

The Baptism (Part 4)

by Ron Bailey

The sermon explores the meaning of baptism and how it relates to the Lord Jesus' death and resurrection, emphasizing the importance of faith and trust in God's word.

Duration: 1:07:57

Scripture: Psalm 32:1-2, Matthew 6:33, Romans 4:3-5, Revelation 3:2

Topics: "Baptism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of questions in the Bible and how they engage our thinking. He specifically focuses on a question asked by Paul in Romans 4 about Abraham's experience. The speaker encourages the audience to explore the use of a specific phrase in chapter 5 of Romans, highlighting the New Covenant's superiority over the Old Covenant. He uses the analogy of a rock pool being overwhelmed by the ocean to illustrate the abundance and fullness of the New Covenant. Additionally, he mentions the power of words in bringing back memories and refers to a phrase in the Song of Songs that prompts reflection.

Transcript

Some of the brothers got together on Saturday morning and we were talking about different things, seeing where the conversation took us, and I just commented that for some months now, in fact about 18 months, I've had a burden on my heart that comes from the Book of Revelation and the word to the church at Stardust, where the Lord spoke to them and said that they were to be watchful and to strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die. Now, I don't think I mean something which is ready to die by the sound of the singing, but sometimes God trusts things to us and it's really good to revisit those things that He has entrusted to us and see how we're dealing with them. And consequently, what I've wanted to do this weekend is talk about the baptism.

And although I am talking about the baptism of the Spirit, I've taken a more sort of unorthodox route. I haven't gone through most of the most familiar texts. I've gone in another direction, because what I wanted us to do was almost start all over again and say, well, what does it mean? What are we talking about? And what I did for the first couple of sessions was talk about baptism and what that really means, what it meant to the people who heard that word.

The thing about us is that we are conditioned by our experience, we're conditioned by our history. If I say baptism to a Baptist, he thinks, I know what you mean, it's this. If I say baptism to an Anglican, he says, I

know what you mean, it's this.

But in fact, they mean two quite different things. So, it's really important to have a look at the Bible and see how God uses His words. What I was saying the first couple of times we were together was that the Bible don't really need dictionary definitions.

They don't have dictionary definitions. What they have is histories. And God has used them constantly in the experience of His people and He enshrined these things, not just so that we would have a meaningful explanation of them, but so when we heard the word, it brings to mind a whole wealth of things.

I was saying the other day, I don't know how long I've been here now, I was saying, I smell coal smoke in the air and it always brings back amazing memories for me. Some years ago I was in the south of Poland, which is the industrial part of Poland, and I was spending a little time with some of the churches down there and they kept on apologizing for the pollution. They said, we're really so very sorry, it's not like other parts of Europe.

Things are being let run and it really is so bad. And I said, please don't apologize for anything, it's wonderful. I said, I breathe in these smells and I'm transported back to when I was five or six, sort of walking to school.

Because I come originally from North Staffordshire, from the potteries, part of the world that sometimes referred to as smoke on stench. And it really was pretty polluted when I was a boy growing up. But the consequence is that with those smells come all kinds of very warm memories, memories of being safe and memories of being carried by my father's back, all kinds of wonderful things.

It's like that. Scents bring back memories. Words bring back memories.

God knows how we're built. Let me show you, just before we pitch in, let's go to the Song of Solomon, Song of Songs. And there's a little phrase here that we sing from time to time.

And it's one of those phrases that you almost need to pause and look at and think, what's being said here, what is all this? This is Song of Solomon, chapter one and verse three. I'll read from the beginning to come up to this point, but it's verse three we're heading for. The Song of Songs which is Solomon's.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine. Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointments poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee. Now it really is such an obscure verse that for people who don't have a Bible background, they come across a verse like this and they don't know where to make a start on it.

There's hardly an image in this that really makes sense to modern life. But what he says here, because of the savour, that's the sweet smell, because of the sweet smell of your ointments, your name is like ointments poured forth. Now what does that mean? It's a picture really of Solomon, and more than Solomon, but it's a picture of Solomon at a time when he would be in a triumphal procession, maybe going to one of his weddings or something like that, and there would be perfumes that were used, unique perfumes, which would be so identified with Solomon, in the minds of the people who stood by the way and listened to it, that whenever they smelled that, they thought of Solomon.

And the consequence was that later on, whenever they heard the name Solomon, they could smell anything. It's amazing how things become linked together and related. There's a wonderful story about a

man named Paget Wilkes.

He was a missionary to Japan, and for a time he lived in London, and on one occasion, he had been there for a little while, and some Japanese visitors came to the house. And as they stepped into the hall, one of them stopped and said, you have a member of the Japanese royal family here. And Paget Wilkes said, well, and he had a family member, but it was, and he said, well, how did you know? And they said, well, there's a scent that only the Japanese royal family is allowed to use.

And when I came in through the front door, I smelled it. It's amazing, the sweetness, this name that we say is sweet, the name of Jesus, that's what it is, because of all that's associated with it. But some of us worked in the business place and in the world of work where the name of Jesus is used constantly, and it has no sweet smell for the people who use it.

The name is empty, it means nothing, it has nothing associated with it. It's because of the association, it's because of what's linked with the word. And the word has power, it charms our breath, it gives us comfort, it encourages us.

So Bible words are very important, and what we should do is not go immediately to the dictionary to find out what they mean. In fact, it's the last thing you should do if you really want to be a student of the Bible. Don't go to the English Oxford dictionary, they have no idea what Bible words mean.

And they'll always lead you astray somewhere else. What we need to do is see how God used it, see how he used the word, the associations that are with it, and see what it means. And that's what we've been doing the last couple of days, by referring to the time when the Lord Jesus used this word baptism.

And he used it in a context that's become familiar to us now, but initially it must have been really quite an amazing surprise to the people who heard it. Because Jesus had been speaking about the last times and about his coming, and about some of the consequences, and then he says, I've come to cast fire upon the earth, and I'm... What will I if it is not already begun, he said, if it's not already kindled? And then he says this, I have a baptism to be baptised with, and I'm straightened, I'm narrowed in, I'm shut into this thing until that is accomplished. There are things that he wanted to do, but he couldn't do them until this baptism had been accomplished, until this thing had been finished, that's what it really means.

And what we said, I think the first night we were together, that accomplished really is the word finished, and it all links in with the time when Jesus from the cross cried, It is finished. Listen to the word carefully, I have a baptism. The cross was the baptism when Jesus cried, it was his baptism.

It wasn't anybody else's baptism, it was his. He said, I have a baptism to be baptised with. It's his baptism.

It was his uniquely. No one else will ever experience what he experienced at that particular time. You know how, in the Bible, hopefully you've heard people talk about the cross in the life of a Christian.

And sometimes it is a puzzle for you people who hear this and say, well what does this mean? Well, the cross is used in two different ways in the Bible. There's his cross. There's the cross of Jesus.

No one else could carry it. On that cross he died for our sins. Uniquely, once and for all, never to be repeated, never to have anything added to it.

That was his cross. It was once for all and forever. And in his ministry on one occasion the Lord Jesus Christ said, if you do not take up your cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.

He didn't say, you've got to take up my cross. You can't take up his cross, only he could take up his cross. Only he could suffer sin.

Only he could bear the penalty. Only he could go through it, but you have your own cross. And it has nothing to do with sin in that sense.

It has to do with self. It has to do with my right to myself, as Oswald Chambers would have called it. And me laying down my rights to myself in order to do the will of God.

So the cross, depending on how we use it, can mean different things. It can mean a once for all thing that never ever needs to be repeated. Or it can be something which has to be repeated every day.

He that doesn't take up his cross daily and follow me, cannot be my disciple. Now I wanted us to look at the word baptism in the mouth of the Lord Jesus when he said, I have a baptism in the Word of God. Because I wanted us to understand some of what baptism meant.

And not to get entangled with some of the things on the edges, but just to begin to go for the heart of it. What does it really mean? What is baptism? And we said that it was immersion, but it's not just immersion. It's actually saturation in something, so that what the person has been baptised into, they become so one with it, so identified, that you can't separate the one from the other.

And I think this is the third time I've said this now, but it's so important to say it again. In Bible days they used to use the word baptism when they were dyeing cloth. If they took some white linen, they'd plug it into a purple dye, they would baptise it, and from that moment, the linen and the purple became so absolutely one, that you couldn't mark where one ended and the other began.

The cloth has become purple. It's not just that the cloth has purpleness, the cloth is now purple. The two have absolutely become one.

What happened on the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ was manifold. It was amazing, there are all kinds of aspects of it. The scripture says that he was the man of God who bears away the sins of the world.

Now if you think of the picture of bearing away, that's the picture of someone carrying something, like you might carry something on your shoulders. And that's true, but later on the Bible begins to go a little bit deeper, and show us that although that's true, there's another level of truth. Because Peter says, he bore our sins in his body, on the tree.

Not just on, superficially, but in his body. He took it into himself. In Isaiah, there's this wonderful book that I guess most of us know, but it says all real life sheep have gone astray, and God that he has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

And laid on him actually means God gathered together all the sins on him. All the sins of the world, your sins, and my sins, yesterday's sins, and tomorrow's sins. The sins from Adam to the last man whose sins, before times come to an end, all the sins of all the world was gathered together on him.

And Peter says, it was in his body, on the tree. But even that isn't the full measure of his identification with us. Because Paul tells us, right into the Corinthians, he became sin.

I can't explain it any more than that, I dare try. I think we've come to the edges of what God has revealed at this point, and we hardly dare say any more than what's already been said, except just simply to say that on the cross it was a baptism, and he was baptised into something, united with something, became so absolutely one with it that he was inseparable from it. And you couldn't tell where the one ended and the other met, began.

We were saying, I think maybe in one of our car journeys at one point, it was almost as though the Lord Jesus acted almost as a sort of a lightning conductor, and he gathered all the sins of all the world into himself on the cross, and it brought down the wrath of God in judgement. We touched over, it was last night, about the Father saying that he would unsheathe his sword, and that his sword would strike his son. And it gets to the edges of our mind, and our minds begin to boggle, and we hardly understand the enormity of what took place.

But the point I want to make is that baptism is not just being dipped into something, it's being saturated in it, it's being marinated in it. It's being so absolutely one with it that you can't separate the one from the other. Okay? That's what baptism is.

Now, water baptism is but a picture of that. Let's go to the letter of Paul to the Romans. And I would love to go through this very, very slowly.

Don't worry, I'm not going to. But I would love to go through almost from the beginning. I want to get to chapter 6, but I would love to go through it gently and lay down the foundation.

But I'm going to do it just a little bit like this. In chapter 4, Paul asks a question. There are dozens of questions in the letter to the Romans, and there are hundreds of questions in the Bible.

And the amazing thing is that most of them have an answer right next to them. And the Bible doesn't ask us questions because it doesn't know the answer. It asks us questions because it wants to engage our thinking.

You see, if I ask you a question, you can't go to sleep. Well, it depends how long I preach for, I suppose, but generally you can't go to sleep if your mind has begun to be occupied with a question. So, Paul, he is speaking in the Spirit of God, begins to ask questions.

And this is the question he asks right at the beginning of chapter 4. He says, In other words, what was Abraham's experience? That's what he's saying. This is the manner our father, said this Jew speaking, this one was our father according to the flesh. What was his experience? What did he discover of God? What was it all about? And then he goes on here to speak about something unique.

You know, the Bible refers to Abraham as the father of believers. He is the father because he is the firstborn. Quite often when the Bible uses the word father, that's what it means.

It's not always a biological term. It actually just simply means the firstborn. I don't know whether I've actually said this before, but way back in Genesis it talks about certain people, and I always get them all mixed up, but there's Jubal, and there's Jabal, and there's Tubal-Cain, and it says that one was the father of those that dwell in tents, and one was the father of those that play music, and one was the father of those who worked with metals.

And I always say this question, well my father, my own natural father, was an engineer who liked camping and played the mouth organ, so who was his father? According to Genesis, who was his father? Because if you read on one more chapter to Genesis, you come into chapter six, and all the descendants of Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-Cain died in the flood anyway. So, there aren't any natural descendants. So, when the Bible says that these people are the father of it, it means the very first.

The person who set the trend. The initiator, the archetype, the first one to do it in this particular way. Now, Abraham is the father of believers in a particular way.

There are other people in the Bible who believe God, but there's something very specific about Abraham, and it comes in this caption here in this little passage, where it goes on its sentence. It says, Where Abraham was justified by works, he got something to glory about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? Abraham, and this is a quote from Genesis, chapter 15, verse 6. Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness.

If you were taking my advice and trying to find out how the Bible used words, and you were looking up something like the verb believe, or the noun faith, because they're actually the same word, and I said, well, tell me the first time you're going to find this in the Bible. The first time you would find the word believe, or faith in the Bible, would be here in the story of Abraham. It's a time when, we won't go into all the details of it, but God made certain promises to Abraham, and the Bible just simply says that Abraham believed God.

It's the very first time that the Bible uses the word believe. Abraham believed God, and then it goes on, it says, and God counted it, that's his faith, counted it as righteousness. Abraham did not achieve righteousness.

He didn't somehow get to a level where he was righteous with God. He received righteousness. It was put to his account because he put all his trust in God.

The Hebrew word for faith is amen. So, Abraham amended God. That's really what happened.

God said something, and Abraham said, he didn't just say, Abraham amended him. What is faith? We're saying, I think it was this morning, that faith really, it's response to revelation. It's not you deciding that you should be better, or be braver, or be able to do more wonderful works than you've done previously.

It's you responding to God. God brings the word, faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God. God says something, you respond in the way that God wants you to, and that's faith.

And this is what happened with Abraham. The word of God came to him, and he believed, and he became the father of believers. I can hear kind of one or two English accents here, I know you're mostly Scots, but you know that some of the English people are very reserved people, and have quite a reputation, because they don't want people to get too enthusiastic, or excited against things, so they have a whole list of problems to make sure you don't get too carried away with things, like too many cooks spoil the broth, which really means don't get too involved in this, because there's already enough people here anyway.

And this wonderful classic one, which is, don't put all your eggs in one basket. Faith is putting all your eggs in one basket. Faith is no contingency plans, no plan B's, nowhere to go if this doesn't work.

Faith is total dependence upon what God has said, and that's what Abraham did. He made not a single contribution to his own righteousness. Not a single contribution, not a penny worth of righteousness, did

Abraham add to it.

He believed God, and God counted his faith as righteousness. Now, this is familiar stuff. I hope it's familiar stuff.

This is what Bible teachers would call justification by faith. And it goes on, it explains in this particular passage that even the people of God were required, although they were circumcised, they were still required to be people who walked in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham. In other words, circumcision wasn't sufficient, they also had to be Abraham's children.

Abraham had to be their father in faith. They had to have the same kind of faith that Abraham had. And then he goes on, and he goes on, he goes on to say, let's jump ahead a bit, he says in verse 7, the end of the chapter almost, that God had a little description here of faith.

So I'll read that. I'll read from verse 17. As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, before him whom ye believed, even God, who quickened the dead and caused those things which be not as though they were, who against hope believed, in hope that he might become the father of many nations.

According to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now dead, when he was a thousand hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.

Faith glorifies God. And being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore, this kind of faith, therefore it was imputed, it was reckoned to him, for righteousness.

And then he says this in verse 23, Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was reckoned to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be reckoned, if we believe on him, that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was justified never, for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. So Paul at this point is saying, well this is what Abraham did, he believed like this, he put all his eggs in one basket, he trusted God absolutely, and the reason the record is there is not just for Abraham's benefit, or not just for the benefit of the physical descendants of Abraham, but it's for all of us. All those who are children of Abraham.

I can see if I can get you thinking, you have got to become a child of Abraham before you become a child of God. That's to say, you've got to have Abraham's kind of faith. You've got to be an Abraham kind of person who puts all his eggs in one basket, who trusts God absolutely, before God can move on to the next stages.

And then we've got a description here in chapter 4 of some of the implications of someone who is justified by faith. Someone to whom God has reckoned righteousness separate from any contribution works of the law that he might have done. And in verse 7 he says this, and I'm not going to go through all this too slowly, I hope.

In verse 7 he says this, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven. This is one of the by-product blessings of someone who is justified by faith. Someone to whom God reckons righteousness because of their faith.

They know the blessedness of iniquities being forgiven. By the word forgiven he really means sent away. Doesn't mean covered up at this point.

It means sent away. It's a picture of the scapegoat in the time when they confessed the sins of the nation over an animal and sent it off into the wilderness. Carrying away in picture the sins of the people.

Have you ever heard those people who say well I'll forgive you but I won't forget it. Most people don't understand the word forgiveness. The word forgiveness actually means to send it away.

To send it away. To put it away from you. That's what it means.

So don't say I'll forgive but I can't forget because you're actually saying I'll forgive but I won't forgive. If you understand the implications of it. That's what God does.

God puts it away. He carries it away. He puts it away.

I think it was Corrie Ten Boom who used to say that God takes out sin and buries them in the depths of the ocean and then he puts up a big notice that says no fishing. You're not to remember it. You're not to bring it to mind.

God puts it away. These are some of the blessings that Abraham knew. Abraham knew the blessedness of iniquities forgiven.

He knew that sense of peace. That God had done something. And not only Abraham but what I'm describing here according to Paul is what David does in describing the blessedness of such a man.

So Abraham knew this. David knew this. In other words all those who were justified by faith know these byproduct blessings.

They know iniquities put away. Whose sins are covered. This is another Old Testament picture.

In Old Testament times the idea of someone who was polluted and not fit to be in the presence of a king and that was provided for them an atonement. Something which would cover them. I've known it for a long time now but I know there's some people here who were kind of hippies or lesser.

You know the word katapheta then? Well the Hebrew word for atone is kaphtar. And it's a link because if you're old enough to remember what a kaphtar is it's the garment that goes right down to the floor it's got long sleeves and a hood. And the consequence is that if you wear it properly you can't see a thing if the person has got it.

And they are completely atoned in this picture. They are covered. They are completely hidden.

And it's another Old Testament picture of the way that God did the thing. So the people who had blotted their copybook, as you would say, people who had stained their own characters of sin God would still make a provision for them so that they could come into his presence covered and still acceptable to him. This isn't the half of it yet but this is just the beginning.

Then it goes on, it says, Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin. God puts to the man who believes him righteousness to his account. But not only does he put righteousness to his account and he bankers here, God refuses to debit any sins to your account.

This means that God puts his righteousness to your account and if you are one of these people who is trusting him absolutely it doesn't matter what you do, the balance never decreases. It's still always the perfect righteousness of God. In fact, maybe you know the translation of that verse in 1 Corinthians 13 which says, Love doesn't keep a score.

Love doesn't keep an account of sin. And all this was part of God's loving provision. All this was, we're answering a question unless you forgot the question.

What did Abraham our father according to the faith understand? What was his experience? Well, righteousness was credited to his account when he put all his trust in God. What was his experience? Well, Abraham knew the blessedness of iniquities that were put away. Abraham knew the blessedness of sins that were covered.

Abraham knew the blessedness of God not keeping a score of his failure. These are all the blessings. And it comes down here towards the end of chapter 4 and it says it wasn't written for his sake alone it was written for your sake.

To us also to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification. And I hope this won't stumble you too quickly and that you'll listen to me a little bit longer for what I want to go and say. Chapter 4 is really all Old Testament salvation.

It's the can of salvation that Abraham knew. That David knew. It's genuine.

It's real. And it's included in the can of salvation that God prepared in the New Covenant. It's included but it's not the whole of it.

There's more. Let's see what he goes on to say now then. Verse 5. And follow the logic now as we're going to see this soon.

He says, therefore so this links in with what he said before therefore being justified by faith we have peace with Christ by whom also Stop. Pause. Think.

If words mean anything at all, by whom also means that we're now coming on to the truth of everything that was in chapter 4 but there are going to be some additional things that weren't in chapter 4. Are you following my logic in this? By whom also. So everything that Abraham knew everything that David knew plus. So let's look at the pluses.

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand. The New Covenant gives access into something quite different more than in fact more than is one of the favourite words in chapter 5. Here's your homework for tonight. Find out how many times Paul uses the little phrase more than in chapter 5. Because chapter 5 is more than chapter 4. Because chapter 5 is the New Covenant and chapter 4 is the Old Covenant and the New Covenant is more than the Old Covenant.

Not different to it so that it doesn't include it includes all of it. Tell me what it's a little bit like. It's a little bit like if you if you go down to the seashore and you kind of go to one of the rock pools and you've got the sea there and it's one or two little kind of crustaceans and things in there and then the tide comes in.

The rock pool is still there. It's not not there. It's just that it's absolutely overwhelmed with an ocean of fullness that has come as well.

And the New Covenant is an ocean of fullness. And this is how Paul expressed it. He expressed it like this The student is by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Now this is one of the first marked differences. If you know Romans or if you're a good evangelical and you've done good counseling training you should know Romans 3 in verse 23 which says there's no difference for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Do you know that verse? All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

What God intended for the human race was glory. Do you know there's another question that David asked what is man that thou art mindful of him and the son of man that thou visitest him for thou hast made him a little low of the angels and crowned him with glory. That was man's original condition.

Glorious. Crowned with glory and honor. But when man sinned he didn't only just spoil his present condition he forfeited his destiny.

He blew the lot. He lost his glorious destiny that God had for him. He fell not only into sin but he fell from the glory that God had expected for him and crowned for him.

And man consequently is hopeless. He has nothing that draws him forward. But you get here to chapter 5 and now Paul is saying we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The thing that was lost in Romans chapter 3 is now restored in Romans chapter 5. The glory of God. It becomes a possibility again that man should really be what God intended him to be. The song piece where David asks that question is a fascinating song.

If you're one of the people who like definitions and want to know what things really mean and you say well what is man? Some people hear what is life and it's a tale of what is it? Fury told by an idiot and all these different people have defined it and all the rest of it. What is man? Well here's the Bible's definition of man. He's a little loaf of the angel crowned with glory and honor.

I want you to notice something about the Bible's definition of man. It doesn't have sin in it. Sin is not in the Bible's definition of man.

In fact, man if he has sin in him is no longer what God really meant by man. Because God says let us make him in our image and our likeness. And if he has sin in him is no longer in God's image and no longer in God's likeness and he no longer deserves the title of man.

Which I'm sure you're very well taught if you know is the reason why Paul speaks in Corinthians and he makes reference to Jesus being the second Adam the last Adam and the second man. Because effectively there's only ever been two men. Only two who fulfill the definition.

Adam was in the image and likeness of God, briefly, blew it, squandered our destiny and Jesus who maintained it right the way through. Man as God intended him to be. Here it is.

We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. It doesn't matter how often you fail. I was saying I'll say this again because I think this is a little illustration.

I won't try and go through the whole story. C.F. Lewis, as well as writing his non-new books, he wrote lots of things. But he wrote a little series of science fiction books a trilogy of them and one was called Out of the Silent Planet and the second one was called Voyage to Venus and the third one which isn't quite so good is called That Idiot Stinks.

But the middle one this Voyage to Venus, it's just a story. It's just a complicated illustration in many ways. But he imagines this time when someone goes from Earth to Venus and they arrive at Venus.

Remember it's just a story. Don't get too carried away with this. He arrives at Venus, this Earth man just at the point when Venus is experiencing its creation, its Eden when God is putting everything in place and all the animals are brand new and everything is just beginning to come together and in this Venusian Eden, if that's the right word for it in this there is an Adam and an Eve there is the man and the woman and the man from Earth arrives there just at the point when Venus begins to have its temptation when Venus' evil one comes to tempt the woman to believe him and make another pattern of life and the man from Earth gets involved in all that takes place and there are tremendous battles that go on.

And I will cut to the end of the story now and you can read the book yourself. So you cut to the end of the story and there's this wonderful scene that C.S. Lewis describes very wonderfully of all the animals of this new creation all surrounding the new Adam and the new Eve in this particular, this new world. And there's lots of singing and dancing and they're rejoicing because things have begun now things can begin and they can begin to develop.

And the man from Earth is actually on his face in front of the Adam and the Eve, the king and the queen. And they want to lift him up and make sure that he's part of the celebration and C.S. Lewis puts these words in his mouth and he says, don't lift me up, let me lie here. I've never seen a real man and a real woman I've lived all my life in shadows and broken images.

And I said last night, you and I have lived all our lives in shadows and in those broken images you've never seen a real man. You've never seen man as God intended him to be unless you've had a vision of Jesus Christ. We've lived all our life, even the best of us, among shadows and broken images but in the gospel God restores the hope of the glory of God to the human race.

We shall be what God destined that we should be. What God declared that we should be. And it goes on, it says not only so, but the glory and tribulations also and tribulation works patience patience experience and experience hope and the hope which makes not ashamed because, we've come to the new covenant now, because the love of God is being poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has given to us.

And having spoken about the love of God in our heart this isn't the love of God to us, this is the love of God in us. This is the fulfillment of the last verse of John chapter 17 when he prayed that the love of which the Father had loved the Son should be in them. Not just for them, not just received by them, but in them.

That it should be their own personal experience. And here he speaks to the Holy Spirit coming, he speaks of the love of God that comes as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit and then he describes the love of God so that you don't confuse the love of God with any other kind of love. And he makes this distinction in his famous verses where he says in verse 7, for scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet for adventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

But God commends his own love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. That's God's love. It's not like human love.

It's not somebody dying for a good man or somebody that loves them. It's actually God laying down his life not for his friends, which is the highest form of human love according to Jesus, but for his enemies. God commends his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

That's the love of God. It is possible for the love of God to be in the heart of a man. It is possible for a man to love in the way that God loves.

So let's have a look at Romans chapter 9. Romans chapter 9 he's Paul's testimony. I say the truth in Christ I lie not my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit. Can you see how carefully he's preparing the way for what he has to say? I lie not, I speak the truth in Christ I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit.

And then he says this. I have continual heaviness, I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. Now your authorised version says I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ.

It's actually I was wishing that I myself was accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh who are Israelites. This is Paul's testimony. These people his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh, chased him all over the known world.

They harried him from the post, they tried to stir him to death tried to have him murdered, drowned in prison anything would do to get rid of this man. And Paul discovers a reaction in his heart to that. And the reaction that he discovers in his heart is he was actually wishing that if it were possible he could be separated from the blessing of God so that they could know it.

Extraordinary. That must have been love. That's the love of God, shed abroad in a man's heart by the Holy Spirit.

That's Calvary love. That's God loving those who hated him. That's God willing to lay down his own life and his own blessing so that those who deserved it least should begin to benefit from it.

That's the love of God here in a man shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit. So this is the kind of thing you get into in chapter 5 of Romans. I'm not going to go through the whole thing by any means but we'll leave chapter 5 and you can follow it through yourself.

And I want to come to chapter 6 now. Chapter 6 we've got another question. We've got a couple of questions here.

What shall we say then? In the light of everything you've said here. Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? That question really fascinates me. I wonder the gospel that you preach, the gospel that I preach, do we emphasize so completely the love of God, so completely the salvation that comes from Christ by faith? So completely that God, this is the language of Romans, that God justifies the ungodliness? Do we believe it so completely and preach it so strongly that someone might say if that's the case, why shouldn't we carry on sinning so that grace may abound? Or do we preach a gospel that's mixed up with law? A gospel that says, well if you do this and do this and do this you'll continue to know the blessing of God? Or is the blessing of God entirely as a result of my putting all my aids in one basket and trusting him absolutely for my salvation? If the gospel can't be misunderstood so that this question is

asked, it probably means we're not preaching it properly.

You can go home and think about that. But anyway it says, God forbid, how shall we that died to sin live any longer in it? Do you not know and now we're coming to my word baptism. So I'm ready to start now.

Do you not know that so many others as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? I wonder if you are one of those Christians who is, maybe for years you've been asking God to work out the cost, to bring you to death, to bring you to the place where all your problems were over. You notice this here is not talking about your death. You were not baptized into your death.

You were baptized into his death. That's what it says. Do you not know that so many others were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into his death.

The gospel that you preach, the gospel that I preach, do we emphasize so completely the love of God, so completely the salvation that comes from Christ by faith, so completely that God, this is the language of Romans, that God justifies the ungodly, do we believe it so completely and preach it so strongly that someone might say if that's the case why shouldn't we carry on sinning so that grace may advance, or do we preach a gospel that's mixed up with law, a gospel that says well if you do this and do this and do this you'll continue to know the blessing of God, or is the blessing of God entirely as a result of my putting all my eggs in one basket and trusting him absolutely for my salvation. If the gospel can't be misunderstood so that this question is asked, it probably means we're not preaching it properly. You can go home and think about that.

But anyway it says, God forbid, how shall we that died to sin live any longer in it? Do you not know, and now we're coming to my word baptism, so I'm ready to start now, do you not know that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? I wonder if you're one of those Christians who is, maybe for years you've been asking God to work out the cost, to bring you to death, to bring you to the place where all your problems were over. You notice this here is not talking about your death. You are not baptized into your death, you are baptized into his death.

That's what it says. Do you not know that so many of us were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into his death? In Bible days, when they baptize people in water, the Bible refers to that Christian baptism as baptism in the name of Jesus. That's not a baptismal formula, that's just simply a way of distinguishing Christian baptism from John's baptism.

They were baptized in the name of Jesus, which meant that they came under the authority of the name into which they were baptized, they were saying I am Christ's man, I am Christ's woman. That's what it means. So usually when you come across this phrase in the Bible, you find this little phrase that says that they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. In John chapter 6 it does not say that you were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, it says you were baptized into Christ Jesus. You weren't just baptized into his authority, you were baptized into the person of Christ.

Apparently. These people are speaking to that here. People who have received the love of God poured out in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, they are baptized into Christ Jesus.

Remember that we've tried to define the word baptism. It means immersion into, it means saturation into, it means uniting with, it means such a total identification with the thing into which you are baptized that you

can't tell whether one ends and the other begins. Isn't that our definition of baptism so far? Do you not know that when you were baptized into Christ Jesus, this is when you became one with him.

You know, don't you, that all the blessings of God are in Christ Jesus. None of them are detachable. Eternal life isn't detachable.

You can't have eternal life. It's not an offer. This is the record that God has given to an eternal life and this life is in his son.

He that hath the son hath life and he that hath the son of God hath not life. You do not receive I know we use these pictures about God giving you eternal life like a Christmas present you say thank you for it and there's a certain truth in it but it's not detachable. God does not hand you eternal life wrapped up with a ribbon on it.

This is the record that God has given to his eternal life and the life is in his son. He that hath the son hath life. The life is in the son.

All the blessings are in the son. This chorus that we sang earlier on tonight. Nothing can compare to the promise I have in you.

Good, good, good words, excellent words. Not the promises I have from you the promises I have in you for in him all the promises of God are in him. Everything that God wants to do for you is in Jesus Christ.

This new life is in Jesus Christ. This ultimate salvation is in Jesus Christ. The only thing that God has got to do is get you into Jesus Christ because everything that God wants for you is in Jesus Christ so if he can get you into Jesus Christ that's all he needs to do.

And I don't know biblically any other way of getting into Jesus Christ other than being baptized into him. I can't find anywhere else in the Bible how it tells me I get into Christ. I'm not talking about water baptism.

You understand that, don't you? Water baptism would be baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. This isn't in the name of. This is into the person of.

This is immersion into the person of Jesus Christ. It is identification with the person of Jesus Christ. It is such a uniting, such an identification with him.

And Paul says, don't you know that if you were baptized into him you were baptized into his death. You don't need to die. You just need to be baptized into his death.

You don't need to die to sin. You just need to be baptized into him who's already died to sin. Sin can't touch him.

Isn't he real? I'm looking a bit bewildered now. I'll try and make it a bit simpler. Verse 3. Do you not know that for many of us as we're baptized into Jesus Christ, we're baptized into his death.

Therefore we are buried together with him by baptism into death. As Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. And then he says this at this point.

For if we have been, now the Orthodox version says planted together in the likeness of his death. And more modern versions often say united together with him in the likeness of his death. And they're both good translations.

And what's interesting is that it's showing us that baptisms means to unite something with something else. Baptism is not just a passing experience. It's not just a quick splash in the water and it's over.

This is baptism which is a continuing state. I said it the other night and I'll say it again. In old Bible days there were two words.

There was the word baptza which meant to dip something and there was the word baptizo which sounds a bit similar but it goes a bit farther because it means to immerse something in it. And there's an old Greek cookery book which explains how you should pickle onions. And it explains that first of all you should bacto them in boiling water.

I think we've decided that is now what we call blanching. So you bacto them. This is a Greek dip into boiling water and it does something.

But then to continue the process you have to baptizo them into vinegar. Now the consequence of baptizoing them into vinegar is that they're immersed into that, they're saturated into it until all the flavours, all the juices making my mouth water here from pickling them in all the goodness all the taste, all the flavours all the scents that are in the marinade are going to be absorbed into the onions and you won't be able to distinguish where the onion finishes and where the taste begins because the onion has been baptised into that vinegar. And parente, the baptism in the spirit, baptises a man or a woman into Christ Jesus and makes him absolutely warm so that all the flavour of all that he did, all that he's gained, becomes the experience of the onion.

Oh look at that, black pickled onions. No you don't really. My favourite Christmas joke is what is small and round and laughs a lot.

Do you know that? It's a pickled onion. They get worse so I won't tell any more jokes now. If we have been planted together in the likeness of a death, we shall be also in the likeness of a resurrection.

It says, it goes on in verse 16, knowing this, that our old man was crucified together with him. This is wonderful. You know, you've got Christians who are constantly looking for new experiences.

They want an experience of the old man being dealt with. They want an experience of the besetting sin dealt with. They want an experience of all this is in Christ.

It's all in Christ. All that God has got to do is get you into Christ and it's all yours. And you do not need a separate personal experience of your old man dying.

This isn't, you don't have a Roman actually. We have a shared one. This is our old man.

Our, plural, old man, singular. This is the human nature. This is what the human race became under the wrong head.

The old man. And the power of it, the life of it was broken when Jesus was baptised into what we had become. And it was broken in him.

And when you're in him, it's broken in you. And it's dealt with. This is a wonderful plan of God.

It's so, it's so absolute, it's so entire, it's so complete. And it leaves us free, of course, to concentrate on him and not another experience. It leaves us free to give ourselves to him and not worry about the next thing that I should be doing or the next thing that I should be getting.

I have Christ and I have all. I have need of nothing else other than Christ. This is the way that God has done it.

Do you remember the story, I'll come to a conclusion soon. Do you remember, well I'll start anyway. Do you remember the story way back in the Old Testament, of the time when Abraham sent out his servant to find a bride for his son.

Remember this story? Genesis chapter 24, I think it is. I think it's a fascinating story. Because Genesis chapter 22 is the story of Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice.

And Genesis chapter 23 is the story of the cave of Machpelah where Abraham paid the price so that what was dead could be buried out of his sight. Hallelujah. You know that God has given his son and he's paid a price to buy a place where what is dead can be buried out of God's sight and never troubling again.

Then you come into Genesis chapter 24 and you get this amazing story of Abraham who sent his servant and goes into the far northern country to find a bride for the son. The son who had been offered as a sacrifice by the father is all linked together. He's gone to find the bride.

And when he finds the family of the bride he speaks to the bride's family and he explains a little bit of the life story and history of Abraham. And he says how God has blessed Abraham and he's done this and he's done this and he's done this. And then he refers to Isaac who is the son who is passed through death.

And he says and he has a son Isaac and to him Abraham has given everything that he has. It's wonderful. All power is given to me in heaven and earth.

It's all in the son. This is why God has given him the name that's above every name. This is why God has given him the pre-eminent.

It's all in him. This is why God says look unto him, look unto me and be you saved. This is why Jesus has come to me.

Come to me. It's all in him. And as we give ourselves to him, oh God makes these things real in us.

It's all in him. It's that little illustration that people have used in the past. You take something like a walnut and you say what do you see here? And they say a walnut and you say oh dear little faith it's a tree with trunk and roots and branches and hundreds of walnuts.

It's all in here. All it needs is the right circumstance. It doesn't need any new experience.

It just needs the right circumstances. All the life of the walnut is here. All the life of God is in Christ.

Your beginnings may have seemed small to you but if God baptised you into his son he baptised you into the source of life itself. He baptised you into all the fullness of the Godhead bodily in his son and given the right conditions, given the right circumstances, God will bring it all to fruitfulness. All of it.

It's all here. He's done it all. This is a glorious baptism.

Glorious. Makes us one with him, makes us one with the Father. In that day, says the Lord Jesus, he who was within you shall be within you.

In that day you'll know that I am in the Father and the Father's in me and you in me. This wonderful union, all spoken of. I'm going to take you to one more verse.

You'll notice I'm not purposefully choosing the obscure verses about baptism. It's just the way we're going. I'm nearly finished now.

1 Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 13. We were talking about prepositions at breakfast I hope everyone knows. And we were talking about this Greek preposition eis, which really means into or on the way to going in the direction of.

You've got a kind of a destination here and you're heading towards it and that is into. Greek prepositions are very very exact, very precise, with almost a mathematical precision. So you would say, for example, in Greek you'd want to say I'm putting my hand into my pocket and because there's movement in it it's heading in a certain direction, you'd use this preposition eis.

But now I wouldn't say my hand is into my pocket, I'd say my hand is in my pocket or within my pocket because it's there in the place of rest. Now the reason for you all this is here in verse 13 it says this For by one spirit are we all baptized into that Christ to one body. Part of the significance of this baptism that God ministers, he is the baptizer, part of the significance is that it baptizes us into one body.

That's to say the purpose of it, the direction of it, is to bring us all into one. I'm just wondering how far to go with this. You know that once there was one will and one being.

And God created, but there was still many beings but just one will. And then sin arrived and there were two wills. And since that time there's been chaos and disaster and pain and suffering and death and desolation.

And the end of this story is that one day will come again when there's one will. When there's one. And part of the foretaste of that is that God has brought us together into one body.

Out of many tribes and nations, out of all kinds of backgrounds and racial and ethnic groups and all the rest of it brought us together into one body. And it's in one experience, it's in one baptism. Altogether making us one new body so that it's no longer the body of sin and of the old man but it's the body of Christ and it's a new man.

I read lots of different kinds of versions of the Bible and usually they'll return back to the AD when I want to know what it really says. I tease people sometimes and they say, well what do you think about the New King James Version? I say, I think it's excellent. It's a really good introduction to the Authorized Version.

No, I'm not one of those people who think that the Authorized Version is without error. I'm not saying that. But there are certain times when one of the old principles of VTI used to say, he said it's tongue in cheek but he used to say, one of the things about the translators of the Authorized Version is that they worked on the principle that if they didn't understand it in the Greek, you wouldn't understand it in the English.

They didn't simplify it, they didn't cut corners they didn't iron out ambiguity they told the story as it was. Now, if you find any modern version of the Bible, other than the New King James Version, that's all right in this, and you come to that little phrase in Romans chapter 6. It'll say something like this, knowing that our old, and then it's anybody's guess what the next word's going to be. Our old nature our old self, our old all kinds of things they've put in there and what they're doing is they're interpreting it.

And they missed the whole point. Because this is the old man in contrast with the new man. I'm not sure the new self would be a lot better than the old one either.

And intrinsically, a new nature might not be any better than an old nature. What matters is that I come out of this body of sin under this wrong head, and I come into a new body under a new head, and make a brand new being. That's what matters.

And God brings it out of every tribe and nation, and from Jew and Gentile, and he cuts it all together in one, in Christ. Baptizes everything into the same marinade so we have the same wonderful taste and scent. This is a wonderful provision that God makes for us.

And the reason I'm doing this now is because I want you to know what God has done for you. If God has poured out his spirit in your heart, and you know the love of God within you, this is what he's done for you. He's made you one with his Son.

He's broken the power of sin. He's given you a fresh new start. You begin new here from this thing.

Now you must go and you must walk in it. You must be dependent upon him. Creatures are always dependent upon the Creator.

Even the new creation is still dependent upon the Creator. You don't become independent. You become, if anything, even more dependent.

You know, I'll finish with this. You've probably heard the old story. I may have embroidered a little bit, but it was Jenny Newton who I think was in hospital at one occasion and the nurses were going around taking down the details and they took Jenny's chart and they said religion and she said Christian and they said, well yes, we know you're Christian.

It's Enos. What kind of Christian? She said, well, I'm Christian. What kind of Christian? Are you an Anglican or a Baptist or what kind of Christian? She said, I'm a Christian.

She said, but independent. She said, no, she said no, I'm not. I'm a dependent Christian.

Write down dependent Christian. You may not be dependent. The baptism of the Spirit does not make you independent.

It makes us more needful of God than we've ever been in our life. But it's all a sufficiency of him. It's all his.

It's all his work to do. It's all his glory. It's all his.

This is what you can expect, brother, sister. You don't need to expect some kind of salvation on the installment. I'm a bit down.

I'm a bit 20 years' time. Don't be seduced by some of those lovely choruses. Some of those choruses that sing things like about melt me and mold me and kill me.

Now, they're wonderful choruses. And I'm not saying don't sing them. I'm just saying, think these things straight.

I know there are Bible pictures about God purifying the silver. And I know the illustrations about God purifying you until he can see his face. And if you don't know the story, somebody else will tell you.

They're wonderful. But remember this, that when the silversmith was purifying the silver, he wasn't going to spend his lifetime doing it. It was going to be an intense few hours.

That's how long it was going to take to get the pollution, the debris, the scum out of this thing so it would be absolutely pure so he could see his face in it. That's how long it was going to take. A short but intense time.

It does not take a lifetime for God to make you like his son. It takes a moment. Just a moment.

We have a moment. Let's stop. Let's pray.

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