the First Amendment. There's freedom of speech. I can create any type of reality I want to believe. But that doesn't make it true. It might be true to me, but that don't mean it's true. And we see in this world today so many people who are deceived by this personal truth that they attempt to create that has nothing to do with reality. So what I'm working towards is that anyone can say I'm this, anyone can say I'm a Christian, anyone can say I'm saved. How do you and I know? There's something that they're proclaiming that can't be verified by you and I. Baptism becomes that symbol. It's that physical representation of a belief that we truly hold in our heart. Because if I'm going to submit to being baptized, it's saying that I believe the symbol. I believe this. What does baptism stand for? Romans chapter 6 says it represents the burial and resurrection of

Jesus Christ. Therefore, if I'm choosing to walk in baptism, if I'm choosing to hold that symbol up, that's saying I believe in Jesus's death and his resurrection and his power over sin that he gives me in my life. See, baptism gives evidence to the belief in our hearts by saying, I want to show you my faith by being obedient to the commands and the example of my Savior, Jesus Christ. See, once we were controlled by our sinful desires, but now we can walk in a new life controlled by the Holy Spirit. That's the war that takes place in our heart. The desire to fall back into old habits is always being confronted by the leading of the Holy Spirit to make us to make better and different choices that honor Jesus in our life. I opened up one of my college textbooks. I spent a lot of time at college this week talking about this or thinking about this. I have a college textbook called Introducing Christian Doctrine. And this is what it said about baptism. I probably should have put it on the screen. Sorry, I didn't. But it says, baptism is a powerful proclamation of the truth of what Christ has done. It is a word in water. Remember that concept. Testifying to the believer's participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is a symbol. I want you to know I developed symbol before I read this. I didn't pull it from there. It is a symbol rather than merely a sign. For it is a graphic picture of the truth it conveys. So this quote makes this comment, it is a word in water. What a powerful statement that is. And this is what it means. It is us preaching the gospel sermon without saying a word. In participating in baptism, it is my ability to share what I believe about the gospel. It's a preaching of a sermon saying, this is what I believe has happened, that Jesus died and he rose again, and now I belong to him. And you're participating and conveying and giving a graphic picture of that truth that you now believe in your heart. It is in this act that we declare that Jesus has made me a new creation and that I intend to follow him. In our class this morning, there was a question that was asked, and it was a great question, because I had shared how with baptism, the water doesn't do anything for you. And this quote kind of picks up on that. Baptism is just showing, it's like it's playing the part of something that's already happened. It says, So baptism is just saying, hey, this has already happened. That's why I made the comment about that song. If you're getting into the water hoping it's going to wash your sins away, you've missed the point. By the time you enter the water, by the time you make this choice to be baptized, the work of salvation is done. Sins are washed away. The Holy Spirit has come inside. You are a new creation. So this act of baptism is just saying, hey, let me show you what's happened to me. I have been buried with Jesus. Romans 6, verse 4 says, I am buried with him, in his likeness buried, meaning that the old man is dead. There's an end to something. The William Parsons that I was before I got saved no longer exist. I'm laying that man down. He's dead. He sought only to live his own selfish life. He sought only to seek what Will Parsons wanted at the expense of everyone else. So with salvation, I'm saying, you know what? That man is dead. I'm no longer. Living life for William Parsons. I'm saved now. I'm a new creation now. I am resurrected with Jesus Christ, a new man, a new woman. I don't have to be what I was. That is a point of excitement that should just rouse us up. I don't have to be that man. There's something better for me. Yes, it's hard. Yes, it's difficult. Yes, I'm not always going to be that new man perfectly. I am going to fall back and I'm going to sin. That doesn't mean that I should revel in it. That doesn't mean that I should abound in it. That doesn't mean I should go wholeheartedly back as a dog goes back to its vomit. I should see it for what it is and be like, oh, That's the flesh again. Lord Jesus, help me to crucify my flesh to you. Help me to make the right decision in the moment. And sometimes it's made with regret, but that's okay. We learn. Christ doesn't throw us away. He says and encourages us to continue to seek him, to read your word, to pray, to learn to hear his voice, to learn to make better choices. It's a process. It's all a process that God seeks to work out in us. So in this action of baptism, we declare that Jesus has made me a new creation and that we intend to follow him. We can all say that we want to change. And I shared with the class this morning what's so beautiful about baptism. Don't raise your hands for this, please. But all of us, at some point in our lives, like, I'm going to start a diet tomorrow. But I'm not telling anybody. Because the first time I tell somebody, and I pick up that piece of Hershey's, they're going to be like, hey, aren't you on a diet? You said you were going to diet. What, did that just go away? There's this... There's this desire to be different, but we don't always like to make public acknowledgement of that difference because

there are people who are going to call us out. Hey, didn't you say X, Y, and Z, but why are you doing this? See, baptism is a putting your money where your mouth is. It's committing. It's signing the dotted line, if you will, saying that I'm a new creation in Jesus Christ, in belief, in my words, and in my actions. And not only that, I shared with the class this morning, as we are baptized in front of our friends and family, we are giving the ability for them to be accountable to us. So when they see us walking astray, they can be like, hey, Didn't you say you were a Christian? Well, yeah, that was yesterday. Not today, though. There's something that holds us to this and gives us the ability to be accountable to people. And as we do this, as we submit to God in our belief and in our words and in our actions... the realization begins to happen in our heart that we can begin to see the desires that God has for us and we can begin to choose those desires instead of just me. See, because when we understand that God is putting them in there for us, for us to become a better person, we're more willing to follow through. Matthew 28, verse 19. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Baptism isn't a final step. It's a beginning. Notice what it says. It says, verse 20, baptize them, teaching them to observe all the things that I've commanded you. Baptism is a launching point. It's a starting point where we begin to submit and commit to following out the teachings and the commandments of Jesus Christ. Because we have put not only our belief in Jesus, but we have made a public declaration that I follow Jesus, and that should put weight upon our heart and our soul and upon our mind to commit to following the teachings of Jesus. That's the step that baptism is. It's a compelling to go deeper into the Word of God. So in closing this morning, I understand that most of us know what baptism is. I understand that most of us have been baptized, and for that I'm really grateful. But I really wanted to share what was on my heart about the importance of baptism. And it's not as easy as it sounds, because at the end of the day, It plays no part in your salvation. It gives you no bonus points in heaven. It doesn't do anything for you spiritually, to a degree. But rather, it's a symbol. It's a way to express that, hey, this is what's happened in my life, and I want to publicly declare it. what i know is that as i grow in my faith god is continuing to challenge the things in my life that i've grown comfortable with and i can look back to baptism and say you know i made my public confession of faith then i should probably commit to growing in christ And I don't know, maybe you are experiencing that same war within your spirit. I hope you are. I hope that you are being challenged by the Holy Spirit to grow past the things that we are comfortable with. It's human nature to get comfortable with our sin. It's who we are naturally. It's what we easily fall back into. And if there's no war in your spirit about the sin that's happening in your life, that's probably a wake up call for you. Hopefully that's an alarm bell for you to be like, you know what? Maybe I'm not truly seeking to follow Jesus. Maybe I'm not giving it all in this Christian walk of mine. Maybe I'm just kind of coasting along. Is your old life and habits pulling you to come back? And you're giving into it. Maybe not fully, but little by little. Do you feel the tug of the Holy Spirit to move closer to Jesus? If you do, that's a great place to be. That warring in our spirit is good. The hard part comes is telling the flesh no. Telling yourself no. No. The older I get, the harder I find that, because I can justify anything. Like, ah, man, yeah, I know this is bad, but I'm so much more wiser and mature now than I used to be. I can handle this. But you can't. See, baptism doesn't have anything to do with our salvation. But rather, it's a step in obedience, declaring that Jesus is the Lord of my life. It's the old man being buried in water, proclaiming it no longer has power over me, that I'm a new creation coming up out of the water, shouting, I am a child of God now. See, this morning, if you're saved and you've never been baptized, today's the day. Literally, today's the day. We're going to baptize here in just a little bit. I would encourage you to follow the example of Jesus, to follow the commands of Jesus, to declare publicly what God has already done in your heart privately. Because I said this so many times when we were preaching through Hebrews, our faith in Jesus is a very personal choice. No one can make it for me but me. But it is never a private choice. We can't make that choice and then hide away in a cave and wait for Jesus to come. Jesus says that we are to publicly declare what he has done for us. That's what baptism is. It's that first shout of, hey, this is what God has done for me. It's that first action when you're baptized. So if you remember, I asked you a question, why do Christians get so

excited about baptism? This is why. It's another life that has publicly declaring, I am all in for Jesus. I'm all in. And you have the ability to call me back, to call to remembrance this act in my life. I'm, as the song said this morning, I'm surrendering it all. All for Jesus. I'm all in.