

GM // Online

Today I want to speak about baptism.

My hope is that we will see why it is so central to Christian faith and practice; & that is not just a symbolic ritual, but there is real power in it.

So where does the practice of baptism come from?

It starts with Jesus...

Jesus himself was baptized and then sent out his disciples to baptize...

Matthew 28:19

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

Jesus sent his apostles into the nations to make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And they obeyed him.

In Acts 2 the first converts were immediately baptized.

Which was no small feat b/c your talking about 3,000 people.

I'd hate to have been last in that line.

But the apostles took Jesus' command to baptize disciples seriously.

... and ever since the church has kept this imperative.

Baptism Is A Critical Part of Being A Disciple Of Jesus

But many of us don't take it seriously.

I was like that.

I grew up in church / saved at 8.

But baptism was never a big deal to me.

Until I was 16 and someone started discipling me.

They showed me it was a big deal.

Until then I was indifferent.

I had a lot of other stuff on my mind during my teenage years.

Baptism was not high on that list.

**But our job as the church is to elevate the things of God.
IF Baptism is taught and commanded by Jesus ... WE
DO THE SAME!**

**I'm saying to you today ... if you are a disciple of Jesus
you need to be baptized.**

But I don't want you to do it B/C the pastor said so.

I want you to get baptized with faith and expectation that
baptism isn't a silly ritual.

It is a sacred moment ... an important moment.

Until you are convinced of this ... baptism won't be worth
the agony and effort.

Think about all you have to do to be baptized ...

- You got to give a public confession of faith. (not fun)
- You have to get dunked in front of everyone. (weird)
- Wet clothes, wet hair, make-up whatever ...
(potentially embarrassing)

There are a million reasons to talk ourselves out of it.

And if baptism is purely symbolic we will find all kinds of
excuses to procrastinate.

***“Jesus has already done everything I need to get into
heaven ... So I'll skip the dog and pony show.”***

Just like that, we turn baptism from a command into an optional extra.

Afterall, the thief on the cross was saved and never baptized.

But when you overplay the symbolism of baptism, you strip it of any spiritual power.

What do I mean?

Baptism is an act of faith.

And every action rooted in faith strengthens faith.

Baptism Builds Your Faith And The Church's Faith

I don't know about you ...

I get so deeply moved to the point of tears at every baptism I witness.

It's NOT B/C I'm emotionally unstable ... :)

It's more than that.

That moment fills me with marvel at the mystery of salvation.

Which is the natural response when we witness people's confession of faith in Jesus.

Colossians 1:3

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints.**

Paul used this kind of language a lot.

His faith was strengthened through the confession of other believers.

This is why we give a confession of faith at baptism.

Confession is the action of saying true things.

We are confessing what is true.

But the beauty of baptism is that our confession is just not in our personal proclamation.

It is in the demonstration.

This is why the act of baptism is so powerful.

Baptism Itself Confesses the Mystery of Salvation

You've heard the phrase, "A picture is worth 1,000 words."

Well ... that's what baptism does.

It speaks without saying a word.

Here is what it is saying...

Romans 6:3-4

3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

At my baptism, I not only told people what Jesus did for me
...

I showed them what he did for me.

My words weren't very eloquent or clear or confident ...

No one said, "He nailed that." :P

But that's okay ... B/C I nailed the baptism part :)

Why else would they have clapped? :)

When I went down into the water and came back up it completed my confession.

It said a thousand words I couldn't find on my own.

And this Romans passage adds depth, color, light, beauty, and revelation to the baptism picture.

That's why perfectly sane people get into a pool of water with their clothes on in front of a bunch of people!

B/C Christianity is a confessing faith.

When Jesus saves you, it begins with the confession of your mouth, and continues as a confessing life.

Baptism reinforces this.

It is YOUR confession ... it is MY confession ... it is OUR confession!

It visually proclaims the mystery of salvation.

So what mysteries does baptism reveal?

“... all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death.”

Salvation Joins You With Jesus' Death

Salvation isn't becoming a “better version of myself.”

I see bumper stickers that say ... “Got problems, try Jesus.” → Misleading ... should say ...

“You’re the problem ... run to Jesus.”

When Jesus calls you, it is a call to come and die with him.

Now, on the surface ... that is the worst sales pitch ever.

Not the best way to “win friends and influence people.”

But this death he calls us to is spiritual ...

It’s a death we can’t see with our eyes.

Which means there is some mystery here to unpack.

So, let’s explore why we have to die?

Romans 6:6-7

6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin.

Big important stuff here... When we die ...

We Die To Sin's Power Over Us

See, you and I are born with a sinful nature.

Despite what your momma told you, you aren't born a perfect little angel.

We all have a bias toward sin.

Sin is simply not being who God created us to be.

We were created to love, obey and worship God alone.

A sinless relationship with God is ... [Gesture] Him as Lord and US his Servants.

Sin's power distorts this by refocusing our love, obedience and worship on ourselves.

We love ourselves more than God.

We obey ourselves ... "I'm responsible to no one but "me."

We worship idols of all kinds: Sex, money, power, leisure, entertainment.

**In America this is celebrated as liberty and freedom.
[DNA]**

The rights & freedoms of the individual is exalted above all.

I love our nation.

I think the freedom of opportunities we have is a great thing.

But let's not drink the cultural kool-aid → No one is truly free.

Every man is in bondage to a sinful will.

The only chance to break that is in joining Jesus in His death.

**In death, the body of sin we were born with is buried.
Sin's power over you is broken.**

I've had Christians tell me about some serious addictions in their lives that ceased when they got baptized.

I can't tell you why that is ... and I'm not promising you it will happen for you.

Just don't put God in a box!

He can use a moment like baptism to bring deliverance if he wants.

Yet, even for my friends who **NEVER** struggled with something like alcohol or drugs again after baptism, they still struggled with other sins.

So what then?

Do we **HAVE** to keep getting saved and baptized?

Absolutely not!

B/C when we join Jesus in His death we not only die to Sin's power once and for all ...

We Die To The Law's Authority Over Us

Romans 7:1

7 Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives?

When you are born into this world you are born into a Covenant ordained by God.

This Covenant is called the Covenant of Works.

To be righteous you have to be perfect ... no mess ups.

And what does it mean to be righteous?

This is the big question men are always seeking to figure out...

B/C we've taken God out of the equation, and so righteousness is whatever YOU want it to be.

Everyone gets to decide what is good and what is evil for themselves.

Which is why what 1 generation calls good; the next calls evil.

There is no unchangeable standard.

But God's Law is perfect & never changes.

And God's Law is good ...

It's like an umpire calling balls and strikes. →

"That's good ... that's bad."

And unlike man's shifting standard of righteousness, God's Law never changes.

[SLOW] But it also never changes YOU.

All the Law can do is command and condemns.

It commands you to live to its perfect standard & condemns you when you don't.

The Law cannot save you; it will stand against you as an accuser.

Jesus said ...

John 5:45

Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses [referring to the Law], on whom you have set your hope.

And this is the beauty of salvation ...

We didn't just die to be set free from sin's power ...

We die to be released from the Law as our accuser.

God gives us an example of how this works.

Romans 7:2-3

2 For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. 3 Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

In the covenant of marriage its “ ‘til death do us part.”

And from birth, the Bible tells us that we are married into this Covenant of Works and Law.

But B/C we have died WITH Jesus we are set free!

In baptism when we come up out of that water ... we are demonstrating/proclaiming all that we have left behind in the grave.

It is a confession that sin has no power over me.

It is a confession that I am no longer under the condemnation of the law and works righteousness.

But coming out of the water is also signifying being raised into new life.

Romans 6:4

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Salvation Joins You With Jesus' Resurrection

This is what it means to be born again.
You aren't just remodeled ... you're a new creation.
You are under a new Covenant of Grace instead of Law.
It's a totally new way of living.

Romans 7:6

But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

We are not only baptised into Christ ...
We are baptised into the Holy Spirit ...

Don't freak out ...

I know Holy Spirit baptism has its baggage B/C of people's mishandling.

But we don't throw out a core part of salvation in order to clean up people's messes.

This resurrection life with Jesus is lived IN the Spirit & BY the Spirit.

We come out of death leaving behind the power of sin and the condemning law...

And we come into Life in the Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13

13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, **were sealed** with the promised Holy Spirit,

Now that word **sealed** carries some weight.

In the ancient world, kings sent out edicts & laws to be read and proclaimed throughout their kingdom.

[SHOW PIC]

This would be written on parchment or stone and marked with his unique seal.

Whatever he declared on that sealed letter or tablet was binding and permanent and unbreakable.

[TAKE DOWN PIC]

AND It had the full weight of authority and power of the King and His Kingdom behind it.

This new life is not only a new way of living ... its a totally new identity ...

The King has issued a new proclamation over you, and it is written on your heart, according to 2 Cor 3:3.

As Christians we confess this and believe it in faith ...

And Baptism is this freedom proclamation.

It is our Kings proclamation ... tattooed on our hearts ... sealed by the H.S.

Here is a sample of what it says ...

Romans 8:1-4, 12-17

8 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according

to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

BAND COME UP

Here is the reality.

The proclamation is power ... BUT ONLY IF ...

- ... you know it and believe it
- ... you don't forget it.

Do you believe it?

Maybe today is the the first time you believed it!

Confess Jesus as Lord and Savior ... get baptized!

Maybe you do believe, but you've neglected it?

Sometimes we grow cold to the familiar.

The Gospel can become like that.

We get busy and put it to the side ... we don't look into the marvelous mystery of salvation.

Things like getting baptized ... reading the Bible, prayer ... become optional extras.

Hebrews 2:1

2 Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

We have to be intentional about holding fast to our confession.

We must pay close attention to the Gospel written on our hearts, sealed in the Holy Spirit.

If you are a Christian and haven't been baptized ...

Sunday Sept 13 we are doing baptisms right here ...

Don't put it off ...

And if you are ready ... come talk to myself or Alan right after service.

Or, if you're hearing this online, email
info@oneharborchurch.com

LET'S PRAY