
RETHINKING THE CHURCH: BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES

BAPTISM: RAISED TO NEW LIFE

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on July 30, 2017

INTRODUCTION

Every community, association, and group has at least one designating sign of inclusion. If you are included, then you bear the mark or marks of the group. If you are excluded (even if only for a time), then you lack the designating mark or marks. Christianity has a number of designating signs, but the singular initiating sign of Christian discipleship is “believer’s baptism.” Believers in Christ seek to obey and learn from their Savior and Master, knowing that every benefit comes from being united to Christ. In this message, we shall consider some basic questions about baptism, and we shall also note the life associated with those who are baptized followers of Christ.

ROMANS 6:3-13 (ESV)

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.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 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. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.

11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

THE POINT I'M AIMING AT TODAY:

Baptism is a public symbol, marking out all Christians as Christ-believers and Christ-followers – positionally righteous and practically becoming the same.

MESSAGE OUTLINE:

- (1) WHAT IS BAPTISM?**
- (2) WHO IS TO BE BAPTIZED?**
- (3) HOW IS ONE TO BE BAPTIZED?**
- (4) HOW IS ONE TO LIVE AFTER BAPTISM?**
- (5) APPLICATION: WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS?**

MESSAGE

(1) WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Our Confession: “We believe Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is **(1) an act of obedience (2) symbolizing the believer’s faith** in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, **(3) the believers death** to sin, **the burial** of the old life, and **the resurrection** to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. **It is (4) a testimony** to his or her faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being **(5) a church ordinance**, it is **prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lords Supper.**”¹

- **An Act of Obedience**

- Obedience does not save a person, but it does show truly saving faith
 - “2:14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ...18 someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ...24 a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ...26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead” (James 2:14–26).

¹ See the full FBC Diana Confession of Faith at: <http://www.fbcdiana.org/we-believe-at-fbc/>

- Spurgeon: “Baptism is often the test of obedience. He who believes in Christ takes Him to be his Master as well as his Savior. And Christ, therefore, says to him, “Go and do so-and-so.” If the man refuses to do it, he thereby proves that he does not intend to be the disciple of the Master. “Oh!” says one, “you know that baptism is a nonessential.” ...[I say], What do you mean by, “non-essential”? [The one will say], “I mean that I can be saved without being baptized.” [To that I say], Will you dare to say that wicked sentence over again? “I mean that I can be saved without being baptized.” You evil creature! So you will do nothing that Christ commands if you can be saved without doing it? You are hardly worth saving at all! A man who always needs to be paid for what he does—whose one idea of religion is that he will do what is essential to his own salvation—only cares to save his own skin and insinuates Christ may go where He likes! Clearly, you are no servant of His! You need to be saved from such a [disgraceful], miserable state of mind—and may the Lord save you!”²
- ***Christ clearly commands that His disciples should be baptized (Matt. 28:18-20), so it is an act of obedience.***

- **A Symbol of the Believer’s faith in Christ**

- Faith in, belief in, trust in Christ is a concept with empty meaning in a nominally Christian culture like ours.
 - Faith in Christ is a brief label that covers the entirety of discipleship
 - Jesus said, “***All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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 that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age***” (Matt. 28:18–20).
 - ***Baptism, then, is the public symbol that the believer is Christ’s disciple*** (i.e. has faith in Christ).

² See Spurgeon’s full sermon here: <http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols37-39/chs2339.pdf>

- **A Symbol of the Believer’s *spiritual* death, burial and Resurrection**
 - Paul speaks of being “*baptized into [Christ’s] death*” (v3), “*buried... with Christ*” (v4), and “*walking in new life*” as Christ was resurrected (v4).
 - These all point to the *spiritual experience* of the believer
 - ***Baptism, then, is the symbol of this spiritual reality.***

- **A Testimony of Hope for a *physical* death, burial and Resurrection**
 - “*if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his*” (v5)
 - We believe or trust that Christ has died in our place and that He has conquered death for us as well.
 - ***Baptism, then, is the public testimony that we believe we shall be physically raised with Him in the end.***

- **A Church Ordinance and Prerequisite of Entrance into Membership**
 - Historically, the ***two marks*** or features of a ***true local church*** have been (1) the right preaching of God’s word and (2) the right practice of the ordinances – Baptism and Communion or Lord’s Supper
 - Baptism is ordained by Christ
 - The Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).
 - This is exactly what Peter commands as the right response to the Gospel at Pentecost.
 - “*Repent and be baptized...*” (Acts 2:38).
 - Baptism marks off Christ-followers from the rest of the world
 - To be “*baptized into Christ*” is to have “*put on Christ*” (Gal. 3:27).
 - ***Baptism, then, is the tangible “marking off” or “setting apart” of the community of Christ-followers and the Christ-ordained manner of evidencing basic obedience to Jesus as Master.***

(2) WHO IS TO BE BAPTIZED?

“We believe Christian baptism is the immersion *of a believer...*” (CoF).

Those united to Christ in (1) death and in (2) new life

1. Those who have been united to Christ *in death*

- Those who “*have been united with him [Christ] in death*” (v5) and who’s “*old self was crucified with [Christ]*” (v6).
 - Those who are united with Christ in His death are only those who believe or trust in Him as Savior and Lord
 - When He died, we died... (Gal. 2:20).

2. Those who have been united to Christ *in new life*

- Those who “*walk in newness of life*” (v4) and “*present [themselves] to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and [present their bodies] to God as instruments for righteousness*” (v13).
 - **NO:** Belief + Obedience = Discipleship
 - **YES:** Belief demonstrated by Obedience = Discipleship
 - ***Baptism, then, is to be experienced only by those who profess faith/belief in Christ and give some evidence of “new life” or “spiritual life.”***
- Who should NOT be baptized?
 - ***Unbelievers*** – the symbol points to the reality; without the reality, the symbol is a lie and a mockery of the ordinance
 - ***Merely religious people*** – religious practice is a stench in God’s nostrils if it is done without a humble heart of faith and submission to Christ
 - ***Children*** – there is rigid no age qualification, but the hope of salvation (however strong) does not make it a reality
 - We are wise to act on age-appropriate evidence of conversion (“*fruit of the Spirit*” [Gal. 5:22-23]), rather than wishful thinking.

- **Good people (friends or family)** – the body of Christ is not a club; it is an eternal and spiritually empowered community of Christ-followers
 - We DO NOT say, “*You can join us.*” Or “*You cannot join us.*”
 - We DO say, “*We affirm evidence of spiritual life in you and welcome your pledge to follow Christ beside us.*” Or “*You do not show evidence of spiritual life.*” Or “*You are not pledging to follow Christ beside us.*”

(3) HOW IS ONE TO BE BAPTIZED?

“We were buried therefore with him *by baptism into death*” (v4).

Drawing the “How” from **(1) the Word**, **(2) the Example**, and **(3) the Metaphor**

1. The Word

- *baptizo* – plunging into something (usually water for washing)
 - Plunging into water
 - The word is sometimes translated “wash,” referring to a ceremonial washing (dipping into water) of cups and dishes (Mk. 7:4) or hands (Lk. 11:38).
 - Plunging into suffering
 - Jesus spoke of His impending suffering as a “baptism” into which His disciples would also be “baptized” (Mk. 10:38).

2. The Example

- **John’s Baptism**
 - John baptized in the Jordan River, and when Jesus was baptized by John, He “*came up out of the water*” (Mark 1:9-10).
 - Though John’s baptism was not the same as Christian baptism in meaning, *it was the same method or mode.*

- John's baptism was "*a baptism of repentance*" (Mk. 1:9), much like the priestly (Lev. 8:6) and purifying (Lev. 11:25) washings of the Old Testament.
- ***Philip and the Ethiopian official***
 - They both went "*down into the water*," and Philip baptized the new convert (Acts 8:36-38).
- ***Paul and the Ephesian believers***
 - Paul asked them what kind of baptism they had experienced "John's baptism" or "Jesus' baptism" (Acts 19:3-5).
 - This is a question of meaning, not mode... In fact, the implication is quite strong that the mode is identical.
- ***The Didache***
 - It means "teaching" (a compilation of early Christian instruction/content – 2nd Century)
 - The Didache shows a strong preference for baptism by immersion in the early church.³

3. The Metaphor

- Burial of a corpse – Immersed into the ground
 - "*We were buried therefore with him **by baptism into death***" (v4).
- Immersed into the body of Christ – the church
 - "*in one Spirit we were all **baptized into one body**...*" (1 Cor. 12:13).
- Immersed into Christ Himself – "in Christ"
 - "*as many of you as were **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ*" (Gal. 3:27).

³ Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1996.

(4) HOW IS ONE TO LIVE AFTER BAPTISM?

Simply, those who are baptized are to “**walk in newness of life**” (v4).

This is no mere behavior modification... it is outward (or life) transformation, based on inward (or spiritual) conversion

- **Because this is true...**

- “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**.*

*8 Now if **we have died with Christ**, we believe that **we will also live with him**. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.*

*10 For **the death he died he died to sin, once for all**, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must **consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus**” (v6-11).*

- **Live like this...**

- “12 **Let not sin** therefore **reign in your mortal body**, to make you obey its passions.

*13 **Do not present your members to sin** as instruments for unrighteousness,*

*but **present yourselves to God** as those who have been brought from death to life,*

*and **your members to God as instruments for righteousness**” (v12-13).*

(5) APPLICATION: WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS?

- **Will you admit to being morally and spiritually dirty?**
 - Non-Christian, will you admit to your failure to keep yourself clean?
 - Christian, will you admit to your failure as well?
 - Christian and non-Christian, will you both look to Christ alone to cover you with His perfect cleanness?

- **Will you stop thinking that baptism will purify you and/or others?**
 - Stop thinking that you are “all good” just because you were baptized.
 - Stop thinking that your kids need to be baptized to just because they said they “love Jesus.”
 - Stop thinking that your friends are “good Christians” just because they were baptized 20 years ago.

- **Will you trust and obey the Savior?**
 - Will you trust Christ and rest in His perfect righteousness today?
 - Will you take the first step of life-long obedience by being baptized?
 - Will you expect the evidence of “new life” in your own experience after baptism?
 - Will you expect one another (church family/members) to exhibit “new life” after baptism?

Major Point: Baptism is a public symbol, marking out all Christians as Christ-believers and Christ-followers – positionally righteous and practically becoming the same.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Baptism Essential to Obedience by Charles Spurgeon

<http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols37-39/chs2339.pdf>

Brothers, Magnify the Meaning of Baptism by John Piper

<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/brothers-magnify-the-meaning-of-baptism>

Believer's Baptism in the Bible by Rick DeMichele

<http://www.biblebelievers.com/DeMichele1.html>

What is Baptism, and Does it Save? by John Piper

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/what-is-baptism-and-does-it-save>

Baptists on Believer's Baptism by Several Baptist Confessions

http://www.baptiststart.com/print/baptism_quotes.html