

Adam Sandiford

This week's message is titled, "The Gospel righteousness and Baptism – Part Two." The scripture reading is Romans 1:16 to 17 and First Corinthians 15:1-4. I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. First to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the Gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written, the righteous will live by faith. Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel, you are saved if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise you have believed in vain. For what I received, I passed on to you as a first importance that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures that he was buried, but he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Don Smith

Yeah, so we're very grateful that you're with us. If you were with us last week, we started talking a little bit about, about baptism. And I wanted to continue with that thought today, I begin asking a couple of questions as I did last week, by a show of hands. How many here have been baptized? Just raise your hand if you have, okay. Now, here's two more questions. This one might sound kind of strange. How many of you remember your baptism? Okay. How many of you do not remember your baptism as number of hands? Because sometimes children are baptized and they are told later. This is what happened when you were a child, you were baptized. And so there's memory there of all of that. NT Wright tells his own personal experience of being baptized. He said, I have no idea. When I was baptized, I know I was quite young. And the question to him was, well, you know, how do you justify all of that when it seemed like there were a lot of adults who were baptized in the New Testament? And he said, Well, I like what Mark has to say, Go into all the world and preach the gospel. He that believes in his baptism shall be saved. He said, so as I grew up as a child, I believed, and I was told I was baptized. And so that's how it works for me, it may not work well for everyone else, but that's how I justify my baptism. And it's, it's easy, I think, on occasion, if you're part of a particular fellowship, that this is how we baptize, and this is basically the age in which we baptize, and others might not find that experience at all. And sometimes what can happen when it comes to baptism as we narrow right down to the point of, we think that we've really got it I'm not suggesting for a moment that we may not have it. I'm just saying. And I want you to really think with me on this because it just came to me this past. This past month or so I was, I was reading through it, you know, we don't have an example anywhere in the Bible of someone being baptized. Now, are you ready to throw something at me?

We have numerous examples of people being baptized. We have no example of what an actually looked like. We think it's being under the water and up out of the water. We do not have a scripture in the Bible that tells us what actually happened with someone's baptism. And I want to spend some time talking about this as we go through. Now, baptism is mentioned many times I think, 11 different occasions in the book of Acts. Matthew records Jesus leaving them ascending into heaven with these words, all, all authority in heaven on earth has been given unto me/ Go into all the world and preach the gospel. He that believes and is baptized will be saved. Matthew records that. But there's no example anywhere in the scripture where Matthew was baptized. Mark was the first gospel written, even though Matthew comes before mark in chronological terms, on the beginning of the Bible, but Mark was the first gospel that was actually written. A quick read, a quick book, and Mark records Jesus saying, Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but

whoever does not believe will be condemned. It's interesting to note that there is no example anywhere in the scripture of Mark, being baptized. Then Matthew, Mark, and Luke and Luke writes most extensively about baptism, but not in this gospel. Luke writes the book of Acts and in the book of Acts is where we have many, many examples of people being baptized. And the great story that many of us remember is this celebration of the Jewish faith called Pentecost. And people all came together and by the Holy Spirit, Peter was great boldness stood up and preach this magnificent sermon that wasn't brief. But it had so much power attached to it. Convicting people's hearts and the Holy Spirit being very present. And he says, men of Israel listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which he did among you, as you yourselves know. He was handed over to you, by God's set purpose and foreknowledge, and you with the help of wicked men put him to death by nailing Him to the cross. But God raised Him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, for it was impossible for death to keep its grasp on him. And then he continues on and says several other things. And then finally, people were cut to their heart. And they say to Peter, what should we do? And Peter responds, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And this promise is for you, and for your children, and for all who are far off, which is a nice way of saying the Gentiles, who will later hear the story of Christ. Cornelius being one in many others as well. So a couple of things about this, that I think is interesting. 3000 people were baptized that day on Pentecost. Do you have a picture in your mind of what you think that looks like? When you think of this story? I thought about this today, as I was growing up, I thought 3000 people are being baptized.

Where was it? The Jordan River? Or at Galilee? When you do a lot of reading, around Jerusalem, there wasn't really any huge place for 3000 people to be baptized all at once. Reading multiple scholars this past week. It's so interesting, but most of them believe that there wasn't probably one location where 3000 people were baptized, but they were probably baptized in different places throughout the city on different but the total will be 3000. But it's amazing to me. To grab a picture of this baptism Now, last week, if you were here we had a bit of a video on funny baptisms. That's not to lessen the import of baptism, where there was one little boy being baptized, he was so happy. He did like a swim through the baptistry or several occasions where this happens. A lot of ministers can tell you stories about this, that were baptizing someone and just as they're going under, they grab you and they're, you're going down with them. There's just no doubt about it. So I can tell you I've been baptized multiple times over the years, you know, and that's, it's just this wonderful experience of joy. It's this refreshing this, this renewing. It connects us with communion and just a few minutes, we're going to have communion, representing the blood of Jesus, the body of Jesus. All of this comes together. There's this wonderful moment where baptism and communion and all come together and it's so interesting to me. That as I grew up, and I don't know everyone's story, that how we were baptized, sometimes became more important than our baptism. And that is troubling to me.

I grew up being taught, there are five steps to baptism. I don't know if anybody ever heard this. It was believe, repent, confess, first of all hear, believe, repent, confess and be baptized. I remember at a younger age, I just felt this call of God and I really wanted to be baptized. Didn't have enough nerve to get out of the pew and everybody is different, but what I grew up, there was this invitation call. And it was always at the end of the service. And what was expected. And I don't know where this ever came from, but when it was expected is, when you sing this last song, then you come up and you stand in front of the church, which is frightening for a lot of people. And it certainly was to me and I just didn't

have the nerve on Sunday morning. And so several Sundays went by, and I really wanted to be baptized, but I just couldn't do it. I was just frozen. And I convinced myself on the way to church that morning, today's the day I'm going to do it, and I was ready to go and I remember once taking one foot in, put one foot back. I just couldn't do it. And then I thought, well, there's church service Sunday night, maybe that'll be a little easier and just so happens that it was a little easier that evening and then going into the baptistry nervous and shy and being baptized, I was down under the water and coming up out of the water because that's what we thought baptism was all about. But again, I make the, the, the, the true statement in the scriptures that we don't have an example of what a baptism actually looked like in the scriptures. It just says, people were baptized. So could people go down under the water and come up, I suppose. Could they be buried under the water and come up? I suppose. It's just done in one way or one fashion. But the sad part to me after that baptism, because this was so ingrained, was feeling this joy of being baptized, and a family member who I will not name said to me, but did you follow the five steps? Did you really, really here? Did you follow those five steps? And then this joyful experience became confusion. Is it right? Did I do it right? Was I wrong? Did I do it wrong? And what should have been a happy, joyful occasion brought worry, and maybe even a little bit of shame. And I remember going upstairs and waking up my parents and saying, here's what I'm worried about, and my parents reassured me, honey, everything is good, everything. Everything is good, and it is good.

But we read through the baptismal stories. Sometimes what should always be a blessing can turn into somewhat of a controversy. And one of the great stories that we read is one of the first quotation Gentile people who became Christians. His name was Cornelius, and he was a Gentile. And I was going to read the scriptures this morning. But with it's a bit lengthy. So I'll just tell the story, if you don't know you can find it in Acts chapter 10, several other occasions, and it tells a story of, of a Gentile. He and all of his family are very, very interested in who is this that the Jews are believing? Jewish Christians are believing. Tell me this story about Jesus. And so Peter goes in and explains to him all the story of Jesus. And Cornelius is so amazed at the story that he and all his family were baptized. And then it goes on to say that the Jewish Christians heard about that, and they were upset. They thought that it was only for them. And what should have been a joyful occasion, had some wrangling around it. And I just wonder sometimes as Christians do, we sometimes take what should be wonderful, joyful, beautiful. And wrestle and argue with things so often that some of the most sacred moments aren't as sacred as they should be. And it should be a joyful experience where we come alongside people and, and remember what happened to them. I think of so many families being baptized entire families being baptized, and I will say that out of the many baptisms that I've had the privilege of participating. I've never baptized a whole household. But there are several occasions in the Bible where entire households were baptized. Remember the story of Cornelius and all his family what we just talked about, they were all baptized or Acts chapter 16 and verse 31, Lydia, and all her household. I think that probably means children may be her butlers and maids. She was a very wealthy woman. Lydia, and all her household were baptized. And I'd like to know, the conversation that Lydia had with all our household. Did they want to be baptized? I, maybe they did. But Lydia said, you're coming with me. And here we go. This is important, and you need to experience this too. And they were all baptized Lydia, and all her household were baptized. So you could picture that in your mind. Where were they baptized? What was said, what was spoken?

So over the years, when someone is baptized, I am in the water with them. And I asked them a silly question. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? And a couple of people have grabbed me on that mark and said, Well, of course I do. Why else would I be standing in this baptistry and which

makes sense. But I said, Well, do you believe (I want to hear) Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? I don't know why I have to say that. I don't have to say that. And then I say, I'm very happy to baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as was recorded in Matthew and other places. And so I bring them down in the water and bring them up out of the water. And then whatever happens next happens. Usually it's great joy. Usually it's a hug. Sometimes people being so excited, they don't know what to do. And so they put me under the water with them. Just an experience, just, just joy, just this happiness, just this wonderful occasion, where this is beautiful. But can you imagine that person experiencing that baptism? And then as the day goes on, somebody whispers in his or her ear, but did you do that? Did you do this? Are you sure about that? And all of a sudden, what should be joyful, wonderful, lovely, Grace filled, honoring of God, God's Spirit in our life. All of a sudden, there's a bit of a blanket that covers that.

We do not have an example of anyone actually being baptized. We know the stories. They were baptized. We know that Paul was baptized. We know a lot of people in the Bible being baptized, but we don't know the words that were spoken. We don't know what it looked like. They were baptized into Christ with great joy. Except for Cornelius, who was a man with his family who wanted to be baptized. But when Jewish Christians heard that the Gentiles were being baptized, they didn't think that was too Right. And so, people who were stronger in the face, called a meeting and they all gather together and Acts chapter 15 said, Christ gave himself for all. Isn't that right? Everyone is welcome to come to Christ. Isn't that right? And so on the day of Pentecost, when Peter is preaching, he's repeating the words of Jesus and throughout the scriptures, there's so much talk about baptism and water and the joy of it all. Don't you know Paul says that as many of us who are baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death, we were buried with him in water. In that justice he was raised from the dead, we too should raise to walk in a new life with joy, and with confidence for all children of God through our faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who are baptized in Christ have been closed with Christ are but when the kindness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ appeared he saved us not by righteous things that we had done. But by His mercy. He saved us by the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit whom he poured out on us generously. Is there any sadness in any of those verses? There's this joy, this welcome this coming to the kingdom. That is precious. So let me conclude today this brief message Part Two from last week of thinking, as I tell the story, in your mind, picture this as you will, whether you see it in the baptistry whether you see it in the lake, whether you see it in a stream, I still can't get over 3000 people being baptized. Does that mean there was one person for every person baptizing them? Or did somebody say on the count of three, go under we're I know we have no idea what would it look like for 3000 people to be baptized all at once what was spoken what was said What happened? But I love the story of these households are gathering, Cornelius and all his family, the first Gentile Gentiles on record as being baptized into Christ. I get that. Because over the years, people who have been standing in that water with me, said, no one in my family has ever been baptized. I can't wait to tell them. Maybe they will too.

We sometimes forget how much courage it takes. And I believe honestly by the prodding of God's Holy Spirit to say this is Connecting with the death, the burial, the resurrection of Christ in this water. And my brothers and my sisters, or my mother and my father, or my children are welcome to have this experience too. I can't imagine I've never heard of anyone being baptized and never telling anybody about it. There's this joy, this connection. So this morning, I don't want to get in the way of any kind of communion thoughts. But when you take communion today, can you just picture your own Baptists? Can you picture why we have communion, death, burial and resurrection, which is part of our baptism.

And think of all of the millions and millions of people around the world who have been baptized who are taking communion. And maybe if you have a loved one, that you want to share with them the story of baptism and tell them about Your story, we can preach it all we want. But when you someone we know and love tells you their story and welcomes you to be part of this unique experience. It becomes their story to this joy of being baptized into Christ Jesus, that 3000 people 3000 people baptized, and all the baptisms over the years, and the baptisms who will come. Not to argue about it, but to be loved, and to be welcomed into God's kingdom. Let's pray. Our Father God, we thank you so much for the privilege of being your children. Thank you for encouraging us to grow stronger in our faith. Thank you for communion. We're so grateful for our baptism. And we encourage others who've been thinking about being baptized. They will And they'll be part of this multi generation of people over so many years who've been baptized into Christ. And then as the generations come, if you will, that more and more people will be washed by the blood of Christ washed a new in baptism in Christ. We celebrate with all those who are here today, those who've been baptized, those who are thinking about being baptized. May they be courageous and strong, and say to someone, I would like to do that too. And may we be available to them always. Thank you, Lord, for your love and for your grace. Amen.

Adam Sandiford

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