

Baptism

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[0 : 00] It's so important that I want you in a physical Bible. And I'm going to be a little demanding. I don't want you on your phone. I want you in a physical Bible. If you don't have one with you, there's probably one under a chair in front of you or near you.

I'll tell you why that's important. We know that there's a brain-body connection. That when we do things with our hands, it helps us cement it into our minds. And I want you to look into the Word of God with me as we open God's Word together.

So no slides. You don't have to look up here. And I've moved the podium so that you can see more of me. Aren't you so thrilled with that? So actually, I sense a little bit of sarcasm.

I learned today this is a rough crowd. Poor John. One time, once, he has a little navigational mishap and that lives on in infamy forever.

So you really need to be on your toes with this group, without a doubt. So turn in your Bibles to Matthew 28. That's going to be our core passage this morning. And as you're turning there, I'm going to tell you a story.

[1 : 11] So as you're turning, listen with your ears so you don't miss the story. The main character of our story is actually going to be you. Okay? So imagine that you're on a road trip.

Maybe you're driving from Iowa to Colorado, which you may not know this, but as a longtime resident of Colorado Springs, living under the shadow of Pikes Peak, I know and heard every year that America the Beautiful was written from the top of Pikes Peak.

That may be America's song, but it's actually Colorado's song. We just share with you. But imagine that you're on that pilgrimage to America's Mountain in Colorado Springs, and you're driving.

Are you with me? You got that mental image in your mind? You're driving. You're driving across a fruited plain. And as you're driving, you feel a presence come into the car.

It's not your spouse. It's a presence that says, at the next rest stop, I want you to pull off. And you think, well, I don't have to go to the bathroom.

[2 : 20] I'm not tired, but okay. And so as soon as you say, okay, the presence fades. And as it fades, you see a sign pop up that says rest stop one mile.

So you drive down the road, you pull into the rest stop, and you're thinking, okay, that was weird. Why am I here? Well, I might as well go grab a Coke out of the machine. I can at least get the caffeine and the sugar and keep me going.

So you park your car, you get out of the car, and you're walking. And as you're walking, you notice along the pathway to the building where the vending machines are, there's a gentleman sitting, and he looks different. He's got a big full beard, and he's wearing a maroon turban.

That's something you see in Iowa very often. And as you get closer to him, you realize he's reading from the Bible. He's reading, actually, Isaiah 53.

And you hear these words. Bear with me here a second. I marked my other places. I forgot to mark this one. And you hear him reading these words.

[3 : 29] He was led as a sheep to slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he does not open his mouth. In humiliation, his judgment was taken away. Who will relate his generation?

For his life is removed from the earth. And you kind of pause because it's not often you see a person in a turban reading the Bible in the middle of Iowa. And as you pause, he looks up and he sees you, and he says to you, excuse me, are you familiar with this passage from the Bible?

And you say, yeah, yeah, I've read that. That's Isaiah 53. He says, can I ask you a question? Is that passage, is the author writing about himself, or is he writing about somebody else? And you go, well, I can answer that question for you.

Do you mind if I sit down? And you sit down next to him, and you say, can I borrow your Bible? And you take his Bible, and then you start to go through the Old Testament. You start at Genesis chapter 315. You go to Deuteronomy 18.

Then to Psalm 22. Then to Isaiah 7. Then to Isaiah 9. Then to Isaiah 53. Then to Micah 5.2. And as you're taking him through these passages, you're showing him that this passage in Isaiah 53 is actually one of a whole collection of prophecies about someone who is to come, Jesus Christ.

[4 : 51] Then you transition. You take him to the book of Romans, and you walk him through several passages in Romans. Romans 3.23, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 6.23, for the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5.8, but God demonstrated his own love for us in this.

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. And then you take him to Romans 10.9. And in Romans 10.9, you read with this gentleman, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

And then you share with him the fact that what was prophesied in the past, what was demonstrated in Jesus' life in the Gospels and recorded in the Gospels, and what Paul wrote about was an invitation to him.

That if he will believe, and having believed, if he will be baptized, he has access to an entirely new life, an entirely new relationship with God.

[6 : 01] And you ask him, what do you think? Do you want to receive the free gift that God is offering to you right now? And the guy says, yeah, I sure do.

This is awesome. You know what? I see that this rut stop has a pond. Why don't you baptize me right now? And you do. And then he gets in his car, and you get in your car, and off you go.

Now, if you know your Bibles, you know that I just retold Acts chapter 8. That's exactly what Philip experienced from beginning to end, except he wasn't driving a car, he wasn't in Iowa, and Romans hadn't been written yet.

So, it would come later. Actually, Paul wasn't even saved yet. So, he would have been a little bit scared, or doubtful if someone said, you're going to quote Romans, which is going to be written by Saul, that guy who's murdering people.

He might have been a little bit put off by that. The reason I opened a message on baptism with that story is because it is the best example in the New Testament, the clearest example of what evangelism looks like from beginning to end.

[7 : 17] And we're going to unpack that a little bit, and then go into talking about what baptism means. So, let's look at the characters. First of all, let's look at God.

God is in control of this entire scenario, this whole scene. At the beginning, both in Acts chapter 8 and in our lives, God guides us into divine appointments.

God connects us with people who are looking. I know that because I can read my Bible. This isn't the first example, and it's not the last. God moves people to where they need to be to fulfill His purposes.

God continues to do that. I'll tell you a quick story. Years ago, we lived in Seattle. Christmas Eve, we had a giant mob of people headed to our house, and I needed some peace and quiet before the mob descended.

So, I went on a walk, and just below our house, there was a mall that, because we have completely commercialized Christmas, was open, and I was going to go down there, grab a cup of coffee, and just walk around the mall.

[8 : 21] So, I walked down, and I was praying for the people who were coming to the house, because we had some people who were coming that didn't know Jesus, and I'm walking, as I came around the corner of the building, so I was walking around the outside, I noticed a petite black lady huddled in the corner.

It was a cold day. Huddled in the corner, and as I walked past her, the Lord said, you need to talk to her, and I said, no, I really don't, and the Lord said, yeah, you do.

So, I negotiated with God as I walked around the building, and I said, I'll tell you what, Lord, I will talk to her if she's there when I come all the way around, and it's a long walk.

I mean, you've been around a mall. It's like walking around Kennedy Mall. It's not a quick circuit, so I'm walking. I'm, Lord, this is weird. I don't even know if she speaks English. I don't want to talk to her. This is awkward.

Kara's not with me, and the Lord said, I don't care. I told you to talk to her, so I get around, and sure enough, she's still there, so I walked up to her, and I started talking to her. Now, this doesn't have a happy ending like Acts chapter 8.

[9 : 26] It's a story with one point that God still speaks, and if we listen, if we listen, he puts us in places to meet people's needs.

Now, in that case, I was able to at least talk her into going into the mall. I had Kara drive down, and so it wasn't just me with this woman who didn't know me, and oddly, she wanted a vanilla milkshake on that cold December day, but we bought her a milkshake, and we talked to her for a while, and then it came time.

We had to leave, and this is so cool. This can only be God. As we're getting up to leave, I told her, you cannot stay here after you finish this milkshake.

Security is going to ask you to leave, and this lady at another table says, don't worry, we've been listening to you guys. She can sit with us after you leave. Is that cool or what?

God was caring for this woman. God will use you in the same way. So God is in control. This whole scene is orchestrated by the Holy Spirit. Don't lose sight of that as we talk about what it means for us to follow Jesus.

[10 : 46] So let's talk about Philip. Philip has just been booted out of Jerusalem because at this point in the book of Acts, the church actually was being disobedient to God.

God had said what in the Great Commission? Go. What did he say in Acts 1-8? You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem? Yes, but did he stop there?

No. He said you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. But the disciples really liked it in Jerusalem. They were seeing a lot of fruit and so they huddled and were building the world's first megachurch.

There were probably 5,000 people that were fellowshiping at that point in Jerusalem. So persecution began and God forced them to go out. And so Philip was out.

He was traveling and just like in my story, he felt the presence of God. And God said, go over there. And he obeyed. He went where God directed him and he met this Ethiopian eunuch.

[11 : 53] God does the same thing for us. Are we willing to listen and obey? Philip obeyed. And then if you notice, as I described Philip, and it says in Acts, that Philip was able, beginning with the Old Testament, he was able to go through the entire Bible and explain to this gentleman the truth about Jesus Christ.

He knew his Bible well enough to give a quick survey of the prophecy about the suffering Messiah and tie it back into Isaiah. He was prepared. The question for us is, are we prepared?

Do we know our Bibles well enough? Could you answer the questions if someone was in your path, God opened an opportunity for the conversation, could you answer their questions?

And if not, I'm going to ask you a hard question. Why not? But I'll give you the solution to the problem too. We have people in this congregation who really know their Bibles that well.

Talk to them. Ask them. Teach me how to do that. Teach me to be able to fluidly talk about those passages and then to present the gospel.

[13 : 10] Help me to know these things. Peter wrote, sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being prepared to make a defense for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.

Be ready. Be ready emotionally. Be ready spiritually. Be ready just with the truths to answer the question that someone's going to ask. So, God's in control. Philip was available and obedient and prepared.

And then let's talk about the Ethiopian eunuch. He was seeking. Did you know that God cannot resist a seeking heart? He just can't.

If you look, Genesis to Revelation, there are specific promises and you see it acted out in person after person after person. If we're seeking God, God says, awesome, let's talk.

I got somebody I need to hook you up with. And God does that. He puts us together. The Ethiopian was seeking. Think about Hebrews 11, 6. And without faith, it is impossible to please God.

[14 : 13] For he who comes to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him. You see, that's an echo of a promise in Jeremiah chapter 9.

No, 29. Excuse me. Jeremiah 29. That God answers when we seek him with all of our heart. And so the Ethiopian was looking and God said, cool.

I got just the guy to talk to you. Let me introduce you to Philip. Then the Ethiopian was responsive. I want to ask you another hard question. When you think about evangelism, is your assumption that if you mention Jesus Christ, you're headed into a fist fight?

or you're going to be looked upon as weird or dismissed? It's uncomfortable. It feels uncomfortable. I think that we're looking at evangelism all wrong.

If we understood that God is working to draw people to himself and that as people are seeking him, God is orchestrating our divine appointments, all of a sudden evangelism shifts from this awkward, weird, invasive sales pitch to a conversation between two people who are seeking to know God better.

[15 : 29] And because you're further along the journey, you can bring this person into a relationship with God. Wouldn't that be a whole other conversation? a whole lot easier, isn't it?

That's really what evangelism is supposed to be. That's the heart of that verse I quoted from 1 Peter 3, is that we're positioned in such a way that we can connect with people and share the gospel with them.

Does that make sense? So, we shared the story and it ends in baptism.

That's the focal point of our message this morning, is what role does baptism play in this overall concept of our life in Christ and sharing the gospel? And we're going to answer that question this morning.

We're going to do it in three movements, like a symphony. The first movement is going to be why baptism matters. Why does baptism matter?

[16 : 29] About a year ago, I started a deep dive into all the literature I could find written on what it means to be a disciple or an apprentice of Jesus. And one of the things that really stood out to me and frankly really frustrated me is that it's a really, really good material, but consistently, the writers assumed the why.

They assumed that we are, the reader already knew why we should follow Jesus. And I think that's a mistake. And oftentimes, and what I found in my reading about baptism, the same mistake was made.

We don't often talk about, why should we be baptized? We just assume, oh, you should. So we're going to look at why. The second thing we're going to look at, briefly, is what is baptism? And then lastly, we're going to look at what's our response?

What does baptism mean practically in our lives? So let's pray together and then we'll delve into God's Word. Father, I'm so grateful that we are never left to our own devices.

God, that as we go through life, your expectation is that we will go through life as your partner and we're the minor partner. That we're following your lead.

[17 : 45] That you are working in and through us, but it is God who gives the increase. it is you who works both to will and to work according to your good pleasure. And Lord, we just get to be along for an awesome ride.

And so God, I pray that as we look at baptism, as we think about its significance in our own lives, whether we have been baptized or whether we're anticipating being baptized, that we would see that all that it represents is so captivating, so exciting, that we're just overwhelmed with gratitude and wonder at what we have received in Christ.

Lord, I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So, the first movement is why be baptized? And it's pretty straightforward.

Jesus commanded it. I had you turn to Matthew 28. Let's read the Great Commission together, starting at verse 17. Matthew 28, 17.

When they saw Him, this is the disciples, saw Jesus coming, they worshiped Him, but some were doubtful. They were doubtful not because they were weak, they were doubtful because they were human. Think about the last month and a half for these guys.

[18 : 59] They go from the triumphal entry on Sunday of Passion Week to Jesus being trialed in a kangaroo court, crucified.

They mourn through Saturday. He's raised from the dead. They see Him walk through walls. That's in John. They share meals with Him. And then He says, I'm leaving, which they had already heard, but they didn't really, it didn't settle in.

It's been kind of a head-spinning month. So as Jesus comes up, they're probably trying to sort through what does all this stuff mean. So some were doubtful. And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, all authority has been given to me in heaven and earth.

I'm the king and I'm ushering in my kingdom. All authority has been given to me in heaven and earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Jesus commanded to be baptized. And you know, I could just stop the sermon right there. We could all be done early. The Sunday school classes would all be in disarray because what do we do now? John got done half an hour early.

[20 : 19] There's more to it than that. We know that when the Lord commands something, it's a good command because He is good and He does good. His commands are good for us to follow. So we're going to explore why this command is good.

And I want you to listen carefully. The next two things that I'm going to talk about are the two fundamentally most important truths about our lives, period.

And as a communicator, as a man who wants to teach God's Word, as one of your pastors who is charged by God to shepherd your soul, trying to effectively communicate what we're going to talk about for the next few minutes, it's not an exaggeration.

I almost feel despair because what I want to convey is so great. And words are so inadequate.

So listen carefully as we unpack why Jesus commanded baptism and to follow Him. The first thing is because the life that He offers is amazing.

[21 : 40] This is the gospel. We have reduced the gospel to our loss in the Evangelical Church of America to what happens to you when you die.

Now that's a good thing. It's great that we get to go to heaven and not to hell. But we miss out on so much if we fail to see that we are brought into new life.

In baptism, it's a picture, we're going to talk about this in a minute, of being buried with Jesus in baptism but being raised to new life. Not new life after we die. New life after we accept Christ as our Savior.

The new life begins at that moment. I accepted Christ at about 7 p.m. on January 27, 1980. New life began on that day. Totally new life.

I read this great quote by C.S. Lewis. God became man to turn creatures into sons.

[22 : 43] Not simply to produce better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man and woman. Pause and think about that. God's just not trying to make you a better version of yourself.

That's not good enough for Him. He is remaking you into this entirely new type of man or woman that reflects the image of Christ and it begins the moment that you accept Christ as your Savior.

Think about Romans 6. Turn there. Turn to Romans chapter 6. I'm going to link two verses that we look at usually separately but they're the beginning and the end of the same chapter.

So Luke chapter 6 starting at we're going to look at verse 4. This is a picture of baptism. Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death so we are buried with Christ just as He died on the cross He died in our place so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father we too might walk in newness of life.

So we too might walk in newness of life. Everything is being transformed by the work of Christ in our lives. The Holy Spirit came to reside in you the moment that you accepted Christ as your Savior and He began a transformative work in your life.

[24 : 14] Now you don't even need to look at this verse because I'll bet \$50 everybody here has got it memorized. Romans 6.23 For the wages of sin is death we deserve to die if we're still in our sin but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Same word life eternal life is the newness of life that Paul talked about at the beginning of the chapter. The gospel message brothers and sisters isn't just about what happens to us when we die.

The good news is the gospel is Jesus knows everything you're experiencing the hardship of your life the challenges the things where you fail the things where you think maybe He's failed you and to enter into relationship with Him.

You know the story in the Old Testament of Jacob wrestling with God and he wrestled all night and he wouldn't let go of God until finally God knocked his hip out of joint and Jacob walked with a limp the rest of his life.

Remember that story? That's a great picture of what it means to walk with God. We wrestle with God to secure the newness of life not because God is reluctant to give us His blessing it's because we're kind of slow we're not real bright and we don't understand but the right response to the things that we don't understand is not to say forget you God I'm done but instead to go toward Him to grab a hold to say with Jacob I'm not going to let go until you bless me and the blessing is God showing you and sometimes it takes a long time but He unveils how He works all things together for good for those who love God.

[26 : 13] That's the gospel. That's what we have in Christ. We need to learn to take possession of that to hold on to it with both hands and in baptism we're saying to God I want that I want that so Jesus commanded it baptism so Jesus commanded baptism Jesus commanded baptism because it is a commemoration of our decision to turn to follow Christ and that's not even the best reason because the best thing is that when we come to Christ when we accept Jesus as our Savior look at what we get turn over a couple of pages to Romans chapter 8 Romans chapter 8 verses 15 through 17 for you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again in other words you're not under a law brothers and sisters

God is not this cosmic taskmaster who smacks you every time you disobey and He's kind of vague about what His expectations are have you ever felt like you're playing a cosmic game of whack-a-mole with God remember that game where the mole pops up and you're trying to hit it and you're the mole and you're trying to figure out what the will of God is and every time you're wrong God whacks you on the head and you're just sure that one of those holes is the will of God and you just need to keep poking your head out until you figure out which one it is do you ever feel like that's what our relationship with God is like I have that is what Paul is saying we're not part of you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again but you have received savor these words you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out Abba Father Abba is the most intimate term that a Hebrew child uses of their father

Daddy the Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit He speaks to you that we are children of God and of children heirs also heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ if indeed we suffer with Him so that we also may be glorified with Him you enter into a new relationship with God Himself think of the most beautiful spectacular scene you've ever seen in nature for me it was standing on Hurricane Ridge which is excuse me an Olympic National Forest in Washington State is when you stand on Hurricane Ridge you see mountain chain after mountain chain after mountain crest over and over all the way down to the ocean it's breathtaking and when you stand on that summit you cannot help but believe in God there are no atheists there there can't be because God punches you right in the head with His glory of His creation that creator who created that majesty who created our hands with complexity that we still can't figure out how to how to duplicate that God is your father your daddy think about that and if you're ever unsure of what that means maybe you didn't have a great relationship with your dad tell you where to find out the definition of what it means to have that relationship with God turn to Luke

I don't know the chapter off the top of my head this is for homework turn to Luke and look up the story of the prodigal son 15 who said that thank you Luke 15 you want to see how God views you even in sin look at the father of the prodigal son that's how God treats you he loves you he wants the best for you he wants to call out the best in you carve away the pieces that don't fit not because this is part of it not because he's displeased but because when we're walking with him when we're living that new life in relationship with him we are living the way we were designed to live life is better because we're living the way God intended it to be lived that's what we have in Christ and when we're baptized what we're saying is God I find it really hard to believe but I want to have that type of a relationship with you can I really call you my daddy and God says oh yeah it's about time

I've been waiting for you come on in and he pulls us closer to himself think about that pause God loves you that much and if you're not sure look a few verses further into Romans 8 verse 32 I believe put this in my notes I should have it memorized Romans 8 32 let's look at verse 31 what then shall we say to these things if God is for us who is against us he who did not spare his own son but delivered him over for us all how will he not also with him freely give us all things and then the chapter ends with those glorious words what can separate us from the love of God absolutely nothing nothing that's what we have in Christ and baptism we're commemorating the day that we decided that we wanted that we were accepting what God was offering to us that's what baptism is for and that's why

[32 : 36] Jesus commanded it it commemorates our entry into new life it commemorates our entry into a new relationship with God as our father makes you think it's kind of important to get baptized don't you think so let's pause a minute or shift gears and let's talk about what is baptism and we're going to go through this fairly quickly what is baptism I'm going to start by talking about what it's not first of all I'm going to say this unequivocally baptism does not save you it's not a part of the process if you trusted Christ Jesus himself said in John 1 12 but as many as received him actually Jesus himself didn't say this it's recorded by John but as many as received him Jesus to them he gave the right to become the children of God no mention of baptism the one verse that talks about baptism in Acts chapter 2 and I think it's mentioned the same concept as mentioned

Peter the way it's translated in English it sounds like that you believe and you're baptized for the remission of sins it's not the meaning of those passages we can go into a greater detail if you need to I don't have time this morning but suffice it to say baptism doesn't save you it plays a key role in our following Jesus but it doesn't save but so that's an error let's imagine we're on the straight and narrow that's one way that we fall off the road that's one ditch now every road has two ditches the ditch on this side and I've heard this many times I'll give you an example I had a student that was part of the leadership team that I had at a youth group years ago and we were getting ready for baptism at church I said to Ian he was 17 hey dude you're gonna get baptized I'm not ready you're not ready what does that mean well I'm not sure I'm really following Jesus the way I should I'm not ready how many of you have thought that at some point

I'm not ready I'm not worthy to be baptized we have put in a gap between belief and baptism that is a symptom of a fundamental misunderstanding of what the gospel is we have separated believing Jesus and following Jesus as his apprentice those two are not separated biblically they go together I was at a church not long ago and I was talking with the pastor about implementing discipleship and if you get to know me part of following Jesus involves discipline that's the root word of discipleship and the pastor said to me well I'm not comfortable pushing discipleship because I don't want people to feel shame excuse me there's no shame involved we follow Jesus for the reasons

I just gave we enter into new life we enter into a relationship with God himself and God has provided means to get there there's not a separation the clear pattern in Acts belief baptism belief baptism belief baptism there's two places where there's a gap in both places is because whoever delivered the gospel to the people hadn't done it right and the disciples came along and said no no you weren't baptized or you were baptized in the baptism of John let's correct your misunderstanding do you believe now let's baptize you they're back to back why because saving faith now it doesn't have to be theologically nuanced you don't have to understand all the the subtleties I sure didn't when I came to Christ at 14 but the basics are what I'm doing ain't working and the consequence of that path I'm on is the wrath of God in hell hell in this life and hell after death so I'm gonna go and I'm gonna take this better way of following Jesus

I believe that his work on the cross was sufficient to to absorb the wrath of God that should have been directed at me and Jesus took it himself and that now I'm called to follow Jesus as his apprentice and live a life as he has designed it they're intimately married together and God is working with us to see that that happens part of my story this is very interesting to me I got saved like I said in January of 1980 I didn't tell anybody that I got saved I knew nothing we started going to church that day and I missed it because I overslept and I had never read the Bible I knew nothing except from the few pages of the book that led me to Christ and yet I knelt in my living room I asked Jesus to change my life to forgive my sins three weeks later my mother comes to me and says what's going on you're different did you get saved

[37 : 51] I was as ignorant as ignorant can be and yet my life had begun to change because the Holy Spirit was invested in changing me that's how God works but there's no gap in my point don't make that mistake baptism doesn't save you and there's not a gap between well I'm going to believe Jesus today and oh some point in the future I'll decide to follow him or following him is for super saints like missionaries and pastors folks if it's just for missionaries and pastors you're missing out on the best part of the whole deal so and if you're stuck following me as I follow Jesus instead of following Jesus directly you're in trouble I want you to go to the source my job is to guide you to the source because I'm not enough trust me I'm not enough so those are the errors about baptism whoops now what is baptism baptism is a commemoration it is a statement to yourself it's a statement to God it's a statement to the world

I've decided to follow Jesus and it's done in a prescribed manner and the Bible is not real clear our tradition is baptism by immersion you're going to see it in a few weeks it's in a pool I've seen it in a horse trough I've baptized somebody in a glacier fed lake which was a terrifying experience because I thought I was going to drop the girl I was baptizing didn't by the grace of God we're going to have a baptism in a river but you take the person in the name of the Father Son and the Holy Spirit which we're going to unpack in a few weeks you go under the water and that's a picture of our death we died with Christ Paul said in Galatians 2.20 I've been crucified with Christ and then as we raise the person back out of the water they come to newness of life that's the passage we read in Romans chapter 6 so baptism is a metaphor and a commemoration the commemoration is like I said it's saying to God I have believed

I have decided to follow Jesus and the metaphor is the death burial and resurrection with Jesus and lastly it's a stake in the ground one of the things that God knows about us all of us is that we are forgetful people we don't remember much of anything and it seems like the more important it is the more likely we're to forget it over the course of life you see the pattern throughout scripture when God delivered the Israelites from Egypt what did they do?

they had the Passover as a reminder when they crossed the Jordan River to go into the Holy Land God told them grab 12 big rocks stack them up as a reminder that God delivered you from the wilderness into the Holy Land when Samuel the prophet Samuel was leading the people of Israel right before Saul became king to fight the Philistines he set up this Ebenezer stone Ebenezer means thus far has God provided so the people of Israel in the future could look back and go oh God provided up to that point I can trust him where I'm at and of course the biggest one of all we celebrated last week is the Lord's Supper it's a reminder we proclaim Jesus' death until he come primarily to ourselves we're reminded of the source of all that we have is the death burial and resurrection of Jesus baptism is the same thing we look back to our baptism to say oh yeah I made that decision maybe we're walking away from God oh yeah

I made that decision and it draws us back or we look back and celebrate wow look at where I was when I was baptized and look where I am now one of the things and I would encourage you to do that by the way if you've ever climbed a mountain as you're going up you go up and there's nothing more discouraging than a false summit you think you're about to arrive and you get to what you thought was a summit and you see there's more to go and then okay that's the summit you go up a little higher oh no there's another summit and another and that's a great picture of the walk with Jesus seems like oh my goodness it just keeps getting harder and steeper and longer but what's encouraging is to look back and go I have come a long way I'm not as bad as I thought God really is working in my life celebrate those things look back to your baptism see where you were then and celebrate all the good things that God has done for you up to that point and then cinch up your backpack and start climbing because it's a lifelong process so baptism doesn't save it's not a it's not a separate thing that says okay now I decided to follow Jesus it's a commemoration of that moment in time when we decided to follow Jesus and truthfully it should happen as soon as possible after you accept Christ in our church we do that periodically just for the sake of convenience and there's nothing wrong with that but we need to make sure that in our minds there's not a separation theologically if you will so that's what baptism isn't it's a commemoration it's a metaphor it's a stake in the ground as we bring this home there's three types of people that are in this room and you can't escape you're one of the three turn to Isaiah 6 as I described the three people as we wrap things up the first one is somebody who's never come to Christ you've never trusted Christ as your Savior either you've never heard this message before or you've heard it and it's just kind of gone in one ear out the other you just haven't seen the need and today for some reason the Holy Spirit is saying nope today's the day you need to listen to what Pastor John is saying and you need to respond you need to accept

[44 : 03] Jesus as your Savior and I would suggest to you that if I just described you or if you think well maybe that's me maybe it's not I don't really know I'm not sure be sure accept what Jesus has offered ask for his forgiveness of sins Romans 10 9 confess with your mouth that Jesus is the Lord of your life believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead which is a statement that his work on the cross worked and you will be saved today is the day so that's the first type of person and of course afterwards we want you to be baptized and how cool is it that we've got baptism coming in a month the second type of person is you're a believer but you fell into that trap of thinking that there is the decision to accept Christ and at some point in the future is a decision to follow Christ maybe you were baptized maybe you weren't if you were baptized I want you to look back on your baptism day and recognize even if you didn't understand it that that was a decision that was an expression of a decision to follow Jesus and start doing it start following Jesus

I'd love to talk to you about that if you weren't baptized same answer as with the first guy we're doing a baptism in a month catch me after the service catch Pastor John or Pastor Tim and we'd love to talk to you about baptism I actually had a couple of little girls have that conversation with me yesterday it's really fun and then the third type of person is you are baptized you're walking with Jesus you're the one who's climbing that mountain you look back and say wow God has worked you rejoice in the work that he's done but you recognize that there's work yet to be done and so you keep pressing on you keep you renew that resolve I'm going to keep following Jesus because he's worth it the life that he offers is worth it okay Isaiah 6 there's a song that I was going to play for you unfortunately I procrastinated and didn't have it done in time so we're just going to read the passage so Isaiah 6 in the year of King Uzziah's death

I saw the Lord sitting on a throne lofty and exalted with the train of his robe filling the temple seraphim stood above him each having six wings with two he covered his face and with two he covered his face or his feet and with two he flew and one called out to another and said holy holy holy is the Lord of hosts the whole earth is full of his glory and the foundations of the threshold trembled at the voice of him who called out while the temple was filling with smoke imagine the scene you're in the presence of God what's the response then I said this is Isaiah speaking woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips for my eyes have seen the King the Lord of hosts

I'm undone I don't have a right to be here I shouldn't be here I'm going to die that's where we were before we encountered Jesus then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand which he had taken from the altar with tongs he touched my mouth with it and said behold this has touched your lips and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven that's a picture of what Jesus has done for each of us who have trusted him it's a picture of what Jesus is offering for each of us even if we haven't yet come to Christ then I heard the voice of the Lord saying whom shall I send and who will go for us then I said here am I send me I read that passage for the first time in the summer of 1981 and even at 15

I understood that even though that was a picture of the prophet in the Old Testament that was a call to me that's a picture brothers and sisters of the life with Christ we have the opportunity to stand in the presence of God and as we see him we're undone but in Christ we have access we can boldly approach the throne of grace as sons and daughters and as we see that there's only one response here am I send me and God will God will that's the life he's calling us to in the next two weeks we're going back in the book of Mark I love how God sovereignly lays things out at times next week we're going to look at Jesus revealing his identity to the disciples in Peter's declaration that you are the Christ that's our third reason for baptism we have relationship with God and we're going to unpack who God is who Jesus is and then in two weeks on the 13th of July we're going to look at discipleship

[49 : 47] Jesus' call to follow him which was the second reason and we're going to continue this conversation about baptism but what I want you to leave with brothers and sisters is the why you have a glorious life in Christ and my prayer for you is that you would say here am I send me wherever that wherever that takes you let's pray God you are glorious in your presence we are undone the only right response is silence and awe and wonder and gratitude but you invite us into an intimate relationship with you you give us a new life and God I pray that as we think about what you're offering to us out of such boundless generosity that we would like Isaiah say

Lord here am I send me I am yours do with me whatever you wish for your glory to extend your kingdom to make me everything you designed me to be I pray this in Jesus name Amen Amen Thank you.