

Baptism Service

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Date: 21 April 2019

[0 : 00] If you will, please open your Bibles to Romans chapter 6. This is a passage I've gone to before when we've had a baptism, but I find this to be such an encouraging passage to lay out for us, the beauty of what baptism is and what it means for us.

So we're going to read together Romans chapter 6, verses 1 through 11. 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.

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. 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.

For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again.

Death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died, he died to sin once for all. For the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

[1 : 57] Let's pray together. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word and we thank you for baptism. We thank you for Christ, his death and resurrection and what it means for us in terms of baptism.

And Lord, we thank you for Isabel, for her faith and what you've done in her heart. And we thank you that she's coming now to be baptized and to join our church. Lord, we pray that you'd bless your word as it's opened.

May your spirit speak through your messenger. For those who don't know you, we pray that you would draw them into yourself. And Lord, for those of us who have put our faith in you, who have been baptized, may we be reminded again of the meaning of baptism to us.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Now, as is evident, we're coming here to celebrate the joyous occasion of baptism. Isabel is coming to join our church and she's never been baptized.

And so we're going to baptize her tonight. And for all of you who have trusted in Christ just as I prayed, this is an opportunity for us to be reminded of the meaning of baptism, the purpose of it.

[3 : 07] So as we look at the text, both for Isabel, for those of you who maybe don't know the Lord to hear as well, and for those of us who have trusted in Christ to be reminded that there are at least three truths about baptism that are represented for us here in this passage.

Baptism represents for us, first of all, the gospel. Secondly, it represents our union with Christ, the way we've been united to Jesus Christ.

And thirdly, it represents newness of life for the believer. And so those are the three things I want to look at and show you how baptism indicates or teaches us about these three things.

So first, the gospel. We understand already that baptism is a visual representation of the gospel. Just as we think of taking the Lord's table, we see the bread representing visually for us the body of Christ and the cup representing visually the blood of Christ.

So likewise, baptism is a visual representation of the gospel. It's what we call a means of grace. Look with me at verses 3 through 5 of chapter 6. Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

[4 : 22] 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. 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.

So symbolically and visually, baptism represents for us the death of Christ, his burial as the person goes down into the water, and Jesus' resurrection.

And we're told likewise this is symbolism for us as well. Baptism represents for us our death of sin and our being raised to newness of life, which really moves into my third point.

But before we get there, I want you to see that baptism simply expresses the verbal content of the gospel in a nonverbal form, in a visual form. Christ died on the cross for our sins, and he was buried in the tomb.

And so when the person being baptized goes into the water, it's reminding us, it's intended to remind us of Jesus' death, that he went into the tomb, that he was buried, just as we, just as Isabel tonight will be buried in the water.

[5 : 35] And just as Jesus didn't stay in the grave, neither will Isabel stay in the water if everything goes right. So as you come, okay, I'm going to wait a minute for the translation to come in.

Okay, great. So just as Jesus came up out of the grave, so too Isabel will be raised out of the water. And as we see those things, what we're seeing is meant to remind us of the gospel.

We're supposed to see it happen and think, that's what Jesus went through. He died for us. He was resurrected for us. So in many ways, I think, what a great Sunday for us to have a baptism.

Maybe we don't immediately associate baptism with Jesus' resurrection. But that's exactly what the text is telling us is meant to be represented. When we see Isabel come up out of the water, we're to think of Jesus' resurrection.

And we're to rejoice in that resurrection for us. Verse 4 says, So not only does it point us backward to the reality of what happened with Jesus, but also it points us forward.

[7 : 02] We've died to sin, but what are we looking forward to in terms of resurrection? We're told both you're raised in a resurrection to new life, which we'll talk about in a moment.

But also, there's a future hope of resurrection. Baptism doesn't do anything for us in terms of making us a Christian. Baptism doesn't guarantee that we'll be resurrected.

But baptism does point us to the reality of those who know Jesus and have trusted in Him just as they've died with Him. If Jesus was resurrected, so too when we die, we won't stay in the grave.

We won't stay in the ground. We'll be resurrected just as Jesus was. And so we see there the presentation of the gospel. If you're here today and you don't know Jesus Christ, here's the gospel.

Jesus came to this earth and He died for our sins. He died on a cross. He was buried in a tomb. And after three days, He was resurrected. And we're going to see, in a sense, a visual representation of that in Isabel's baptism today.

[8 : 11] And the promise for us in the gospel is, if we put our trust in Jesus Christ, then death has been defeated. Death no longer has control over us.

Though we will physically die, we will be resurrected to a new life with Him forever. Remember, Romans 4.25 says, He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

So there again is the gospel. Jesus was delivered over to death for our sins. Why did Jesus die? For our sins.

He took upon Himself the punishment that we deserve for our sins. And He was raised to life that we might be justified before God. I've said before, but Jesus' being raised to life is God the Father's verification, acknowledgement that Jesus lived a righteous life.

That He did all He needed to for us to be justified. So first we see the gospel. Secondly, we see union with Christ.

[9 : 19] Baptism gets its meaning from Jesus' death and resurrection. But look at the language we see in these verses 1 through 11. We see language of with Him and into Him.

So in verse 3, we are baptized into Christ Jesus and we're baptized into His death. Now we may watch and see, well, you're baptized into water.

But there's a sense in which baptism represents a reality that has already happened for the Christian. We've been united to Christ. And so just as Christ died, our baptism, we're being baptized into Christ Jesus and into His death.

Verse 4 says we're buried with Him. Verse 5 says we have become united with Him. Verse 6 says that we are crucified with Him. Verse 8 says that we've died with Christ.

And it says we now live with Christ. Live with Him. And verse 11 says that we are alive to God in Christ Jesus. So there's somewhere around in these 11 verses, somewhere around 10 references to our union with Christ in this passage.

[10 : 32] Now what is the importance of our union with Christ? Well, that could take a whole series of sermons. But let me just briefly say here that what's being indicated to us in relation to baptism is that your old self has died.

Who you were before you were a Christian is gone. It's over. You're no longer that person. You have a new identity now.

And your new identity is found in Jesus Christ. Maybe you guys can think of something like the witness protection program. Right? You have a witness. You move him to a new state.

You give him a new identity. He's a new person, right? But not really. Still the same person. He still acts the same way. You may go by a different name. But if I met you on the street, I might still recognize you for who you are.

And what we're told about this is that in Christ Jesus, we're made into new people. And so baptism for us represents that reality. We've been united in Christ in this new identity.

[11 : 33] And I'm getting newness in life. And I'm probably already getting ahead of myself. But as we go into the water, as we come up again, it's meant to symbolize that who you once were, Isabel, has died.

It's no longer the same person. And for all of us who are Christians, we need to be reminded of this. When we find ourselves back in the same sin, that's not who we were.

That's who we were. But it's not who we now are in Christ Jesus. We are a new creation. So Christ did not come to improve the old self, to make us a little bit better than we were before, polish off the rough edges a little bit.

But Jesus came and died to make us a new creation in Him, to bring us into newness of life. And so that union of Christ really leads to the newness of life.

And that's what I want us to look at thirdly. Look at verses 6 and 7. What does newness of life mean? Well, 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.

[12 : 42] For one who has died has been set free from sin. So Christian, part of what baptism symbolizes for us is that we've died to sin. The newness of life means you're no longer bound, you're no longer enslaved to sin the way you once were.

You've been freed from the dominion of that tyrant sin. It's not just a freedom from a tyrant, but the tyrant has died. It says, in verse 6, Our old self was crucified with Him.

The body of sin might be brought to nothing, so we would no longer be enslaved to sin, for one who has died has been set free from sin. So, in essence, we've died, but the power, the authority of death over us is gone.

It no longer, of sin over us, no longer rules us. It's died. And likewise, we have died to sin. We've seen that already in verses 6 and 7. But look at verse 1 and 2. What shall we say then?

Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means. How can we who died to sin still live in it? So, Paul finds the very idea that a Christian would keep living the way he used to live, it's ridiculous.

[13 : 57] How could that be? That's not who we are. Now, Isabel, your husband's here today and your children, and so, they're watching your life.

And part of being a Christian is not just, it's not hypocrisy, it's not faking it, but the reality is that when we come to Christ, we're changed. We don't live the way we once did.

The home life looks different. How we relate to our spouse and to our children, to our co-workers, everything changes in Christ. What once led us, what once ruled us was sin.

But now it's Christ that we follow and who we want to please. So again, it's not just separating from sin. It's not as though we hide sin off in the closet somewhere so company doesn't see it when they come over.

But it's a dying to sin. It's the same truth that we see in 1 Peter 2, 24. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.

[15 : 05] By his wounds, you have been healed. So by the death of Jesus, we're transformed. We've died to sin and the alternative is that we might live for righteousness.

So our whole purpose in living now has changed. We no longer live for sin, but we live for righteousness. Now let me just condition that and say, that doesn't mean you're going to live a perfect life.

we still will sin, but sin no longer has the power over us it once did. The cross is broken, sin's power over us.

We're no longer enslaved to have to obey its desires as our master. And so for Paul, the very thought of us continuing to live in sin is beyond comprehension.

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! Exclamation point! No way!

[16 : 04] It cannot be that way for the Christian. So you have a new Lord. Look at verse 11. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

So sometimes we imagine that we're going to be completely free. I'm going to be my own boss and my own master. People who think they're their own boss are really still ruled by Satan. Right?

They're still enslaved to do sin's will and desire. And so it's not as though we've been set free from sin's will and desire to do what we want to do. Because we see in Romans 7 we still have that tendency to want sin.

No, we've been set free so that we may live for Christ Jesus. Our life is for Christ. We obey His will and His desire. So, Isabel, and for all of you in this room who have trusted in Jesus Christ, you're now to live for God.

Paul's first prayer after he was saved, in Acts 22, we read, Lord, what do you want me to do? I think that's just such a good question. Our first prayer, after you become a Christian, God, what do you want me to do?

[17 : 19] I'm listening to you. I'm obeying your will now. I want to do what's pleasing to you. And without any direct revelation other than the Word of God, we can very simply say, 1 Corinthians 10.31, so whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God.

And so we live now for God and for His glory that He might be magnified in our life. 2 Corinthians 5.17 says, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old is gone, the new has come. And as I've communicated, baptism has no special power. The water's not magical. Some of you probably heard the water heater broke, it's mighty cold today.

Our deacons have been very gracious and dumped all the hot water in the building into this. But none of that has made it magical. Right? Being baptized doesn't do something special for Isabel.

But it communicates something that I almost want to call magical. Something miraculous that God has already done in Isabel's heart, in her life.

[18 : 28] Your new creation. And so as she goes down to the water, she comes up. What's symbolized for us is her dying to sin and her being raised to new life, to live for the Lord.

And so the symbolism's there, the reality isn't. The reality's already happened in her heart. We're only symbolizing it here. I want you to understand that difference, that it's not anything special or magical we're doing, but God has commanded that we do this, that we remember and we're mindful of the reality of the gospel and how the spirit works in our hearts.

Christ. Now just a few points of application for really all of us in the room. Christians, this is a reminder for us of the resurrection from the dead.

I mentioned that already a little bit from verse 6, but we see it again in verse 8. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. There's this future tense.

If we know the reality that we've died with Christ, then we will live with Him. And baptism, that burial into death and that raising to new life, symbolizes for all of us in this room, we're going to be resurrected one day.

[19 : 43] We're going to be with the Lord. We'll go into the ground, our bodies will rot away, He will raise them up and He will renew them, He will glorify them, and we will be in the presence of the Lord forever.

Fullness of joy, pleasures at His right hand, that's what awaits us. So every time we see a baptism, we ought to rejoice. It ought to remind us, I'm headed for heaven.

I'll be resurrected one day, even as we see them come up from the water. We ought to rejoice that we're in Christ, that we're united to Him, that in Christ we're a new creature, that God the Father looks upon us in Christ, and He sees us not in our sins, not as we deserve even, but what He sees in us is Jesus Christ and His righteous life, His death.

And so He sees us as righteous. And so we ought to be encouraged by the blessing of our union with Christ. Christ. And then just a closing word for Isabel.

I want to encourage you that this baptism, all that you've heard in this message, all that it symbolizes, that as you go from here, that you live now as one who's in Christ Jesus.

[21 : 03] We see that again in verses 1 and 2. No longer live as those who live for sin. You've died to sin. How can you still live in it? In verses 10 and 11, instead, that you live for God.

For the death He died, He died to sin once for all, but the life He lives, He lives to God. So you also must consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

So as you're baptized, as you go from here in the days to come, think of those truths. You've died to sin. You're alive to Christ Jesus now and how glorious that is.

Let me close this in prayer.