

Baptism

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Date: 07 September 2025

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[0 : 00] So, yes, I want to speak today about baptism. Seemed like that's all that I could think about.

I want to talk about our commitment to the Lord. I think I told Jessica it won't be just for her, but it is about the subject of baptism and maybe more so about what it represents.

You know, it's not just that we go to the water and do a ritual or it's not just a religious thing that we do, but it's a commitment.

It's a life-changing experience. It's about a new birth, and it's about the old life versus the new or the old, putting away the old and having the new.

So, praise God for that, for the message of the gospel. I'd like to turn to Romans, if you'd turn to Romans chapter 6.

[1 : 13] You know, there's many different avenues that we could go about this subject, many different thoughts.

My prayer is today that God would just speak to our hearts, whatever our need is that we have in our hearts, that God would, whether we have been baptized or whether we should be, that God would speak to our hearts and not just our ears, not just tickling our ears a little bit, but God would do something in our hearts, maybe strengthen or encourage, inspire our commitment to Christ or whether it's to, maybe it's conviction.

So, God knows our need. Romans chapter 6, Paul writing, he says, What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us that were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death.

You know, I'll just say this. Baptism, water baptism is symbolic of being baptized into the death of Christ.

[2 : 51] Therefore, we are buried with him in baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so, we also should walk in newness of life.

What a wonderful word there, that it's not just, how would it be if this morning, if we would be baptized and we would look back and say, yeah, that's when I died.

And that would be the end of the story. How would our life be like? Our Christian, well, there wouldn't, there would be no Christian life, right?

And here in verse 4, it says, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so, we also should walk in newness of life.

So we clearly know this, but do we know it? We know it because the Bible says so, but do we know it? Do we know it in our hearts?

[3 : 58] That there is a new life to walk in, a newness of life in Christ. I'd like to speak a little bit today throughout this also.

Who is Christ? Who is Jesus to you? And what is he like? Do we believe in, I just want to give a little story of something that my wife and I heard years ago, a testimony of a Jehovah's Witness that became a born again Christian.

By the way, they don't believe in the new birth. And they believe in a wrong Jesus because they believe that Jesus was just created like an angel and he's not God.

So if you serve a Jesus like that, anyway, the story was, she was witnessing as a lady and she became very passionate about winning her people to Christ, to the true Jesus.

and something she always said was that if, as she was witnessing to some other Jehovah's Witness, and I'm not picking on that, but that religion or whatever, it's just, it fits.

[5 : 17] And she would say that if you serve the right Jesus, you will be right for all eternity. But if you serve the wrong Jesus, you will be wrong for all eternity.

That should grip our hearts as well. What if we are serving the wrong Jesus? Is there such a thing? Is there such a thing of having made Christ?

And I believe this is the thing in our day that is so popular where people make Jesus something that is not the Jesus of the Bible.

It's somebody that we imagine him to be. Is that possible? That we serve a Jesus that we have maybe heard all our life, but we've kind of been just thinking, well, one of those is that Jesus is just a mere human.

He's just like me. You know, and he's really not almighty. We're really not concerned too much about his judgment.

[6 : 34] I've been reading recently through Revelation. And if that's how we believe Jesus Christ to be, we should read Revelation and meditate on it and think about the coming Christ because he is God.

And so I trust this morning that we get our, we could say imagination or our idea of who Christ is through reading the scripture.

That is who Christ is. And so let's be clear on that. I just wanted to bring that out because if you have the right Jesus, you'll be right for all eternity if you're serving him.

But if it's some imaginary Jesus that we just made up, that maybe somebody tried to tell us about, we could be wrong for all eternity.

I trust we have the right view of who Christ is and that he is the almighty God. He is the creator of all things.

[7 : 39] The Bible says, without him, nothing was created. Everything was created by him and for him. That includes you and I. And then he became a man and gave his life to redeem us.

That is who Christ is. In Matthew 28, Jesus came and he spake unto them. He said, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

All power. If you look that word up in other translations, it's all authority. This Jesus is all authority that exists.

He said that himself, about himself. Go ye therefore, because that he is all authority, go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. What a promise if we serve this Jesus, that he will be with us always, even unto the end of the world.

[8 : 58] Those are, I believe, some of the last words that Jesus spoke when he was here on earth. Now let's go back to Romans 6 here, verse 5.

For we have been planted together in the likeness of his death. I'm sorry, let me start over. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also, in the likeness of his resurrection, we shall be in the likeness.

So, if we have been crucified with Christ, the old man, the old nature, has been put to death, if that's true, then we shall also have the new life of his resurrection.

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.

[10 : 06] Is this our experience? That we are dead with Christ and now live with him?

Has the new life in Christ become a reality to us? Is it real? Life?

Truly having Jesus? You know, we say we accept Jesus or we receive Jesus into our heart. What we're really saying, could be saying, is that we have the life of God within us.

Is that a reality? You know, I think it was Bert Clendenin that said that that's the only thing that Satan hates.

He doesn't care, he doesn't hate the old nature. But, when we receive life, the life of God, that is, which is Jesus, that is what he hates.

[11 : 15] And that is what he came to try to steal, to kill, and destroy.

He wants to kill that in us. He wants us to become discouraged, depressed, to give up, to be turned away from that life.

So by entering that life, we enter a battle. We enter a war zone for our soul, don't we? that's when the battle actually begins. But we just read that Jesus will be with us until the end.

Right? We have those promises. It's not a playground. Christianity is not a place to play.

You don't have, you can have horse play at work. Some of you do sometimes. But the Christian journey is not a playground.

[12 : 20] It's a battlefield. These things are not in my notes, but just thoughts I'm having this morning. He came to kill, steal, and destroy that new life.

He loves that old life. And you know what? Most people do too. Most people love the old life. what does the Bible say?

That about they didn't repent because they didn't love light because their deeds were evil. Right? They love darkness rather than light because their deeds.

So people love the old. How is it with us? Jesus also said in Matthew 10, the thief cometh not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy.

I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. More than we can even ask or think Jesus wants to give that to us.

[13 : 25] That's the good news of the gospel. More abundantly. I mean, we know what life is but what is more abundantly? You want to imagine something?

Imagine that. Having life in me more abundantly because that's how Jesus wants to give it to us. Verse 9 in Romans 6 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more death hath no more dominion over him for in that he died he died unto sin once but in that he liveth he liveth unto God likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I want to just talk about this verse a little bit. Reckon yourself to be dead. I used to struggle with that like what is he saying? What does that verse mean?

Reckon yourself. And I believe he's saying here that it's by faith.

It's by believing. It's by knowing because I believe the word of God. The Bible says, I mean, if we just go by our feelings, we go by our life, sometimes we mess up, sometimes we do things we shouldn't.

[14 : 52] You know, we let the flesh rule for a moment, maybe for a day. hopefully not, hopefully not for a week. But what if we let the flesh rule me for a day?

Is it over with? Are we done? The Bible says it's by faith. And so because the Bible says that I'm dead, I just choose to believe that.

And by faith, I believe it. I reckon myself to be dead. Right? We believe it because the Bible says I'm dead. And so if we don't first believe that, we're not going to get very far in our journey.

We're going to struggle a lot with that flesh, that old nature. But we need to reckon that thing to be dead because Jesus said it, I was buried with him.

The old life is gone. Right? So if we sin or we do something, we have an advocate with the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he'll cleanse us again.

[16 : 00] But we need to reckon the death. Okay, where were we?

Verse 12, let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that you should obey it in the lust thereof. Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourself unto God as those that are alive from the dead and your members as instruments for righteousness unto God.

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace. So we still have a choice.

Jessica still has a choice. she can still yield to the old. And so can all of us. But Paul here is saying, you don't need to.

You don't have to do that anymore. You now have a power within you to not yield, but to yield your members unto righteousness rather than unrighteousness. It says here that sin shall no longer dominate your life.

[17 : 20] It no longer will rule you. You now have a power that you didn't have before to say no. And by the way, if we can't say no, we can't be a Christian.

We have to say no to that old. That's how we reckon it, to be dead. How do I know that? Did I just make that up?

Jesus said that unless we take up our cross daily and follow him. That cross again is symbolic of death. That's how we know that yes, daily we take up our cross.

What shall we say then? He says this again, the first part of the chapter he said this, now he comes back and repeats it. What then shall we sin? Because we are not under the law but under grace?

And he says, God forbid. Know you not that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are, to whom you obey whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness.

[18 : 31] Let's ask ourselves, whose servant are we? Whose servant are we? Everyone here that is old enough to be accountable is somebody's servant.

to either Jesus, the surrendered vessel to him, or I serve the old, the old life, right?

The old nature. The Bible calls it the old man, the old nature, self, the flesh, sin, it's all the same thing, I think.

It's all the old life, right? Am I right, Matt? I think that's what it is. I think it's all the same. So we are somebody's servant.

I don't think that's an option. No, I just please myself. I'm nobody's servant. Who are we serving then? Still somebody, we're still a slave, right?

[19 : 39] Let's be, Paul said he's a slave to Christ. he is sold out, he is a vessel for him. Verse 17, but God be thanked that we are, that ye were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you.

He's talking to the Romans here, they heard the gospel, they heard the doctrine, the teaching of Christ, and they obeyed it. Being then made free from sin, you became servants of righteousness.

Isn't that life? Isn't that being a servant unto righteousness? Isn't that the freedom? Jessica mentioned freedom, being free.

It's because you've obeyed that gospel. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh, for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now, yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. In other words, we were missing righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof you are now ashamed?

[21 : 15] For the end of those things is death. Yes, it always leads to death. It kills the life of God in us.

When we yield to those things, but now being made free from sin and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. These are such deep truths and amazing verses we read a lot and they're not new by any means to us, but there's such a depth in these verses.

We think there's freedom if I can somehow be a good enough Christian and do enough good stuff.

Just last night a guy told me that from another state was here visiting and he left and he made the comment that sometimes he thinks about he misses us and maybe he thinks about going to heaven.

[22 : 42] Once we get to heaven we can be with all our friends and I know you and I are going there John because we're both good people. And I just met him very briefly I was late for another appointment and didn't have time but I just thought wow how sad we are both such good people.

So of course we're going to heaven. That's how the majority of people believe that if you are good you'll go to heaven. So we can be pretty good and still love ourselves still serve ourselves and still be in our society we can be very good and acceptable but here in verse 23 it says the wages of sin is death this is 6 23 and in Romans 3 23 you might want to mark that down that verse says that for all have sinned and what finish the verse come short of the glory of God so we're all sinners he was wrong about that statement last night we're not pretty good I mean if he would have been yeah he still needs the new birth but he needs that verse for all have sinned and come short of the glory of

God and that wages of sin is death but the gift of God once we surrender to him those of us that have others that want to and still haven't but you're weighing the cost the gift of God is eternal life it's a free gift so free but it costs us our old self doesn't it we have to be willing Jesus is looking for fruit that fruit is found in yielding to him in our yielding to his word in our both in our lifestyle and in our daily lives remember Jesus said you must take up your cross baptism we could go we could make a lot of statements about what baptism is and there's many thoughts but it is commanded by

Jesus I don't believe it's optional for the Christian I mean everything's optional you know even as far as you don't have to be a Christian but for the Christian I don't believe it's optional it's a public testimony to the church and to the world it is our way of saying I am not ashamed of Jesus Christ I'm not ashamed of the one that I'm committed to many Christians treat faith or baptism as a private matter is your faith private is it just personal Jesus said whoever acknowledges me before men I will acknowledge before my father in heaven I think baptism may be our first public acknowledgement!

It's a lifelong commitment even a commitment to discipleship in Acts it says they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship to the breaking of bread and to prayer and the other thing I want to say this morning is that baptism is the beginning of the journey it's not that okay I've lived my life and now I'm at a certain age and now it's time to seal the deal and I'll just get baptized and done put a period at the end it's quite the opposite it's the beginning right those of us older ones we know that but do we it's the beginning of the walk it's where the start of a life of devotion begins to

[27 : 25] God's word to fellowship to prayer to holiness it means walking in obedience even when it's difficult it calls for our daily renewal reckoning that daily reckoning of that old man taking up our cross saying no I'm not I'm devoted to Christ we have choices every day don't we who is our master here's that verse in Luke 9 23 if anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me that's the invitation Jesus gave no wonder he said you know am I making it too hard are we lifting the standard a little too high let's think about also what

Jesus said that few there be that find it he said you know the other roads why there's a lot of most people are over there on that big easy road but my road is taking up a cross it's a narrow road straight is the gate narrow is the way and few there be that find it so I don't think we're being unrealistic here I think it's a narrow road Bible says so and this is a commitment to Christ to not do it on our own strength we heard that a little bit in the testimony how many of us have tried that right we've tried it we know it doesn't work doesn't work before you're

Christian so doesn't work after either we need the Holy Spirit we need God's empowerment in our life and that is the new life in him in us without me Jesus said without me you can do nothing spiritually speaking there is nothing that we can do to become holy we can't become righteous it's in Christ let's think about a lamp now that we have life our light is to shine right a lamp can be very beautiful and people go wow that's a nice lamp where'd you get that it's an antique nice lights some of us like nice lights but if there's no oil in it or it's not plugged in whichever way it is what good is it something we set on a shelf and reminds of old times but when you have a lamp or even a candle you know our light that we allow to shine will often light up somebody else's light too somebody said that if you take your candle and you light somebody else's candle your candle doesn't get any dimmer you just have more light now because there's two of you right the

Holy Spirit that inward power that enables you to shine for Jesus without that we can't make it Corrie ten boom a Christian woman who survived the Nazi concentration camps told the story of meeting one of the guards who had been responsible for her sister's death he had become a Christian and asked her for forgiveness Corrie said she could not forgive in her own strength but when she prayed the Holy Spirit gave her the power to extend forgiveness she did not have on her own see that's what the Spirit does in our life he gives us the strength that we could never do by ourselves the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 Philip shared the gospel with the Ethiopian official as they passed some water the man said look here is water what prevents me from being baptized the king

James said what hinders me they went down into the water and he received baptism he was baptized he received baptism then the scripture says he went on his way rejoicing and carried the gospel back to his people back to I think that was in Africa you know your baptism is not just about you our baptism isn't just about us it's about the mission that God wants to put us on for others right that joy that peace it's not just about me and centered around that it's about how can God how can you use me now God is using a lot of you all I know and that's such a blessing but that's what the gospel does it multiplies it grows let our light shine

[33 : 26] Jesus said a city that set on a hill people won't miss it when we allow our light to shine don't don't put it under a bushel and try to make it a personal thing that I'm saved but I don't want you to know Merlin that I'm a Christian or maybe it's a customer not hard to let be very vulgar do we let them know where we stand who is in your family in your workplace or your neighborhood that needs to see the light of Christ through you who is waiting to hear the good news from your lips and to see it in your life or we may be just a taker and not a giver if we have that light let's let it burn burn brightly there's a story of a lighthouse keeper who was given only a limited supply of oil to keep the light burning and people kept coming to him at this big lighthouse for oil for their lamps their homes and their businesses out of kindness he gave some away eventually he ran out of oil and the lighthouse dark now this is just a story but the lighthouse went dark this could be a true story and one night a ship crashed on the rocks and lives were lost when he was questioned by the authorities he said

I was just trying to help and maybe he did help but he did not take care of himself and made sure that he has oil in his lamp right the authorities their reply was you were entrusted with one thing to keep the light burning and God by entrusting his spirit into the hearts of a believer he is entrusting us to keep that light burning until he comes again we are entrusted with that to keep that shining for others think of the ten virgins only five kept their oil in stock only five the other five they ran out their lamps went out and Jesus said the door was shut to them they didn't make it let me ask you today are you living out your baptism commitment to

Christ are we running the race daily depending on Christ on his spirit daily being that witness for others we can always renew our commitments right that's the grace of God that we can commit we can recommit we had mentioned obedience to the word earlier you know maybe somebody's here this morning and is is contemplating following Christ maybe you have been thinking about it and you just haven't made that decision today could be your day to make that decision follow Jesus for life it's a big one count the cost it's a big decision obedience!

Jesus said if you love me follow or keep my commandments obedience is not about legalism it's about love Jesus said if you love me so many times today it's oh it's you're just legalistic and we don't want to accept loving Christ in that way we don't obey to earn God's favor we obey because we already have his love and grace that's why Jesus said if you love me would you obey me would you obey my word true love for Christ is not shown in words but in obedience Jesus gave the parable in Matthew about the wise man and the foolish!

man the wise man built his house on the rock because he heard the word and he obeyed and that's considered being built on a rock and when that storm came his house stood firm we know the story from right the wise man built his house yep I'm not going to sing that for you but we grew up with that song didn't we a lot of us it's actually a very deep story about choices but the foolish man built his house on the sand because he heard the word too but he didn't obey and when that storm came his house fell flat great was the fall of it the Bible says so disobedience is actually dangerous because storms will come storms will come the question is are you building your life on obedience to the word or on the shifting sands of feelings and opinions this word is solid it's truth you can rely on it you can count on it you can bank your life on it that it will stand and at the end of time we will be judged by it so study the

[39 : 44] Bible believe in the Jesus of the Bible are we are we willing to do that now I have another question comes a little closer to home what would you do if the Lord would ask you to ask a person what to do in our society again today that would be unpopular message I can't do what man tells me only God says I can only do what God says you know that is also wrong but it's also a half truth I want to just explain that a little bit my view of that there is a truth and we cannot follow after man we can't obey a man or woman when it doesn't line up with scripture for sure we know that in fact the disciples they were told to stop preaching

Christ they said we can't do that they were their authorities and for other things they needed to obey them but it outweighed or it went against what the scripture teaches!

so they told them that we cannot obey man we have to obey God or however that is there so that is a truth but what I'm thinking about is men and women of God men and women that serve God that love God that love truth can we hear from them or are we so afraid of that see I think it comes back to the self life can I listen to you when you speak truth into my life or is that just you see where I'm going with that here's what I want to point out and I believe that Jesus our authority and we're going to wrap up here in just a little bit gave one of the best most profound examples of that when the apostle

Paul was converted when he was on his face however that was and Jesus had already gone to heaven and a bright light shined down on Paul and I believe that it says he fell to the ground and Jesus spoke out of heaven he said Paul or Saul why persecutest thou me and Paul's response was who are you Lord that I persecute who are you and he said I'm Jesus from Nazareth we know the story Paul was trying to persecute all the Christians and the churches were all scared of him right it's an amazing story true true story something that really happened would to God that could happen again today maybe it does in some places happens to our hearts maybe in a different way but anyway the point is one of the next questions that

Paul asked Jesus was what do you want me to do Lord do you know what he said Jesus said from heaven he said to go into the city and it will be told to what to do you're going to go to town and you're going to meet a man and he will tell you what you need to do Jesus could so easily just told him what to do but I believe that for whatever reason Paul needed to go hear from another person he needed to hear from one of those!

[43 : 51] men that he! he's going to tell you what to do not a popular message in our day but there's a truth in that he went to a man and you can read the story and Paul he became blind and all that and what was it three days later he received his sight he received the Holy Spirit and he became a preacher of the gospel who just preached a whole message out of one of his chapters an amazing story and even Jesus was obedient to the word in Matthew 4 when he was tempted by Satan he responded every time all three times he responded with it is written just made a note here oh that we would get back to the Bible and say it is written

Jesus said that that's how he overcame the devil was by saying the Bible says it is written in the word of God and finally the devil left him shall we stand together the devil left him we're going to wrap up here in a little bit and then I think we'll just go right down to the river Lord willing Jesus obeyed the father perfectly even unto death on the cross Philippians 2 8 says he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death even death on the cross that's how Jesus obeyed no obedience is not a popular message today but it is a very important one in the garden of

Gethsemane think of this in the garden Jesus prayed not my will but yours be done that was obedience he was asking his father that this cup would pass from him that it would pass that do I have to do this take the sin of the whole world upon him even in that our savior obeyed his father he said not my will but thine be done even death on the cross if our lord obeyed the word how much more I mean he's god he's the author of the word does he expect us to obey I had to think this morning of that song a lot of the songs we sang were wonderful but crucify all the world within me what is that open the wells and in closing maybe we'll just sing that again if we could

Aaron open the wells of salvation let's sing that I don't have a book I don't think yeah here it is 371 is the page and as we sing that and you need to just commit your life to Christ whether it's the first time or the fortieth time doesn't matter but I just trust that our hearts will be in tune that if he were to come this afternoon to take us home whether Christ returns and that's another thing I often think about you know we talk of obedience the importance and all those things but the reality is that usually most days Jesus hasn't returned he has returned for some people though and he could return today but in other words judgment day isn't right away and so we think that commitment to Christ and obedience to him is optional you know

Jesus probably won't come back today or tomorrow but someday he'll come back and what if he came back today what if this was my last day am I surrendered to him am I ready we're talking about all of eternity so let's let's commit our life to him and remember it's not a playground it's a battlefield for our soul thank you for listening we're going to sing this song and if in your heart as we stand here you just want to make that commitment to Christ you can do that you can even stand up here if you want but if Jesus speaks to you about commitment and about your selfish life let him speak to us let's hear it let's hear with our last Sunday we heard a good message on the word and about hearing the word of God let's hear it with our hearts