

A Message on Baptism

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the difference between John the Baptist's baptism of repentance and the baptism that Jesus commanded, which involves being united with Christ in His death to sin. It highlights the need to fully surrender to God, die to sin, and experience the power of Christ's resurrection through baptism. The act of baptism symbolizes our helplessness to overcome sin on our own and our dependence on God to lift us up into a new life of victory over sin.

Duration: 8:57

Scripture: Acts 19:3, Romans 6:3, Philippians 3:10, Romans 6:6, Romans 6:4

Topics: "Baptism", "Surrender to God"

Description

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Transcript

John the Baptist came preaching the baptism of repentance and when the Apostle Paul, Acts 19, met certain people in Ephesus who were not baptized in the Holy Spirit, he asked them about it and they said, we've never heard about the Holy Spirit. He said, what were you baptized? Acts 19, 3. He said, we were baptized into John's baptism. Now, John's baptism was from God.

It is the Lord who sent John with that message and that baptism was a 100% from God. But yet, these folks needed to be baptized again because this baptism that Jesus commanded was something completely different. You see, what can be greater than a baptism of repentance from sin? If you're coming into the waters of baptism to say, I've repented of my sin, well, that's John's baptism.

You can go to John the Baptist. You don't have to come to a Christian. But the baptism that Jesus gave, he said, Paul baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The baptism of Christ, the baptism that Jesus commanded is described in Romans chapter 6. It's not a baptism of repentance alone. It's more than that. It's a baptism where I'm saying not only I'm sorry for my past sins, I acknowledge my past sins and I'm sorry for that.

That is John's baptism. But here I'm saying, I want to be united with Christ in his death to sin. Romans 6.3, don't you know that all who are baptized into Christ are baptized into his death? It's a baptism into the death of Christ, not just a baptism of repentance.

And I'm sorry to say that usually even in Christian churches, they say, have you repented? Okay, get baptized. They're not told what this baptism is for. It's almost as good as a baptism of John.

But see what it says. The way you baptize, don't you know that's a baptism, not just of repentance, but into Christ's death to sin. It's not just I'm turning from sin.

I want to be finished with sin. And therefore, we who have been buried, what is the meaning of being dipped into the water? It's being buried. That's why we say sprinkling water on a baby's head.

It cannot be baptism because when a man dies, you don't just sprinkle some sand on his head. You put him six feet underground. Completely, completely underground.

I remember once in baptism in CFC Bangalore, one brother was baptizing someone and he was a tall person. So his head would not go in. So I said, put him in again.

That's the most important part that has to go down under the water, his clever brain. So they dipped him in again till he went completely under. It has to die.

All this human cleverness is to die. That's the baptism of Christ. Everything that is of me and my cleverness and my ability goes into the death of Christ.

And like the Father raised up Jesus Christ, now I depend on God to lift me up. And that's why in a particular situation, if somebody puts me, spiritually speaking, to death by insulting me or speaking evil about me, I submit. I remember my baptism.

Oh, yeah. I submit to it. I don't resist it.

Fully believing that my Heavenly Father who raised up Jesus will raise me up and I will experience what is called the power of His resurrection. The Holy Spirit's power is the power of His resurrection. And you cannot experience it if you don't submit to death.

How can you get a resurrection if you don't die? Paul said at the end of his life in Philippians 3.10, I want to know the power of His resurrection. The resurrection power is something that lifts us up from everything of the world and everything of sin and everything that pulls us down. And so he goes on to say, explaining baptism in Romans 6, verse 6, knowing that our old self was crucified with Christ on the cross, so that this body that keeps on committing sin, this inward thing that loves to sin will be put away with so that we should no longer, verse 6, be slaves to sin.

So this is the difference between John's baptism and Jesus' baptism. John's baptism was, I testify that I've sinned and I want to turn away from all that and get baptized. And Jesus' baptism was that I want to say I want to not only turn from my sin, I want to be finished with it.

I want to overcome it. I want to die to it. I want to experience that power of Jesus, the resurrection power of Jesus that lifts me up.

And we are testifying thereby another very important truth. No, when you're dipped down in the water, it's almost impossible for you to lift yourself up. Somebody else has to lift you up.

You're not just sitting in the water, you're going down, somebody lifting you up and you're testifying thereby, I cannot lift myself up from my sinful ways. It is impossible. I can grit my teeth and say from now on, I'm not going to sin and you'll sin tomorrow or even this evening.

But if I acknowledge, I cannot, somebody else has to lift me up. The Father has to raise me up. That's also a testimony in baptism about my helplessness to overcome sin.

I want to, I'm desperate, I want to finish with it. But I can't do it myself. As the Father raised up Christ, verse four, so we also might walk in newness of life.

So that is the testimony in baptism. And it's a wonderful thing. I'm not saying we become perfect from day one.

We are testifying, this is the way I want to go. And overcoming is a lifetime process. The way, Jesus spoke about the way to life is a narrow gate and narrow way.

There's a crisis and a process. So we come in through the gate and walk, walk, walk, walk. And it's a daily walk of overcoming.

Little by little by little by little, sin's power goes away from us. But our attitude always is death to sin, death to sin. So that is the testimony in baptism.

No, I'm not saying we got to understand it all before we get baptized. But it's good to understand it so that we seek to live according to it. There are many people who take baptism, who never read Romans chapter six.

On the day of Pentecost, when 3,000 got baptized, that Roman six was not even written. And even after it was written, many people couldn't read it. And Paul wrote it to the Romans.

There are hundreds of Christians who never heard about it. So I'm not saying you have to understand everything about it. But it's good to understand it so that we know what we are testifying about.

But if you have a sincere heart towards Christ and wanting to be free from sin, even if you don't understand the meaning of it, you can still come into a life of victory. See, our digestive system works, even though we don't, can't explain how it works. So I can't explain how my digestive system works, but it works perfectly.

So we don't have to explain everything about baptism before we get free from sin. But if your attitude is, I want to finish with sin, I believe God will lead you into that life. So we pray that as our sister gets baptized, not only she has this attitude, but those of us who are baptized in the past years will renew our consecration and say, Lord, I'm, you're reminding me again of what I did when I took baptism years ago, that I want to finish with sin in my life.

Please give me grace for that. Amen.

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