

# Baptism

September 24, 2023

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is titled "Baptism." Thank you to Rhonda, Ed, Janet, Don, and Mike for being involved in the video. The scripture reading is Acts 2 36 to 41. There was a recording issue during the closing prayer. Subtitles are shown on screen and a transcript is available on our website. Happy birthday this week to Lynn and to Christina.

## Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

Good morning. If you're out come in please. And to start it with, those of you who are here for the first time, students, thank you so much for coming and welcome. Glynnis is celebrating a birthday, I believe today, right? Yeah. And Kathleen is also celebrating a birthday and I don't see her this morning but oh I do see her. Happy birthday Kathleen. September the 24th we're having a potluck. Jack has COVID along with all of his other health problems and concerns. He's actually been doing quite well lately but anyway he's got COVID. And some of you may remember about Geoff's sister dying recently. Well her husband died also so Geoff's brother-in-law has also died with cancer. And those of you who remember Gordon Mewhiney who used to worship with us a few years back, he died suddenly recently. So those are some things to be to be concerned about today. And let us pray.

Thank you God so much for the opportunity that we have to worship and the opportunity we have to be here today with fellow believers and people who we love and people who love us. And we pray that we will continue to grow in our love and we will continue to grow in our faith in you and and give us strength in times of challenge in Jesus name. Amen.

## Communion

Throughout my lifetime I have always, at least from the early childhood years, had an idea that, you know, that there's more to this world than I can see and feel and touch. There's something beyond this world. In an early age I was curious about nature and how things came about. And I wondered about where they came from. Where did all this stuff come from? This matter that we have, the chemistry that we study in school, like how does all of this stuff actually work? The conclusion that I came to as a young person was that there must be something beyond our reality that's more powerful and more intelligent and more wise than what we are.

Throughout my experience in churches early on I became aware that there was this being called this being God and that this being had several different heads. There was God, there was Jesus, and there was the Holy Spirit. And that these gods interact with this world in a rather profound way. So there was this idea that when life is over or when Jesus comes again that there would be this place to rest our souls in for eternity. And I remember learning that and thinking you know and I heard that scripture about he would come through the clouds. So clouds became interesting to me. I would look up. I play golf in the morning. So I've seen a lot of suns sunrises in the last five months. They're all different. Clouds are all different. We go to the beach, we like to go down to the water and watch the sun go down. They're all different. They're all beautiful in different ways.

So you look to the clouds, wonder what it's going to be like when Jesus comes through them but you know what for 2000 or so in 23 years he hasn't come. I wonder when he's going to come. If he hasn't come in the last 2023 years probably he's not going to come this week. But there is this urgent sense of urgency that we expect him to come and that we need to be prepared for the coming. So how do we do that? In the meantime I mean when he's not coming.

First of all I think that we need to be prepared for his coming. Which means that each day of our lives that we might honor him by loving him and that we might honor him by loving each other. I heard a person say recently if I were to die tomorrow I would hope that the only thing left would be that I loved people. He's right. It's really the only important thing that we can do is to love each other and by doing that we honor we honor God. So as we think about this life that we have and for some of us we're closer to the end than others. Don't know exactly when that's going to happen but it's probably going to happen. You know they say there are two things that happen in life for sure there's death and taxes. It's going to happen. So are we ready? We are ready if we know the Lord and if we've tried to be obedient to his teaching and if we are there is no fear in death. No fear. We're ready to go.

This morning in our children's class we're going to be looking at some of these ideas. We're going to be talking about Noah. How that Noah prepared an ark that a few people could be saved. But in the same passage it talks about when the Lord comes there'll be people in the field. One will go to be with the Lord and the other will stay. So we need to be prepared for that. I think over the years of all of the songs that we sing about heaven there are so many of them. So for believers this is a hope that someday that we might be with the Lord forever. To this end as we celebrate Jesus this morning we celebrate this great gift that guides us now as we live our lives and guides us into eternity. Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven we are grateful to you for the love that you have for us that you created this beautiful world that you placed us here and that we are a special creation because we are like you in some ways. That we can think and reason and that we can love and be kind like you are. But we know that in this world we we sin and we are grateful that Jesus came to pay the price for that sin. That we might follow him and his words believe in him and follow him and that by doing that that we know that we'll be with you forever. We look forward to that day but until we have that day we give you thanks and praise for that sacrifice that you have given for us to make it possible. In Jesus name, Amen.

## Reading

### [Acts 2:36-41](#)

Good morning. This morning we're reading from Acts chapter 2 verses 36 to 41. "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Messiah." When the people heard this they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off for all whom the Lord our God will call. With many other words he warned them and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized and about 3,000 were added to their number that day.

[Music]

## Sermon

Good morning everyone. Thank you so very much for being with us today. For many years the culture in the churches of Christ at the end of a sermon if there was not an invitation for people to be baptized it wasn't considered a real sermon. Somehow over the years we've kind of maybe passed this up not talking about baptism maybe as much as we should have. This past week I was reading about stories of various baptisms some that I thought were pretty humorous. A preacher was baptizing a husband and a wife in the baptistry. It was a bit of a problem. The baptistry was small and confined and very close to the audience and the husband was six foot seven inches tall and his wife was six feet one inch tall. The preacher said that when he baptized them together it was like a splash pad at SeaWorld. The baptistry overflowed on everyone in the front row and a little boy who was at church for the first time said, "This is great can we do this again next week?" And most preachers would love to baptize people every week.

Baptism is wonderful. It's joyful. It's symbolic and everyone's baptism they would remember that baptism. For some reason there was a culture. When I was small if you were 12 years old and hadn't been yet baptized it was considered what are you waiting for and I'm not sure where that ever came from. And our baptism is we agree with what Jesus said that Jesus lived for us died for us was buried and raised again and that's really what baptism is all about. It's the death and the burial and the resurrection and you're suggesting in your baptism that you're being baptized into Christ Jesus. Baptism is wonderful. It's joyful. It's symbolic of the death burial and resurrection of Jesus as we've said. One of the things that baptism also comes to me to believe is that you belong. You belong to Jesus because he belongs to you. We've always belonged to him because he said that everyone was created in his image. So here are some scriptures today. Just some brief scriptures that might just trigger us a little bit in understanding baptism better.

Paul said don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death that we were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father we too may live a new life. Our baptism is an expression of being born again if you will or turning the tide getting closer to Christ Jesus and then it says if we've been united with Christ in his death we will certainly be also united with him in his resurrection. So baptism has everything to do with God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit and each one of us. Now maybe some of you were baptized when you were a baby and you don't remember any of that or maybe someone's taken a picture of that but in our particular church we've always believed in immersion where we put someone under the water and coming up out of the water. Baptism has everything to do with each one of us and maybe some of you were baptized when you were a baby and there may be some photos of it but even though baptism is a very solemn ceremony there have been many events that are sometimes funny. I baptized a lady years ago she was so happy and excited that she grabbed me and put me down under the water and I was wondering if she was ever going to let me up. I was underneath there for a while and she was just so exuberant just so happy that she was baptized that I guess she just thought I should be baptized again so I was and it was lovely the event was lovely the joy of it was lovely.

So many ways there have been baptisms over the years that are truly unique. Following the resurrection of Jesus Matthew records it this way then the 11 disciples went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go when the disciples saw Jesus they worshipped him but some doubted.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." And this is what is usually spoken when the person is being baptized: I now baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. In many ways it's like saying "I do" at your wedding ceremony. It's, "I belong to you and you belong to me." Then typically the people witnessing the baptism gather around the person who was baptized, welcome them as a brother or sister in the Lord and we remind them what Jesus said: "I will never leave you, I am always with you."

Now in Mark's gospel he writes these words: "and Jesus said to his followers, 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved and whoever does not believe will be condemned.'" There is this invitation, this welcome to be baptized into Christ Jesus but to continually ignore it and push it away is really not a great thing. It's Jesus himself welcoming us into his kingdom. So in Luke chapter 3: "The word of God came to John the Baptist and he went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism--excuse me--of repentance and forgiveness of sins." And just as a baby is born and completely washed our baptism is a physical and spiritual washing representing the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Now, John the Baptist could not forgive people of sins but he was, he was a forerunner to Jesus so that when in Christ Jesus our sins are forgiven.

John in his gospel gives a unique take on explaining baptism: "Jesus said these words, 'I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless that person is born of the water and of the Holy Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh and the Spirit gives birth to the spirit.'" In other words, the Holy Spirit gives birth to us, to our own spirit. It's more than just your personality, it's more than just your thinking. It's this concept of your complete soul, our mind, our emotion, our thinking, our personality. God gives it all to us and then the question would be, "so what do I give to God?" I give my life to him; He's already given his life for us in Christ Jesus and to represent our closeness to Christ, baptism is really a wonderful experience. As Jesus died and was buried and rose again in our baptism, in our baptistry here behind us, a lot of different experiences. And baptism over the years in different places. It's this wonderful concept of being closer to Christ than ever, ever before.

So Luke writes in the book of Acts--and it's in Acts many, many times--Peter said, "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's impossible for death to keep its grasp on him." And it is impossible for death to keep its grasp on us, especially being in Christ Jesus. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit and our baptism represents that we believe all of this. It's a beautiful description of how many people have been baptized over the years. So in the book of Acts you can read many, many stories of people coming to Christ Jesus. It says this: On the day of Pentecost people's hearts were touched and they asked disciples, "What do we do?" Peter answered, "Repent, be baptized every one of you, for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of God's Holy Spirit."

One of the reminders that we have and even in our baptism is God is always with us we are never alone and in our baptism it's this embrace of Christ Jesus. These precious words: "Those who accepted the message were baptized." How many? Three thousand people were baptized and they added to that

number on a daily basis. Now that's a lot of baptisms. It's this beautiful description that the Holy Spirit convicted people's own spirit to say yes to Jesus. Say yes to God. Saying yes to the Holy Spirit. Saying yes to scripture. I want to live the way Christ wants me to live. The Apostle Paul writes more books in the New Testament than anyone else; however, at one point in his life he mocked Christians before he became a Christian. And then when he becomes a Christian he changed his life from Saul to Paul and he preached mightily the gospel of Jesus Christ all throughout his life even until his point of death.

And then in Romans, the Apostle Paul said these words: Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father that we too may live a new life. Baptism symbolically means that we believe with all of our heart that Jesus lived, that Jesus died, that Jesus was buried, that Jesus was raised to life; just as we will be someday buried and raised again. And if we die with Christ, Romans 6 said, we believe that we will also live with Christ.

And then these precious words in Ephesians 4: There's only one body and one spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father who was above all and through all and in all. Think of who Jesus is and what he has done for us. Colossians 2: Having been buried with Christ in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised Jesus from the dead. And then in 1st Peter: This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you. Not the removal of dirt from the body, not taking a bath, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Christ Jesus.

Many people over the years have been baptized in various ways. For many of you who attended Camp Omagh over the years, before Camp Omagh ever had a swimming pool there was a little river down below. How many people remember that? So you'd walk down to the river, steep walk all the way down, and there was this little, little stream of water and they'd have to find a deep part somewhere in that little river where someone was going to be baptized. And I remember CG McPhee and some of these older people, wonderful people; great, great preachers being back in the water. It was interesting, some of those preachers always wore a suit and tie and then they had these big galoshes that came up to here when they were baptizing someone. I remember times like that and baptizing them in the river and baptizing them out and I thought about that. That was really interesting and I didn't know this for a long, long time but my mother told me that she was baptized by CG McPhee in that river many, many years ago.

Doesn't really matter where a person is baptized. What's most important is baptism and if you feel called to be baptized we would be delighted to help you. The baptistery is usually warm; sometimes there's a fly floating around in the baptistery. Doesn't really matter. Doesn't really matter where you're baptized. There are people here who remember that I've baptized people in bathtubs because they were ill and couldn't go anywhere else, so there was a, there was a baptism in the bathtub. Things like that happened in different places but the encouragement is to look at Jesus and then to look at ourselves. And Jesus invites us to come to him. He knew us before we were born, he knows us now, he will always know us. And there's that invitation that as Jesus died and was buried and rose again. That represents our baptism, our love for Jesus. Understanding his death, his burial, and his resurrection. That we will be together again someday. Your loved ones who have passed. We will be together

someday and it's because of the death, the burial, the resurrection of Christ Jesus and our saying yes to Jesus.

Think about baptism. Think about the interesting times, coming together. The joy and typically after the baptism is over, people gather around and pat them on the back, give them a kiss or give them a hug. Sometimes people don't want any anyone else there, just the preacher and someone else. It doesn't matter. Sometimes church can be so formal. That we have to do it in a specific way where there really isn't any specific way in being baptized other than the fact of your--of the death, burial, resurrection of Jesus. Under the water, coming up out of the water. Looking still very much the same but you've changed your life completely. Amen.

## Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, we're thankful for this time together, Although we're small in number, we're mighty as we edify each other through scripture and song and communion and remembrance of your son and what he did for us at the cross. Father, it's easy for us to look at the world and get tangled up and angry and see what's going on, so much injustice going on in the world, and so many crooked people that, some, some that are in our leadership now. Father, we do pray for our leaders, we do pray for a better world, but Father it starts with us. Help us to do one small thing to another person, to show that we love and we care for that person, because we're all made in Your image, and we're all important to you, no matter what we may look like or who we may pretend to be. We are still your creatures, help us to be your people, help us to be vital cogs and part of your kingdom to bring others. Encourage others to join the family of God here in the community. Help us be the shining light that we sang on earlier, and let our light shine. May we all be encouraged for the small gathering, but also be with our brothers who are meeting in the park today, may they have peace and fellowship done in front in your name, that the worship brings You glory. Father, we love you, and we just want to tell you that, and Father, we pray for, help us never to take your love for us and your forgiveness for us for granted. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

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