

Baptism of Suffering

by Edgar F. Parkyns

The sermon explores the pivotal role of John the Baptist in heralding Jesus and emphasizes the necessity of repentance for spiritual transformation.

Duration: 1:04:12

Scripture: Matthew 3:11, Matthew 10:16, Matthew 10:22-23, Luke 3:16, John 1:6, John 1:9

Topics: "Suffering"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the words of John the Baptist as recorded in Luke 3:16. John declares that there is someone mightier than him who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. The preacher emphasizes the importance of self-examination and repentance in response to the message of John the Baptist. He also highlights the role of John as the herald of Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. The sermon concludes with the proclamation of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Transcript

John chapter 1. How often has this chapter been preached on? My word, we go back to it time and time again. John chapter 1, verse 6. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for a witness to bear witness of the light that all men through him might believe.

You'll see the little scripture I have stopped at starts with John the Baptist, goes on to Jesus, the light, and from there to all men. I hope to follow that kind of outline, starting with John the Baptist, going on to the Lord Jesus, and finishing up with you and me. Whichever way you try to get into the gospel story, you are met at the portal with John the Baptist.

The portal is fourfold, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In Matthew, you haven't gone very far before you find John the Baptist. In Luke, you're introduced to the matters affecting his conception and birth, even before you're introduced to Jesus Christ.

And in chapter 3, he's telling us his full ministry. In Mark, right at the very beginning, you have the ministry of the Baptist. He is the gatekeeper, very definitely in Mark.

And here in John, you only got through five verses, and then at the sixth verse, here he comes again. He's there as the great introducer to the Gospels. This rugged man who had no formal education, being

brought up in the desert, perhaps wandering away down to Sinai and up into Judea, into the desert of Judea, living alone with God, separated to God from his mother's womb, filled with the Holy Ghost, yet finding no outlet, either outlet manward, in all those thirty years.

And then at last, he was sent forth. What an amazing man. Jesus said that there wasn't a prophet in all the Old Testament greater than John the Baptist.

He said, what went ye out in the wilderness for to see? A reed shaking with the wind? A man clothed in soft raiment? You can look in king's houses for those. What went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say, and more than a prophet, for from, how does he go? All the prophets have prophesied until John, that's a misquote, and there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. And yet, he finished his whole course of ministry in his early thirties.

He died even more early in life than Jesus did. Fancy burning out for God in thirty years, and the remarkable thing, only a few years less than three in public ministry, yet being greater, or at least as great as the greatest of all the prophets. This is the man whom God chose to be the herald of the King.

He didn't need a nice hall to preach in. He didn't need any advertisements in the local paper even. As soon as he began to preach to the passers-by in the wilderness, people knew and spread the news that a prophet had risen in Israel after four hundred years' silence.

Full of the Holy Ghost, every word he spoke was God-inspired. He was, as he says, a voice crying in the wilderness. He's the only prophet, incidentally, as far as I can see, who was himself prophesied of.

No one told about the coming of Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, but John was foretold by Isaiah and by Malachi, and the closing verses of the Old Testament look forward to the ministry of John the Baptist, so that he is the linkage in the pages of the New Testament which link us right on with the prophet Malachi as he closes down the Old Testament. He was the herald of the King. The herald came dressed in a rough garment of tent cloth, and when the king came he was the carpenter of Nazareth.

God's standards were different from men's standards. He preached about the coming one and the coming kingdom. He was the herald of the Christ, but in association with that preaching, as you know, his key word and his key ministry was repentance.

The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent ye and believe the good news. True repentance is born out of the declaration of good news.

Men lie grovelling in their sin and corruption until hope arises, and when hope arises then there is a possibility of repentance. Hallelujah. Repentance, which seems to belong so much to the area of despair as indeed it does, is nevertheless born of hope that God has something better.

If a man is in despair and there is no hope, instead of repentance he goes down into death and suicide. But where there is hope he can turn and turn to a God who is able to deliver and save and change. So John's message was a message of repentance, and as the doorkeeper of the four gospels we need to recognize that the road into almost every blessing that God has is paved with repentance.

As Jesus said, blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. There is a place, of course, for that true assurance in God which can enable us to lift our heads and declare who we are in Christ. But the weight of the New Testament and the Old tells us that a lowly and a contrite heart he will

not despise.

And if there's someone in our meeting feeling a bit depressed and heavy and you're feeling you're not quite up to standard and you're not as good as the other believers around you or something, don't shrug that off. It may be the very beginnings of the stirrings of the Holy Ghost in you to bring you, via repentance, into hope and into faith and into love and into life in dimensions you've never known before. We are not to shrink from repentance.

There is a kind of evangelism which goes through this land and America which aims at patting people on the back and saying you're all right, you are perfectly secure, there's nothing really wrong with you, God loves you and that's the end of it. But that is not the Bible way. The Bible shows us very clearly in the figure of this man in his garment of camel's hair at the dawning of the New Testament.

The way to God is the way of repentance. The way up is the way down. Humble yourself, says Peter, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

If I had been a Jew, I might have said, what's that fellow preaching repentance to us for? It's the Romans who ought to repent, not us. The prophets told us to leave idolatry and we've done so. The prophets told us to keep the Sabbath and we do so.

The prophets told us to fear the Lord and we do that. Moses told us to pay our tithes and bring our offerings and we do that. What have we got to repent of? How strange that God should send to a people who were a reformed people a prophet who says repent.

And I think the answer is that reformation is not good enough for God. That is only a veneer. God goes deeper than that and he requires a broken heart.

Hallelujah. If you're feeling a bit broken, then blessed be God, you're almost at the threshold of tremendous blessing. Go through with God.

How often we have read little books to comfort our souls when we should have been reading something to cut us to pieces. When I was at Pinecrest, almost for the first time, one of the texts I brought forward was examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith or no. What? Know ye not your own selves how that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.

And someone who had been brought up under standard evangelicalism thought, whatever's he saying that to us for? We mustn't examine ourselves, we must look to the promises of God. That's dangerous to examine yourself, but there it was in the scripture. And what, the word of God stuck like a barbed arrow.

And all her evangelical assurance left her bit by bit. And thank God, instead of running away from the searchings of God, she went through. And every day she has fresh revelation, fresh light, fresh joy and peace in Jesus.

Hallelujah, the way up is the way down. John the Baptist is the herald of Jesus Christ. He said four major things about our Lord, and they are listed, three of them are listed at any rate, in Luke 3 and verse 16.

We all know John 3, 16. It's just as well to know Luke 3, 16. Luke 3, 16.

John answered, saying to them all, I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire,

whose fan is in his hand, and he will truly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner, but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. Notice then the four things he said, or here are three of them.

One, he is mightier than I. Two, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Three, his fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor. And the fourth one, as you know, is found in John's gospel.

It was reserved until the last moments, long, some forty days after John had seen Jesus, he was able to make that last prophetic declaration on behalf of all those who had gone before him. When he saw Jesus standing distinct from the crowd, he had baptized him some forty-odd days before this, but now he was able to point him out and say, behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, thus completing his testimony. Soon after that, he was imprisoned under Herod's orders.

Even in prison, this brave man preached against the king and warned him to drop his adulterous ways. And his short life of testimony, in which he burned out for God, was sealed at the whim of a dancing girl, and his head was brought on a dish before the horrified king. There cometh one after me, he said, mightier than I. And he said these things that all men, through him, John tells us, might believe.

And the first thing we are required to believe about Jesus is his greatness. There cometh one after me, mightier than I. I was brought up as a modernist, but one thing my modernist teachers did spare me was that Jesus was a magnificent man. They did allow me to get through with a high estimate of the qualities of Jesus.

If John the Baptist was fearless, Jesus was more so. If John spoke out boldly, unafraid of priests and Levites and kings, Jesus went his way with full knowledge of what was waiting for him. John didn't know what was going to happen to him, but Jesus knew.

He saw the cross from the cross, mightier than John the Baptist. John stripped aside the garment of hypocrisy and exposed the leprosy of sin, but Jesus healed the leper, saved the sinner, blessed the fallen. He was mightier.

John was the voice crying in the wilderness. He defined himself from the definition of Isaiah 40. He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

Jesus was the Word of God. John carried the Word. Jesus was the Word incarnate.

The one coming after me, he said, is preferred before me, for he was before me. John is from time. Jesus is from eternity.

He is the Word of God. God manifests in the flesh. And the first challenge that John gives to us is to believe in Jesus, not only that perfect man, but God manifest among us.

Not only one tempted and suffering like we are, but one who is from eternity to eternity, upholding all things by the Word of his power. And let me say to you that we can never believe in too much in Jesus and his greatness. I pray for grace that I might believe in Jesus more next week than I believed in this last week.

I want to know the greatness of his power, and he wants us to know the greatness of his power. God wants all men to know who Jesus is. And the degree in which you know who Jesus is, is the degree in

which you can become a channel of blessing to other people.

It's not in rhetoric or in a natural ability or anything, but if you know who Jesus is, revealed to you by the Holy Ghost, if he indwells you not only in emotion, but in deep understanding, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, so that you know him and he knows you. It's there that your ministry blossoms into what God intended. We cannot function without Jesus Christ.

We cannot function on a creed. We need to know him. That was Paul's great passion.

And John, at the beginning, speaks of his greatness. There cometh one after me, mightier than I, the latchet of whose peasant sandals I am not worthy to unloose. Oh, let's renew and enlarge our confidence in Jesus in this hour.

If you go away with nothing else but that, you'll have got something that can be life-changing. Sometimes we, we depend overmuch on past experiences. You get your whole being to know who Jesus is.

Oh, the most life-changing faith that will change every day and every circumstance. There cometh one after me, mightier than I, that all men might believe. Believe John's testimony.

And the second thing he says is, I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The second thing he tells us about is Jesus, the great baptizer.

You would have thought that John would have gone into raptures about the coming ministry of Jesus. You'd have thought he'd have given you whole paragraphs about Christ's power to heal. But he didn't say a thing about that.

He seems to have missed all that out. All that wonderful earthly ministry that the four evangelists tell us about, he jumps right over and goes on to something which wouldn't start until Jesus had left the sea. For didn't John explain to us, John 7, that the Holy Ghost was not yet given, or was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.

And didn't Peter say on the day of Pentecost, he being at the right hand of God exalted, hath shed forth this which ye do now see and hear. It's also a little surprising he doesn't go into a great detail at this point about how to know the way of salvation. He slides past that somehow, omits it just here, and comes straight to this point that Jesus will give his converts an experience more dynamic than anything John gave to those who believed him.

Those who believed John and came to him for repentance were baptized in Jordan. And the nickname that the crowd gave to John was the nickname Baptist, John the Baptist. The Greek word is baptisteis, and it means John the Dyer.

They recognized in his action, the action of a dyer who takes a piece of cloth and immerses it in the dye and brings it out again. So along the banks of Jordan they were crying, John Baptisteis, John the Dyer. He's dipping them in that they might be changed.

You know perfectly well that if you do any dyeing of your curtains, I suppose it's old-fashioned these days, that maybe some of you dear older saints can remember the dim and distant past when you actually did dye your curtains, or maybe some even still do the same thing. But I guess you have discovered that

sprinkling is not the best method of dyeing. And also effusion, pouring the dye on, would produce some extraordinary results.

The satisfactory way of dyeing is by immersion. And I think that really settles, as far as I'm concerned, quite completely the kind of action that John went through when he baptized his converts. And what an experience it must have been for a farmer.

Farmers usually aren't very fond of washing. I knew a farmer and he spoke about a farmer's wash to me, and I said, whatever do you mean by a farmer's wash? Oh, he said, a farmer washes when he goes to market, or just before, after he's got his hat and coat on. Imagine then a farmer coming down, and there is icy Jordan.

And he's so convinced, one of his sin and need, second of the glorious possibility that the kingdom of heaven is at hand and Messiah is near. He's so convinced that he steps down into the Jordan, and my how cold it is about his ankles, and up to his knees, and up to his waist. And he moves out to the Baptist, standing there in his now soaking wet garment of camel's hair.

And then, for the first time, submits himself totally into the hands of another, and is immersed. He's probably never swum in his life. Down he goes.

It's like death. And then he's brought out again. He won't forget that.

Associated with his conversion to repentance, he's been immersed in Jordan, and he's received an experience which will remain with him for years. John said, I baptize you with water, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. And that means, surely, that the experience is going to be charged with the dynamism of God, charged with the power of God.

He shall immerse you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. And in order to receive his immersion, then the great truth is that you must follow a similar route that John the Baptist disciples took. That is, you must go down to meet him.

Hallelujah. Go down to meet him, and get as near to him as you possibly can, where you are surrounded by the presence and power of God. And allow him to handle the whole situation.

If you've never given yourself over to another totally before, then give yourself totally into the pierced hands of the Risen Lord. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. There has been a lot of talk of baptism, and a lot of practice of baptism in Pentecostal circles, where people are sort of engineered and manipulated into something which is shallow, imitation, unreal, and not lasting.

But oh, if you go down, down into the, into the things of God, in humbleness and brokenness, and make sure that no one baptizes you except the Heavenly Baptizer, you'll have something that'll change you. You'll have the real baptism. Hallelujah.

And there's been a great rediscovery of these things in recent years, and the last, especially in the turn of, since the turn of this century, since the great movements in Wales, and Azusa Street, and elsewhere. All over the world, poor, humble Christians have been made more and more aware that Jesus baptizes in the Holy Ghost. So much so, that one or two Pentecostal denominations have reduced the gospel to a fourfold simplicity, as you may know.

Jesus the Savior, Jesus the Healer, Jesus the Baptizer, Jesus the Coming King. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. What does the fire mean? I've looked at it.

At one time, I was told that the fire was hell fire, corresponding to verse 17. Listen, verse 16, He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire, whose fan is in his hand, he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner, that's those who receive the Holy Ghost, but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable, that is the baptism of fire for unbelievers. Well, that sounds reasonable, but there's a flaw in it.

For baptism is both given and received voluntarily, otherwise it's drowning. For baptism, the candidate comes forward of his own free will. I am told that the Emperor of Russia, or the King of Russia, I believe it was, in the 10th century, having listened to, I believe it was Saint Boniface, ordered the whole nation to be baptized.

And everybody in Russia in that day was all baptized on one day, that is sprinkled, and it wasn't a voluntary thing at all. If you didn't get baptized, you had your head chopped off. But real baptism is undertaken voluntarily.

John's converts came out to him and submitted to him. So, I doubt if that is the meaning of that he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. In the early days of Pentecost, folk were singing, the fire, the fire, the Pentecostal fire, and they thought it was all the fire of enthusiasm in the Holy Ghost.

But I found that wore off after a bit. And the people who were doing all the shouting about the fire were mistaking their own natural zeal, which I often found rather trying, with that fire that Jesus was talking about. And so, I want to make a suggestion to you this morning.

I don't know whether you'll like it or not. I believe that there is a double baptism here, Holy Ghost and fire. Not the same thing, but two balancing things that God gives.

Jesus said one day to his disciples, I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straightened until it be accomplished? That's in Luke 12, if I remember rightly. He wasn't referring to his baptism in the Holy Spirit when God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and power. He was referring to something future which would release him, which would get him out of the straitjacket of his earthly ministry.

In his earthly ministry, he was straightened, he was bound. He was only to reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The others were beyond the scope of his calling.

And he longed to reach the whole world, and until his further baptism, he was straightened. In his earthly ministry, when he was at Galilee, he couldn't be down in Jerusalem. He would have to walk with the others.

He looked forward to that time when such limitations would no longer be upon him. But as the God-man, he could reign from heaven and be present with us here, and present with our friends in Africa, and those in New Guinea, and all over the world at the same time. And that baptism that he was speaking about was the baptism of his own sufferings and death.

On another occasion, two of his disciples were brought forward by their mother. Great big babies, they were too scared to go themselves to their master, and so they said, Mum, you ask him. And so Mum asked for them, and there were the two sheepish-looking disciples standing in the background, while

Mother said, Lord, will you grant my two boys a very special favor? May they sit on your right hand and on your left when in your kingdom? And Jesus looked past her to the two disciples, apostles maybe, and said to them, Are you able to be baptized with my baptism? Are you able to drink the cup that I shall drink? And they said, Yes, we're able.

All right, he said, you'll have it. But the reward you seek is not mine to give, for that belongs to my Father. There is a baptism of suffering which every Christian needs to know, and it must be entered into as voluntarily as folk entered into baptism in water.

When Paul was converted, the Lord said to Ananias, Go and lay your hands on him, that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost, and I will show him what things he must suffer for my namesake. So that when Paul received the Holy Spirit, he was immediately introduced to a life of suffering, and he took it with great joy. It was from the hand of Jesus.

Let me give you a few more scriptures like that. When Paul was stoned at Lystra, he was raised from that critical condition by the power of the Lord, went on through the other towns, and presently came back through Lystra. And he exhorted them, he appointed elders, and he said that through much tribulation, we must enter the kingdom of God.

They saw what had happened to him with their own eyes. No, he said, you must be prepared for that yourself. If you're going to belong to the crucified, you must accept not only the comforts of the Holy Ghost, but the baptism of fire.

In Malachi, he sits as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he puts the fire under it, and he purifies by fire, and it is the fire of accepted suffering. He said himself, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. And that doesn't mean to say bearing a little bit of rheumatism and not complaining about it.

Something altogether different. Those who bore their cross were often to be seen in those tragic days in Galilee and Jerusalem, driven by a cohort of Roman soldiers on their way to death, carrying the instrument of death on their own shoulder, as Jesus did later on. And the Jews utterly hated, loathed, and were terrified of the sight of a man bearing his cross.

Jesus said, if you want to follow me, you take up your cross and follow me. Accept a baptism of suffering, face up to it. And moreover, he said, unless a man does this and forsakes everything, he cannot be my disciple.

His words are strong and disturbing. Let me quote to you from Matthew 10. Wouldn't you like this bit left out of the Gospels? Verse 24.

Oh no, I'd better come back to verse 16. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, they will scourge you in their synagogues. Ye shall be brought before governors and kings, for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought of how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak.

For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your father which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver the brother to death, and the father the child. And the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death.

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake, but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee to another. Verily I say to you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come.

The disciple is not about his master, nor the servant about his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? Fear them not therefore, for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known.

What I tell you in darkness, speak ye in light. What ye hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. Fear not them which kill the body, that are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your father? But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my father in heaven.

But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword.

For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me. He that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it. He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Perhaps we'd better cut it out.

Maybe we can find a dispensational way of dodging it. But there are Christians in Russia who can't dodge it. And there are Christians in China who haven't dodged it.

And there were Christians in Chad who were buried in the ground up to their neck and the ant set their eyes out. There are those all over the world in this our day who have understood that there is a baptism of fire, a way of suffering. And we poor, lopsided people have thought all about the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and a great deal too little about that which identifies us with the cross of Christ.

And few of us are ready to take the risk of losing out for God. We want the blessings, we want the gifts, but to suffer and die is something we'd rather leave aside. But he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

Says Peter, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that shall try you. Oh well, it can't come to me. I'm living in comfortable conditions, I've got a good job, I shall be alright.

Well, never mind. But the point is, have you given your life over into the hands of Jesus to the place of death in a very practical way? Have you really taken up your cross? Have you really faced not only the baptism of blessing, but the baptism of fire? The early disciples knew it, the early church knew it. And we are told in Acts that they count, they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name's sake.

And we've gone through the scripture with a kind of filter. We've tried to filter out all the suffering passages and retain all the comfort passages. But it won't do.

May God deliver us, may God deliver me from my natural shrinking from suffering and danger for Christ's sake. It's an ugly thing and it's no part of the kingdom. When you were first converted, beloved, you knew that your Christian life was going to cost you something.

Isn't that right? And ever since then, other Christians have been saying, now don't be so extreme, don't take it quite so seriously as all that. Modify your behaviour, just tone down a bit and you know, you mustn't go seeking for trouble. And so we have so modified our practical Christianity that we're almost worthless in this world.

I'm not suggesting that you should just become fanatical and wild, but I am suggesting that there is such a thing as receiving from the same one who filled you with his spirit, an identification with his cross, that will enable you to go through any kind of suffering gladly for his name's sake. A complete change in our whole pattern of thinking until we are truly his disciples and not just charismatics. I didn't mean to say that in a derogatory way, but there is a case, a tendency among all of us, I suppose, to look for the sweetness of the blessings and avoid the bitterness of the cross.

Paul wasn't like that. He counted it all joy when he entered into sorrows and his goal was that he should be conformed to the death of Jesus in every way. Enemies put him in prison, Christians let him down and he was trapped at Jerusalem.

Year after year he suffered as few men have suffered, frustration and disappointment. His heart was surging with the inspirations of the spirit. He longed to be out going as far as Spain to preach the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ as he had preached it already as part of the lyricum.

And he was confined year after year unjustly in the prison and all through other men's wickedness and dishonesty, one was hoping to get a bribe from him and kept him there year after year. And he could have got bitter, but when he writes he says, Paul a prisoner of Jesus Christ. What had made a difference? He had received his baptism of fire and he was delighted to suffer with Jesus.

He knew who he was, a man who had been identified with Christ's sufferings. And nothing could scare him, nothing dismay him, he had been through. Now, trouble, tribulation, will come in every man's life.

A man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. You can't avoid it. We think, we used to think as kiddies that, you know, we could get through without any of the troubles that other people moaned and groaned about.

But it can't be avoided. Trouble's bound to come. Some trouble we pull upon ourselves through our own follies.

I've pulled a lot on myself through my own follies, and I dare say I'm not the only one here who's done that. And we have to suffer. But what a blessed thing to be baptized by Jesus to such a degree that you are

identified with him in his sufferings, and you can take the bitter as happily as you can take the sweet, because you are identified with him in his death.

He has baptized you not only with the comfort of the Holy Ghost, but with the fire of the fellowship of his suffering. That's what made the early church. And it is the lack of this balance which is what is wrong with the Lord's people in this our day.

He shall baptize you. Will you let him? Will you say, Lord, I've got awfully selfish and lazy and inclined to look after my own comforts, but I want you to baptize me with the fiery trial and to be ready in my heart and eager to suffer for your sake. You know, the early church martyrs actually were eager to suffer.

And there were, although they didn't understand everything in the third century of our era, there were many who competed to be thrown to the lions or burned at the stake. They counted it the highest privilege to die in agony for Jesus. Why? He had baptized them into suffering.

Hallelujah. Put the iron into them so that they were able to stand triumphant. When Paul Cranmer was serving the Lord in Britain, he was a double-minded man.

He was a double-minded man. Archbishop of the church, favourite of King Henry. He compromised him point after point, but in his heart he really loved the Lord Jesus and really loved this book.

He was in great favour with Henry that later on, after the brief reign of a little boy King Edward VI, he came under the power of Bloody Mary. And Cranmer, under pressure, gave way and signed a recantation of his Protestantism and signed submission to the great persecuting church of Rome. But he could not be happy about it, weak man as he was.

And in the prison, the Lord gave him the baptism of fire. And he realized that it was better to die with Jesus than live with his compromises. And when at last he was tried again, because he had shifted his ground and he was led away to the stake somewhere in London, he stretched out his right hand into the flame.

Oh unworthy right hand that had signed that paper of retraction. And the flames consumed it while he watched it. And he went up and sacrificed the gar.

Hallelujah. And the Lord calls every follower of his into the twin baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. That makes men and women of God who will go through for Jesus, whose hand is in his hand and he will thoroughly purge his flaw.

The harvest was brought in from the fields and brought to the flat top of a high hill, which was the threshing floor. There the oxen would drag round the threshing sleds and they would be closely followed by the winnowers, who would take their great wooden shovels called pans, here in this passage, and throw the mixture of chaff and wheat into the air. The wind would carry away the chaff and the wheat or corn would fall to the ground and would be gathered into the garner.

John had tried to purge the floor of Israel, but he said, there's coming one after me and he will thoroughly purge his flaw. He'll divide the chaff from the wheat without any mistake. Praise God he's in our midst this morning.

Chaff has the same shape as the wheat. You know that, you who have plucked corn and rubbed it in your hands as we did as boys, that's the threshing. And here comes the wind, you blow through it and then the

chaff is separated.

You know how the chaff and the wheat look almost the same. In fact, the chaff is a bit bigger than the wheat. But the chaff, although it has the right appearance, has nothing in it.

And when Jesus purges his floor, there's a lot of chaff that will go and only the wheat will remain. And if there's someone here who you realize that you're chiefly outside profession and there's nothing very, very real inside in relationship to Jesus Christ, remember that he is the judge, the fan is in his hand, and he prefers to purge his flaw here and now and to leave it until that great judgment day. But whichever way he does it, he will make no mistake, he will thoroughly purge his flaw.

He is not only savior, he is judge. And then the last thing that John said about him was that tremendous occasion when he saw Jesus standing clear from all the others. And John, the evangelical writer, is the one who records it twice over, that mighty declaration, behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

When we've seen it all, when we've faced the tremendous challenge of what he is, there comes within us that dread awareness of our own inner corruption. The light, the truth, the direct challenge of Jesus Christ is such that everything in us which is corrupt is exposed. Even our self-protection, even our timidity, even our weaknesses, even our inner greed and secret corruptions, they're all exposed in the light of his countenance.

And we know not where to turn, but thank God at the close of John's testimony, before they took him away to prison and to ultimate death, he was able to stretch out his indexed finger and pointing hand and cry, behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Notice once again that when they heard what he had to say, there was nothing to be seen except an ordinary-looking carpenter. There was no lamb there, only an ordinary-looking man.

You need the eyes of faith to respond to God's beholds. When the Word of God says behold, he's asking you to see something you can't see. He's calling to a faculty in you which perhaps has lain dormant, or which God has to give to you, when he opens your eyes that you might see who Jesus really is.

Behold, says John, the Lamb of God. Have you noticed too that even when Jesus was crucified, there were both friends and enemies around the cross who saw him there in his agony and suffering, his wounds, the crown of thorns, the distress of his tortured body. They saw it all, the agony of his countenance, but they didn't see the Lamb of God.

They didn't understand a thing about it. But the Holy Ghost comes to testify to Jesus and reveals to your heart and mine, when we are broken and needy. He reveals to us the Lamb of God, and what does John go on to say, who taketh away the sin of the world.

Doesn't just expose it, doesn't just describe it, doesn't just reform it, but takes away the sin of the world. Thank God. The whole lot of it, including mine, he takes away the sin of the world.

The Holy Spirit comes and he shows us our sin, he penetrates our heart, we see how far short we have come of God's high calling, and the whole thing is labelled sin, and we dare not label it anything less, but then he shows to the broken and contrite heart, the Lamb of God who takes away. Blessed be his lovely name, the sin of the world, and even those sins which have surfaced in your conscience this morning and mine. He takes away the sin of the world.

Hallelujah. That cry, it is finished, means the finish of me and my sins too. He takes away the sin of the world.

The evangelist goes on to say, John was not that true light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

I just pause for a moment to look at that phrase, that true light which lighteth every man. Now isn't that odd? You know perfectly well that Jesus has not been preached to all men. How can he light every man? To tell the truth, I don't know.

But I am told that all things were made by him, and I believe he has an interest in the remotest heathen in this world who has not yet heard the gospel. And I believe this, that somehow Jesus, who in a way that we know not nor understand, was involved in your being, even before you knew him, in some way or other, sent a shaft of pure light into your darkened being, so that you could never be satisfied totally with sin and corruption, no matter how much you tried. There was a little shaft of light.

He lighteth every man coming into the world. When we go into heathen villages and we preach Christ, we know that he's been there before us. And those who have heard the still small voice will recognize what we are saying is true.

Hallelujah. The gospel reveals the one who has been operating beyond our consciousness from eternity. He is declared unto us in this precious word.

And when with all my being, I come back to my Lord Jesus and accept his cross, and all as it means, I'm coming home to that which my Creator destined for me before I was born. Hallelujah. And you can never be satisfied with anything less than a total yielding to the mighty baptizer who baptizes with the Holy Ghost and with fire, who gives you both blessings and sufferings.

And that means a total yielding to him at any cost and at any price. I just opened to a hymn by dear Francis Ridley Havagum, who understood these things very well. Thou, Lord, hast borne for me more than my tongue can tell Of bitterest agony to rescue me from hell.

Thou suff'rest all for me, what have I borne for thee? And thou hast brought to me down from my home above Salvation full and free, Thy pardon and my love, great gifts thou broughtest me, what have I brought to thee? Oh, let my life be given, my years for thee be spent, world fettered all be riven, And joy with suffering blent to thee, my all I bring, my Saviour and my King. He couraged to possess you wholly. He doesn't want just to give you the comfort.

He wants you to have the whole significance of the cross. Will you yield to him his kingly right, His fan is in his hand and he will truly purge his floor. Make no mistake about it, no double dealing with him.

He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. And he is the greatest one of all. And he's the Lamb of God who lifts your burden of guilt and disobedience and rebellion and brings you right back to God.

Hallelujah. And he's right here now. What do we say to him? Lord, give me the comfort and not the suffering.

It won't even satisfy you. You know it won't. Will you take the whole, the whole challenge of his relationship? Oh God, I have, I'm looking back over my life, I realize how far short I've come of this.

It's only just recently that God has shown me that this is the truth that I was evading. Thank God it's here now. Will you accept this challenge? Let's bow in prayer, shall we? And we find it's not in us.

We weren't made heroes, were we? We weren't born that way. But in new birth, in the baptism in the Holy Spirit, he intended us to be wide open to the fellowship of his sufferings. Praise the Lord.

Will you take that now? Will you say, Lord, I'm not capable of it, but you are. You're able to baptize me into this area. Amen.

And I don't know how you care to signify such a surrender before I say anything about that. Maybe there's someone here who's not even born again, not even Christ's, still outside. You can receive him now, if you will.

Will you believe him, this blessed lamb of God who takes away your sin? Bless him, all your sin, if you believe that. Will you accept him now? It would be good if you stood to your feet where you are, as an indication. You do that.

Stand to your feet, taking Jesus now. Thank you. Thank you.

God bless you. Anyone else coming from darkness into light? Oh, out of a load of guilt, into forgiveness. Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

See him there. He's the end of that struggle. Blessed be his lovely name.

He receives everyone who comes. Anyone else in that same position needing to come to Jesus now? Will you stand also? And those of you who feel that God is challenging you to an out-and-out relationship with Jesus, in which your consecration is sealed not just by your own efforts, but by his baptism into the fellowship of his sufferings. You may not agree with all theology, but you know the reality of it, don't you? Well, you, if this is a moment of decision for you, you stand to your feet too.

Praise the Lord. Thank you. Thank you.

Oh, Jesus. Jesus. Lord, with timid hearts we come, and knowing our limitations, knowing that we can't make it, but you who baptize, you are the one who enables.

We've found no satisfaction in being any other kind of Christian than one who is in total involvement. Take us now, Lord. We accept the meaning of the cross and the fire and the suffering.

It might make big changes for some of us, but we accept it, Lord, at your hand. We don't want our own foolish choices, we want your choices, Lord. Take us now.

Oh, thou great baptizer, hold us close to thyself, that we might know thee, and the power of thy resurrection, and the fellowship of thy sufferings, being made conformable to his death. We want it lifted from the Word and the page, and made real, Lord Jesus. Receive us now according to your promise, Lord.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.

You may be seated.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/2/SID2550.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/edgar-f-parkyns/baptism-of-suffering/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net