

Baptism and Salvation From the World

by Zac Poonen

Baptism is a public testimony of our faith, not a means to salvation, and should follow a proper conversion, not precede it.

Duration: 1:04:33

Scripture: Psalm 139:23, Matthew 28:19

Topics: "Discipleship", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being true disciples of Jesus, focusing on the need to make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to follow all of Jesus' commands. It highlights the road of discipleship, the significance of repentance, and the dangers of seeking honor through worldly means. The speaker urges listeners to be on guard against criticism, jealousy, and wrong attitudes, emphasizing the need to unplug from negative influences and fill their hearts with gratitude and the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

When Jesus sent his disciples out to go to the whole world, there were three things. Matthew 28, verse 19. There were three things that he told them to do.

Those are the last words of his in the Gospel of Matthew, the first gospel. Now, when he, when Jesus was sending his disciples out on such an important ministry, which is going to carry on for, as we know now, for 2,000 years, we can believe that he would have mentioned only the most important things. There were hundreds of other things that he could have mentioned.

But what do we read here? Matthew 28, 19. Go, first of all, make disciples. Then baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And third, teach them to do everything that I commanded you. So the first step is to make people disciples. A disciple is not someone who's perfect.

A disciple is someone who's learning and following. He may have just taken the first step, but there may be mature disciples who have walked many miles with the Lord. But a person who has turned around to be a disciple today, he may take only one step, may be a long way from perfection, but he's also a disciple because he's going the right road.

There's a road of discipleship. And if you're on that road, whether you have taken one step because you're just begun, or whether you're many hundreds of miles down that road because you've walked with God for many years, the important thing is to be on that road. Some people get on that road and then after a while they find it's a little tough because it's a very narrow road.

They prefer to go on to something broader that their worldly friends advise them. And then usually they lose their salvation. And that could have happened to some of you.

I don't know. I'm not here to judge. But that's a possibility.

But God's will is that we get onto the road of discipleship the day we are converted. And continue on that till Jesus comes back. There are many who have come here who thought they had accepted the Lord before they came here.

And who have told me, we really never knew what it was to be saved till we came here because we never knew what sin was. See, you cannot repent. Repent means turn around from sin unless you know what sin is.

If you tell someone who's never heard the word sin, give up sin. Well, what will he give up? If he thinks that sin is smoking and drinking, he'll say, I've given up all sins in my life. So if we don't understand what sin is, we can't really turn around from sin.

And that's the problem with a lot of people. If a preacher gets up and says, repent, do you know that the average person in the world doesn't even know what the word repent means? And even some who know, maybe some who are here also, may think repent means I feel a bit sorry for what I did. Well, even a thief when he's caught feels sorry for what he's done because he's jailed.

Repent is not just feeling sorry. It's turning around in addition to feeling sorry. Not reaching perfection, turning around.

Turning around is something you can do in a moment. A prostitute can turn around in a moment. A murderer can turn around in a moment.

The worst sinner in the world can turn around in a moment. It may take many years before they overcome some of their sins. That's different, but they've turned around.

So repentance is not something that takes ages and years. It takes just a moment. Repentance is like an about turn.

And the tragedy with a lot of people is that they've not turned around completely. They turn 90 degrees. Now, if you turn 90 degrees, you're never going to go where God wants you to go.

Even if you turn 120 degrees, it's 180 degrees turn. So when we talk about sin, we must also recognize that as we go along this road of discipleship, we will discover more and more and what sin is. I'm still discovering sin after 50 years of being a believer.

And I believe I will, if I'm faithful, I will continue to discover more sin, which I don't know today, next year. And more next year. That's growing in the Lord means you come closer to God and you discover a lot of things which God's not happy with, which the world doesn't even call sin, which most believers don't call sin.

But as your conscience becomes sensitive, it begins to register certain things. So many people, after some time in CFC, they say, Hey, I'm discovered sin now. That doesn't mean, doesn't mean I'm converted only now.

No, no, no. It just means you're progressing. Because you, if you walk with the Lord, you'll discover more sin.

Then what is the initial repentance means? Initial repentance means I turn from what I know to be sin. Which may be one millionth of all the sins in your life. Imagine one millionth of all the sins in your life.

That's all you can see the day you're converted. So if you think you're very holy, you're holy in one millionth of your life. That's good because that's all you can see.

The God leads us step by step. It's like a torchlight. You can't see any more than what your torchlight shows you.

But you take one step, then you see some more. You take one step, you see some more. Christian life is like that.

God doesn't give us a flat light all the way up to the throne of glory. Little by little by little to see whether you'll take one step. As you go step by step, I will open up the way before you is his promise.

So many people have taken baptism without repenting. And that's because the preachers who baptized them were more eager to count numbers. I know churches who want to have a baptism every Sunday.

To have an unbroken record to boast before people. That we've had a baptism every Sunday for many many years. I'll tell you honestly, I don't want such a record.

Because if we tried that here, we'd have a crowd, a mixed multitude of half converted people. And not at all converted people. And made them double the children of hell.

Jesus said to the Pharisees, you travel around the world preaching. And you make people twofold a child of hell. Now I'll tell you how you can make your children twofold children of hell.

Baptize them when they're not converted. That's the best way to make sure they'll definitely go to hell. Without a doubt.

Without a shadow of doubt. Because you have a great lust to get honor in the church. My children are now in the club.

I tell you there are many parents who have a great lust to get honor in the church through their children. You examine your own heart and see if it's not true. My children are well behaved.

My children are believers. My children are godly. My children are this.

My children are gifted. My children are this. And you're not concerned about the glory of God really.

You're concerned about your own name. And even though you can say it's for the glory of God, God knows your heart. It's for your own name.

And all such people, I want to say to you as a warning, you will destroy your children. Mark my words and don't tell me in the day of judgment I didn't warn you. You will destroy your children because you're seeking honor for yourself through your children.

It could be their conversion. It could be their giftedness. It could be anything.

Would you be just as excited if that was somebody else's child? Perhaps not. And that's very often why you could be critical also of other people's children. Because your own children are so good.

I feel sorry for you. And I feel even more sorry for your children. Unless they can break free from the honor-seeking of their parents.

And seek to live before God's face. So I've seen this. That some people want to get their children baptized because Oh, it's so bad.

It looks so bad if my children are now 18, 19, 20 years old, not baptized. What will they think of me as a father? Let them think anything about you as your father. Do you want your children to go to hell? Don't make them two-fold children of hell by getting them baptized when they are not converted.

There are two pictures we could use of new birth in the Bible. Of conversion. One is a birth.

Jesus said you must be born again. So the Bible says as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word. So one picture the Bible uses of conversion is birth.

And we all know what birth is. There's a long preparation for birth. You don't pull a baby out of the womb after three months, it'll die.

And if you try to get a person converted when he's not ready to be converted, he'll die. And that's what's happened in a lot of evangelistic meetings. Raise your hand, sign a decision card, come say Lord Jesus come to my heart.

The guy is not ready to be converted. He's only two months in the womb. He will be converted if you give him time.

But the evangelist has got a lust to increase his statistics. Come on, come on, you're okay. I never tell anybody he's okay.

If he's not repented, I say sorry, you're not converted. I've even told people who sat here and broken bread for some time, and I watched their life and I go and tell them you're not converted. I don't think so.

I used to do that when I was an elder in the church. I don't do it anymore. Because I don't have that responsibility, but I've done that.

Because I don't want their blood on my hands. In the day of judgment, I don't want anyone to turn around to me in the day of judgment and say, Brother Zach, you sensed that I was not converted, and you never told me. And because of that, I'm going to hell today.

Ooh, that'll be terrible. I don't care for his honor. I want to save his soul.

I don't want to be popular with him. I want to save his soul. I remember once one brother told someone here, Brother Zach is a hard man, and I called him and I said, Brother, I'm not offended by what you're

saying.

I also want you to know that I'm not bothered what you think about me. I'm concerned about your eternal destiny. I know one thing.

In the day of judgment, you will thank me. That's enough for me. Even if you don't understand why I am strict with you today, in the day of judgment, when you see God's light, you will thank me that your soul was saved.

So, that's the reason why we have certain standards in the church. John the Baptist had certain standards. So, one picture is birth.

And we don't suddenly pull a child out of the womb. We say, when the child is ready to be born, then if it's born, it's a healthy child. Otherwise, some evangelist pulls him out of the womb before he's ready.

They have to be on incubators, and some believers have to be on incubators for 20 years because their initial birth was not proper. You must have a proper birth, and then you'll be healthy from day one. You pull out a baby, but when it's three months in the womb, it won't survive.

It's six months in the womb, and it's not ready to be born. Don't pull it out. Wait.

There's no hurry. It's better that your children are properly converted, rather than pulling them out when they're not ready, and then put them on incubators for the rest of their life, and bring dishonor to you, dishonor to the Lord, dishonor to the church, dishonor, and finally go to hell. So, I don't want that.

I want to tell you, I never pressurized my children to be baptized. I have four boys. I used to ask them to accept Jesus from the time they are.

My wife and I would ask them to accept Jesus from the time they were three. I don't know, maybe even earlier. And I don't know, maybe hundreds of times, they must have asked Jesus to come to the heart, but I never let them get baptized.

All of them got baptized when they were around 17, and that when they asked for it themselves. I was not in any hurry to get honor from the church. Oh, brother Zach's children are all now born again.

I couldn't care less what the church thinks about me. I was concerned that my children should live before God's face. God must approve of them, not all of you.

What does your approval mean? Your approval, don't get offended, but it's fit for the garbage bin. And to comfort you, let me tell you, my approval is also fit for the garbage bin. God's approval, that's the only thing that matters.

Seek His honor. Seek His honor in everything. Don't ever seek to get a, make an impression before others in the church.

So, and then the other thing I've seen with baptism is some, sometimes, you know, young people are all good friends, and one of them is getting baptized. Hey, I also better join in. My friends, my peers in the church are getting baptized.

No, that's, I've seen people get baptized like that also in past years. And I've seen the way they have gone after they got baptized into the world. Because they didn't have a proper conversion.

Their friends were getting baptized, so they got baptized. And their parents didn't stop them, because the parents thought, oh, if I stop them, they may turn away. No, you let them go on into baptism, that's why they turned away.

And they suffer with that all their life. So having seen that through many years, I tell people, please don't pressurize anyone into baptism. Let them take their own time.

Let them really get converted. Let them really get convicted. And please, please be free from honor-seeking.

Honor-seeking, I tell you, destroys the best of families and brothers in this church. Honor-seeking from the church through their children. I'm telling you, and it is in your flesh.

If you don't cleanse yourself from it, it'll come out. You have to say, no, I don't want any honor from the church through my children. I want zero.

I want them to be godly. What the church thinks about them is absolutely unimportant. What the church thinks of me as a parent is unimportant.

Let them think I'm a useless parent. What does it matter? In the day of judgment, if God shows them I was a godly parent, that's enough. Isn't that enough for you? Or you want some certificate from all these blind, dumb people around you today? I'd rather have a certificate from God in the final day.

That's the only thing that matters. Otherwise, it's all like these fake degree certificates that people get. Don't go for that.

The other picture, see, when I talk about birth, let me use an example. Actually being born again is like a child being born. You know, a child is suddenly coming into a world that's never seen before.

That's how a baby suddenly opens his eyes and says, Hey, I've never seen all this. And that's exactly what happens when a person is born again. If you're really born again, you suddenly become aware of certain spiritual realities that you never knew before.

It's like your eyes being opened. A baby that's in the darkness of its mother's womb and suddenly it sees a world that it's never seen before. That's what happens when a person is born again.

He suddenly becomes aware of spiritual realities. He gets a hunger for God's word like the baby cries for milk. Those are marks of a good, proper nine-month birth instead of a premature birth.

So I want all people who are born again in this church to have a good, proper, full-term birth so that they are healthy from day one. And one mark, as I said, is that they suddenly become aware of spiritual realities which you're not aware of before. And when, you know, it's very common now, when we get born, when children are born, we get a birth certificate.

Now we can say, in a sense, baptism is like a birth certificate. Now supposing a lot of babies are being born and they're all getting birth certificates and here's one couple that has got no babies and they want the honor. So they, without a baby, they go and get a birth certificate and show their birth certificate here.

What would you think of such a couple? You'd think they're off their head. That's exactly what I think of parents who push their children into baptism to get a birth certificate when the baby's not born. It's stupid.

How many of you would go and get a birth certificate without a baby being born? Don't get baptized before an actual new birth has taken place. It's worth waiting to be a full-term baby. The second picture, and let me say this also, if you don't get a birth certificate, that doesn't mean your baby's not born.

There are lots of babies born in India that don't have a birth certificate. Are they born or not? Of course they are. Birth certificate is a good thing, but that's not the thing that makes the birth.

The birth is before the birth certificate, and if you don't have a birth certificate, you're still born. So what I want to say is, in spite of many years of sitting here, when somebody thinks that baptism is the way of salvation, that teaches me one thing, that they've sat here and heard nothing. They've heard zero.

If they imagine that baptism is how you go to heaven, or if you tell your children that, or if you imagine that my children will be lost if they're not baptized, your children will be lost if they're not born again. The thief on the cross was not baptized. Of course there was no baptism in those days, but even if he was a thief on the cross after the day of Pentecost, he would still be saved if he was not baptized.

Imagine a person who is converted on a deathbed in a hospital today, who can't be baptized, he can go to heaven straight away, or somebody converted in a prison, they won't release him to be baptized, he can go to heaven. Baptism is an external testimony, like a birth certificate. It's not the proof that there's been a birth, and if you don't have a birth certificate, you can still be born.

So please remember this, so that we get it very clear in our heads, it's likely that there could be people sitting here who still don't listen, who haven't listened for the last 15 years and still don't listen today. But let me say to those who have years to hear, that baptism is not the way to heaven, but baptism is a very important testimony. It's more than a birth certificate, because Jesus commanded it.

He said when you make a person a disciple, when he's taken the first step on the road of discipleship, he must be baptized, because it's a public testimony to angels, demons, people, everyone, that I'm born again. The other picture that the Bible uses of being converted is a death and resurrection. That some old person has died and a new person is resurrected.

See, that's a little more difficult to understand, but birth we can all understand because we see it all the time. Death and resurrection we've never seen, so we don't know what that means, but that's what Romans chapter 6 says. Romans chapter 6 says that baptism is a testimony of death and resurrection.

Something has died and something has risen from the dead. What is it that has died? It says in Romans 6, don't you know, verse 3, all of us who've been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into death. So baptism is a word which means immersion.

That's all it means. It's a Greek word. Unfortunately, they never translated it.

They should have translated it. Immersion. Go make disciples and immerse them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

If those translators had been honest and translated that Greek word baptizo as immerse, a lot of problems would have been solved. But they wanted to please old King James, the first or sixth or whatever his

number was, in 1611 when they translated the King James Version. And they wanted to save their heads from being chopped off.

And the church was not immersing people. The church was sprinkling people. And they didn't know how to get around it.

So when they were translating the Bible, they said if we preach immerse, we lose our heads. But we can't translate christen, because that's not what the Greek word means. So they invented a word into the English language.

Nobody knew what it meant. Baptize. So people read the Bible and said, when baptized, what's that? I suppose that's what they do to the children in the church when they're babies.

And that's how this whole wretched teaching of infant baptism came, if you want to know the history of it. I wish they had translated it. And I've challenged some people who have been in translation ministry.

I say, why don't you have the courage to translate that word as immerse? I've never seen a single translation today that has had the boldness to do that. Immerse them. And don't you know, verse 3, that those of you who've been immersed in water, immersed into Christ Jesus, were immersed into his death.

You were put inside his death. Immersed means, you know, I can't dip my finger and say my hand is immersed. My hand is immersed means the whole hand must go in.

I know times here when people are being baptized, tall people and their head doesn't go in, I say put that in again. Because that's the most important part that's got to go under the water. All the cleverness of man has to go underneath.

So it must be immersed. Immersed. And immersed into his death means I've gone right into his death.

Into death to what? A death to my old sinful way of life. So it says in verse 6, knowing this, that our old self, this old person that we were, that doesn't mean perfection. It means the old attitudes we had towards God and towards sin and the world have died.

It's crucified. So that this body that lived for sin is finished with. And the whole purpose of baptism is to testify, verse 6, that we should never be slaves of sin again.

That's why we have that verse on this tank cover. Because he who has died is freed from sin. So baptism is, it's very interesting that Romans 6 speaks about baptism and Romans 6 speaks about victory over sin.

So the whole purpose of baptism is to lead you into a life of victory over sin. And then it says just like Jesus was raised from the dead, verse 4, we also come out of the water. So baptism is a testimony of death and resurrection.

Something has died, something has raised up from the dead. Now we all know about death. Do you bury a man who's not dead? What do you think? It's a crime.

You know that if you bury a man who's not dead in Bangalore, you can be locked up? How can we baptize somebody who we know is not dead yet? At least to the best of our knowledge, he's not dead. It's a crime before God. Equally, if a man is dead and you don't bury him, that's also a crime.

So if a person is born again, he should be baptized. You can't keep him unbaptized. Then you say, why do you ask us to wait, brother? Why do you ask us to wait three months, six months? I'll tell you, because we're not sure you're dead yet.

I sense some breathing there. That's why we're waiting. Some smell of the old life is still there.

We may be wrong. We're not perfect. I wish we could check up with God every time, but we can't.

We have to use our discernment. Then people say, what about in the early church? They baptize them immediately. That's right.

If this were China, where people are locked up and persecuted for Christianity, for becoming Christians, and you came to me and said I want to be a Christian, I'd baptize you straight away. But we live in India, where being a Christian costs you nothing. It may bring you a little honor.

There are a lot of blessings in being in CFC. There are financial blessings. People care for you, help you.

I don't know whether you're really converted. If it was China, I'd baptize you immediately. Any country where there's persecution for being a Christian, Russia in the old days, where if you were a Christian, the only job you could get would be a corporation sweeper, I'd baptize you straight away in such countries.

Why would a person want to be a Christian in such a country? The early Christians were all Jews. You know, even today, the Jews are against Christians. In such a country, where a person, why should a man break with Judaism? His whole family would reject him.

He loses inheritance. He loses everything. And such a person says, I want to be a Christian.

He must be genuine. Whereas today, when people say they want to be a Christian, especially children of believers here, and say, I'm a believer, I don't know whether they're saved. I may take years to find out whether they're saved.

That's the reason. So that's the reason why in the early church, they baptize them straight away. They were pretty sure because they have nothing to gain.

There was persecution. Some of them were killed. They saw Stephen being killed for being a Christian.

Would you stand up and say you're a Christian? I mean, if you were in Afghanistan, and you stood up and say, I'm a Christian, boy, I'd baptize you straight away. But not here in India, because I don't know. There's no persecution here.

So that's the reason why we have to wait, because we want to make sure a person's really dead, and that the person's really... One last verse. In Matthew chapter 3, we read about people coming to John the Baptist for baptism. And it says here, verse 7, when John the Baptist, Matthew 3, 7, saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism.

I don't know why in the world they came for baptism when they had not turned from their sin. But there is an honor seeking in coming for baptism. And the Pharisees and Sadducees were tremendous honor seekers.

So they came for baptism, stood in the line to get honor, because a lot of people, you know, whenever there's a crowd doing something, everybody likes to cash in on that. It's like some big Christian meeting with lakhs of people. Even the non-Christian politicians would like to sit on the platform and say a few words.

You think they're converted? No, they're not converted. They want the votes of all these lakhs of Christians who are in the meeting. So it's like that.

The Pharisees and Sadducees wanted some honor. They saw big crowds going to John the Baptist. Hey, we want some honor with these people.

Let's show these people we are also repented. And he stood there and John was a man with discernment. He did not know anything about their private life.

He did not know how they were living at home. He did not know how they were dealing with their finances. But he could look into their eyes and say, you guys are not converted.

The closer you live to God, the more you are able to discern people just by looking at them and talking to them. It's true. You can fool 99% of believers, but you can't fool a Godly man.

I'll tell you that. He sees through your carnality and your selfishness and your unconverted love of yourself and everything, though he may never tell you, unless you come for baptism. And he saw them.

He just saw them, it says. He didn't even know their names. He said, you, you're not repentant.

Go back. So when people came in line to John the Baptist, he didn't just baptize everyone and count his numbers. No.

He was not interested in numbers. There's no record of how many people he baptized. If it was one of today's evangelists or pastors, they'd keep a record.

2,587 people were baptized. Not John. He was interested in leading people into God's kingdom.

And he'd look at people and say, I don't think you're converted. Go home. He says, you brood of vipers.

Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And don't suppose that you can say, oh, because my father is a member of CFC, I can be baptized. No, God can raise up children from these stones.

These stones. God can raise up children from these tiles. But not from you, if you don't repent.

The ax is laid to the root of the trees. Has the ax been laid to the root of self in your life? Then you're ready to be baptized. Now again, don't misunderstand.

It's only according to the light you have. According to the light you have, you may have seen only one millionth of the sins and the selfishness and the pride in your life. But what you have seen, if you have turned from, you're ready for baptism.

Next year, you'll see some more. You don't have to be baptized again because your attitude has not changed. Your attitude is the same today.

My attitude is the same today as it was 50 years ago when I got baptized. I wanted to follow Jesus then. So I never needed to get baptized again, but I got more and more light over sin in my life in the last 50 years.

And if the Lord tarries, I'll get more and more light in the days to come. So don't think you got to get baptized because now I got more light on sin. Well, then you got to get baptized every month.

No. It's your attitude that has changed, not your light on sin. What is your attitude to sin? To the sin that you can see, even if it's only one millionth, you're ready to be baptized.

So may God bless you all. What we saw in these brothers and sisters who got baptized just now, the Bible says there's joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. And where their baptism has been a testimony to repentance, there is joy in heaven.

And if you've got the spirit of heaven, you will rejoice as well. And every baptism reminds us, those of us who are already baptized, of the day when we were baptized many years ago. And it's good for us to ask ourselves whether we have been true to that testimony that we testified in baptism before the Lord, that there was something that was buried and gone.

It says in 1 Peter, in chapter 3, it's not only our old man that was buried in baptism. And that we are a new man in Christ. It says here in 1 Peter, chapter 3, verse 20, in the middle of that verse, the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah during the construction of the ark in which a few, that is eight people, were brought safely through the water.

Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you. Not the removal of dirt from the flesh. Baptism does not remove sin.

But an appeal to God for a good conscience. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven after angels and authorities and Pharisees having been subject to him. And I want to read it in this other translation.

The waters of baptism do for you what happened in Noah's time. Not by washing away dirt from your skin, but by presenting you through Jesus. Resurrection.

Through Jesus' resurrection before God with a clear conscience. Jesus has the last word on everything and everyone. And what he says, goes.

So, that flood in Noah's time, the Bible says here, in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is a picture of baptism. And Noah and his family going through the flood and coming out is a picture of what we testify to in baptism. And what was it that happened to Noah when he came out of the waters, as it were, like these brothers and sisters have come out of the waters of baptism.

When Noah looked around, the old world was gone. When his children and their wives looked around, their old friends had gone. There was not one of that old friends alive anymore.

All those things they may have cherished in that old world, once upon a time they cherished it, but it was gone. You know, when water is on the earth for one year, there is nothing much left. Everything was gone.

It was all dead. And all those dead carcasses lying on the ground, they had no interest in that. And that's what happens when we are crucified with Christ, which we testify to in baptism.

Paul says in Galatians 6, and verse 14, Galatians 6, 14, May it never be that I would boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified. It's dead to me, and I'm dead to the world. On the cross of Jesus, when I died, I died to the world and its opinions about me.

And the world also died to me. And, you know, it's like saying that I have as much interest now in the world as a dead man has. It's quite a challenge to live by that standard.

I have as much interest in this world now as a dead man has. I have as much interest in the opinions of other people about me as a dead man has. The reality of this must hit me, that in Noah's day, God condemned the world, and Noah condemned the world as well by building the ark, saying, this is the only thing that's going to remain.

And today, the Bible says, Jesus died to save us from the world. See the first chapter of Galatians. Galatians 1, verse 4. Many people know that Jesus Christ died to forgive our sins.

But they don't know the second part, and that's why their lives are so defeated and don't make much progress. The Lord Jesus Christ, Galatians 1, verse 3 and 4, gave himself for our sins. That's one.

So that he might also rescue us from this present evil world, or by world he means this system, this age, according to the will of God. Just like Jesus rescued Noah thousands of years ago from that flood, now Jesus died and rescued us from this world. We've got to see ourselves when we come out of baptism, like Noah and his children who come out into a new world, and now their fellowship is with all the people who came out of the ark.

That is their closest fellowship. And I discovered this, and I've discovered it more and more through 50 years, that my closest fellowship is now with those who've come through the ark and saved out of this world. I mean there may have been close relatives that Noah had, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, neighbors and friends, whoever they know.

After the flood was over, however close they may have been before the flood, after the flood they were gone. And there's a sense in which it's not that we don't care for them. We love everybody.

We love our neighbors, we are good to our neighbors, we are good to our relatives. But there's a disconnect that has come now. Because we have come in Christ.

And our attachment now is to those who are in Christ. We are still friendly with everybody. But there's a lot of difference between fellowship and friendship.

There are a few with whom I have fellowship. Friendship? I'm ready to be friends with the whole world. So there's something that we testify to in baptism.

Many of you were baptized many years ago. Is that what it has meant for you since then? Did a sort of a disconnect come between you and the world? Was there something cut off? Did something of the old world disappear? And your whole attitude towards the world system, towards the values of the world changed. I'm sure Noah and his sons were completely different after they came out of the ark.

But it's very easy to backslide, very quickly. Even after we see how God has rescued us. I think of Ham, Noah's son, who backslid just a few days after coming out of the ark.

He despised his father because his father made a mistake. Even godly men can sometimes make a mistake. He saw his father's nakedness and instead of keeping quiet about it, instead of covering it, he went and spoke about it.

And when you see somebody's spiritual nakedness and you glory that you're not naked like that and you go and talk about it, I've seen through the years the curse of Ham comes upon them too. Something happens in such people. They don't seem to grow spiritually because they are preoccupied with the faults they see in others, maybe the fault they see in some godly man.

But that godly man may be ten million times more spiritual than you. He's got one fault. But you see that one fault and you don't see the ten million faults that you have yourself.

And something happens to such people. They stagnate, sometimes they lose their salvation. If you have come through the waters of the flood, if you have come through and the Lord has rescued you, what should Ham have thought? This is my father.

He walked with God for hundreds of years and if it were not for him, where would I be today? I would have been destroyed with all these carcasses down here. You know, we so easily forget what we have received from others. So easily.

And I have seen through the years that spiritual progress is found in the lives of those who are grateful. The one leper who came back to Jesus and thanked him, he got more than the other nine lepers. He got salvation.

The other nine got healing. And salvation is a million times greater than healing. We can say he got a million rupees.

The others got one rupee. Why did he get it? Because he came back with gratitude. And I have seen through the years that those who are grateful to God and really thank him for what he has done for them and who are humbly grateful to brothers and sisters who have helped them and blessed them and not so critical, it goes very well with them in the years to come.

I have sought to develop a habit of gratitude through many years. I sometimes write to somebody, Brother, I remember 20 years ago you did something for me. I haven't forgotten it.

You helped one of my sons 20 years ago. Thank you. It does good to me.

Even if you are the most selfish person, I would encourage you to develop the habit of gratitude. Even when you see a Noah and you see some nakedness in somebody, okay, but hasn't that person blessed you in some way? Hasn't he blessed your children? Don't destroy yourself like Ham did. Ham brought a curse on his children.

In baptism, we testify that that old attitude, the old world is gone. But even though Ham came through as it were the waters of baptism, his critical attitude had not changed. And it's possible to come to take baptism and testify so many things, but ultimately we still keep that critical attitude.

Criticism, this attitude of finding fault and criticism started with Adam. God never asked him anything about his wife, but he had to blame his wife. This woman gave me the fruit.

I mean, doesn't God know that? Why do you have to go and tell God something about somebody else? Why do you have to go and tell somebody else about something else? You know when Martha came and criticized Mary, saying, I'm working so hard and this Mary is not doing anything. Jesus rebuked Martha. I'll tell you something.

When you criticize somebody, some brother, God will criticize you because God treats you the way you treat other people. If you're good to other people, God will be good to you. If you're kind to other people, God will be very kind to you.

But you're always critical of other people. I tell you in Jesus' name, God will criticize you day and night and there's no hope for you. God Almighty, God criticizes you.

You better be careful. So, I want to encourage you this year to give up this habit of finding fault, this Adamic habit that has passed on through the generations, through our parents to us, which is in our flesh and even after we are born again, we go into the water, get baptized and come out and we come out of this critical judgmental attitude. God will take care of them.

God doesn't need your help to find their faults. Let me tell you that. If any of you think that you've also got to sit in one corner of God's judgment seat to find fault with people, you're pretty proud and arrogant.

God can judge people without any help from you, brother, sister. He can do it. The difference between your judgment and God's judgment is this.

The Bible says in Hebrews 9, verse 27, It is appointed unto men, once to die, and and what? After that, the judgment. God judges people after they die. When do you judge people? Long before they die.

Why does God wait until a person dies before He judges them? Because He says, maybe He'll change tomorrow. Maybe He will change next year. He's going to live another ten years.

Maybe He'll change after ten years. Let me wait, let me wait, let me wait. Look at that thief on the cross.

All the people criticized him, but God waited, waited. Wasn't it a good thing God didn't judge him before he died? All the world, his parents probably criticized him, his neighbors must have criticized him, his brothers, sisters and all the Pharisees in the synagogue would have criticized him and if you were there, you would have criticized him too. But God didn't.

God waited. And he repented before he died. That's the difference.

If you want to judge people, the Bible says, God can wait until they die, but we, we have to wait until Jesus comes again. Because even when they die, we don't know the full story. There may have been things in their life.

When you see a person fall into sin, you don't know the struggles he had in his life. He tried it, tried, tried, tried his best to fight it and he fell. You don't see all those inner struggles he had for many months.

You just see that one moment of failure. And you judge. That's Ham.

And you forget what God has done for you, saving you through the flood. When the spirit of gratitude goes away, the spirit of criticism is there. The Bible says, Judge nothing.

1 Corinthians 4 and verse 5. Don't judge anything. Don't go on passing judgment before the time. Do you have a great lust to judge? There is a time.

God will give it to you. The time is when Jesus comes again. He'll show you all the inner life of everybody.

You wanted to see the inner life of everybody, right? He'll show you the inner life of that man whom you criticized, who was struggling, struggling, struggling. And you'll feel ashamed. Because you never saw those struggles he had in secret.

You just saw that one fall and found fault with him. So there is something we can learn from Ham not to do. Criticism, finding fault is a demon in a sense.

A demonic attitude which gets into us. And when you cast out that wretched attitude, like Jesus said, you cast out a demon. And you keep your heart clean and empty.

Seven other demons will come in one day and make you a bigger critic and a bigger judger of others unless after getting rid of this demon you replace your heart with the Holy Spirit. That's the message. If you keep your heart empty after casting out a demon, eight demons will come in.

Criticism is not a demon. It's an attitude of the flesh. But the principle is the same.

You say, OK, I'm going to stop criticizing. You will not succeed by the end of the year unless you fill your heart with the opposite of criticism and judgment. That is a thankful spirit.

Be thankful. Learn to give thanks to people who have done good to you. Write notes of thanksgiving.

Send emails of thanksgiving. I do it. It's changed my life.

There are many people who have done good to you. Who have done good to your children. Who have blessed your children.

Jesus said that even a cup of cold water if somebody gives one of my disciples, he will not lose his reward. Do you know that if somebody, I know there are many people who have given me a cup of cold water, where do they get their reward? One day Jesus will call them up and say, you remember so many years ago, 2000 years ago I remember you gave a glass of cold water to my servant Peter or Paul. Here is your reward.

2000 years later, he remembers that somebody gave his servant Peter a cup of cold water. I learned something from that from myself. I said, Lord, I want to be like Jesus.

I want to remember even years later that somebody helped my little boy somewhere when he was struggling with something. Some brother helped him. You know when my boys were teenagers here, there were a few brothers who helped them.

One or two of them have left the church. But I will never forget the good that they did to my boys. And if I see them, I will remind them.

Some of them have spoken evil about me. That's fine. That's up to them.

But I will be thankful to them for the way they helped my boys when they were young. Because of which my boys are following the Lord today. I never want to forget because Jesus doesn't forget even after 2000

years.

Dear brothers and sisters, don't let your attitude to other people be like their attitude towards you. They may criticize you. They are serving the devil.

Why should you serve the devil? Because they serve the devil. If somebody gets angry with you, he's saying, I'm serving the devil. That's what he's saying when he gets angry.

And you say, you serve the devil? Okay, I'm going to serve the devil too. Isn't that the height of stupidity? But that's what happens in many homes. A husband yells at his wife and he's shouting out whenever he gets angry.

He's saying, I'm serving the devil. The wife says, okay, I'll serve the devil too. Or vice versa.

Think what they did to Jesus when they were crucifying him. They were serving the devil 100%. But you say, you can serve the devil.

I'm going to serve my father. Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing.

It's very easy to sing here, I'm following Jesus and all these wonderful songs. But the test is this. Am I willing to say, Lord, you came to deliver me from this evil world.

I testified in baptism that the world is finished like Noah came out into a new world. That old world of mine was full of finding fault and criticism. Everywhere I looked, I found something wrong with somebody.

And if something good happened to somebody, I was jealous of him. I was jealous. I was jealous of other people's children.

I was jealous of other people's cars. I was jealous of other people's houses. Jealous of everything.

Lord, that was an old world. I lived in that for many years. I'm sick and tired of it.

You brought me through the flood of baptism out of it. It's a new world for me. There's not going to be any jealousy in me of other people.

Even if they're unbelievers. I want to rejoice. If something good happens to somebody, rejoice with them.

I tell you, your life will change. You know why it will change? Because of what I said earlier. God treats you as you treat other people.

I want to say to you something which you must take heed to. Don't let this year be like the years gone by. Be good to others.

God will be good to you. A lot of our spiritual progress is hindered because we've been critical. We've been judgmental.

We've been jealous. It's all secret. Only God sees it.

God says, I see that. I will treat you exactly like that. No wonder your spiritual growth has been stunted.

No wonder when you read the Bible you get nothing out of it. And the only time you get something from the Bible is when you come to Sunday to hear the message. But that person who hears the message, has

got a flesh just like yours.

Why does God reveal certain things to him he doesn't reveal to you? Is there a partiality with God? Does God love some of his children more than others? No. Perhaps he's cleansed his heart so that he can hear something. Perhaps he's unplugged his ears from all that criticism and jealousy and wrong attitudes that made us deaf to God.

He unplugged it and you haven't. God is speaking. But we can't hear him, that's all.

It's a great tragedy. I've been challenged by Revelation chapter 1 where it says about John. In John he says, Revelation chapter 1 he uses two expressions about the voice of the Lord here.

One he says in verse 15, the middle of that verse, his voice was like the sound of many waters. The sound of many waters. And verse 10 he says, it was a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet.

Now, do you know that a man can blow a trumpet here so loud and somebody says, what was that? I've never heard anything. Because he's deaf. But you, it's so loud.

Some people say, I'm straining to hear God's voice. How is it that John heard the Lord's voice like a trumpet? Like the sound of mighty waters. And you say, Brother, I can't hear God.

God is still speaking like a trumpet. Unplug your ears of the wrong attitudes you have towards other people. Of the criticisms, the old grudges that you have kept for many years.

Unplug your ears. That's why we can't hear. The wrong attitudes, the criticism, the finding fault.

And say, Lord, I'm going to have clear ears this year. And you will hear gradually. It won't become like a trumpet tomorrow.

But it will get a little louder. A little louder, a little louder. And by the end of the year, you'll be hearing the Lord's voice so much more clearly than you heard in all your life.

Do you know that's the most important thing to live spiritually? Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth. Your quality of your life will improve. How careful many of us are to eat foods that are healthy.

To avoid junk foods. Do you know that criticism and wrong attitudes do more to destroy you than all those oily, greasy hamburgers? Sure. Yes.

Junk food. Lot of Christians are on junk food. And that's why they don't grow spiritually.

That world system that tries to grip your mind through television. Be careful. World is trying to capture you through television.

Be careful about what you watch on it. I heard a story of a man who ordered a television in his home one day. And the television company brought the big television set in a truck and outside was written, Sony brings the world into your home.

Oh, he said, please. He said, take it back. I don't want it.

That advertisement was honest. Sony brings the world into your home. Be careful.

The internet. Make sure that your mind is not so taken up with the values of this world which you said was destroyed under that flood. And you're allowing it to come back.

It's like going to those carcasses. Floating around after the flood was over. You have nothing to do with that.

There is a world system that's trying to capture your mind. And when it says baptism saves you, it doesn't save you from hell. But there's a testimony there to be saved from the world.

Speaking about being saved from that old world. I'm testifying in baptism that I've finished with that old world. Those values.

My closest friends are now those who are in God's kingdom. I want to tell you in Jesus' name, if you say you're a Christian and your closest friends today, the ones you long to spend time with, are the people of the world, I would seriously question your salvation. You may have said sometime in the past, Lord Jesus, come into my heart, but brother, sister, please check up.

Are you really? Have you really come out of the world? Jesus died to deliver us from sin and from this world. And I believe that's a very, very important thing that we need to check up on at this time. Jesus came to save us from that entire sense of values that this world holds as precious.

No, it's not precious to me. I remember once thinking of what Jesus said, don't seek, Matthew 6, 33, 32-34, don't seek after those things which the Gentiles eagerly seek after. And I began to think, what are the things that the people in the world seek after? They seek after honor.

I say, Lord, I don't want to seek after honor, not even in the church. They seek after power and position. I don't want to seek that.

They seek after money far more than they need. I mean, to seek for money to live is a good thing. By the sweat of your brow, you earn your living, the Lord told Adam, and I want to earn my own living, every possible means, but to be so covetous, to want more and more and more and more and sacrifice my spiritual life in that pursuit of wealth, that's destroyed many people.

The things the Gentiles eagerly seek after, sexual pleasure and entertainment and comfort and everything and the cost of their spiritual life, I don't want to go that way. That world has died to me. I testified to it in baptism.

I've come out into a new world. And dear brothers and sisters, take that position in Christ. I have died with Christ, and I've finished with that old world.

And I want to have nothing more to do with it. So what we have seen in the baptism today, I pray to be a testimony to all of us that we shall think seriously about it, about our own baptism, and whether we've been true to that testimony that we testified to before the Lord in baptism many years ago. Let's pray.

As far as heads before God, you need the power of the Holy Spirit to live the life you just now resolved to live. If you think you can make it on your own, you're fooling yourself. You can't.

Say, Lord, I desperately need the power of your Holy Spirit to stick to the resolution I made just now, to give up those habits that have polluted my soul for years, to give up those wrong attitudes towards other people. I'll never overcome jealousy without the power of the Holy Spirit. I'll never overcome a critical

attitude without the power of the Holy Spirit.

I may conquer it for two days after hearing this message, but it'll come back again. But Lord, fill my heart with the Holy Spirit. I don't want to clean my house and leave it empty for more demons to come in.

I want my house to be filled with the H-O-L-Y Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. Help me, Father. Show me what it means to be delivered from the world system.

Help me to be grateful, deeply grateful to you and to the men and women who have helped me. And never to forget, in ingratitude, the goodness that other people have shown me through the years. Thank you, Father, for your Word that guides us in the right path.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18509.mp3>

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/96wPwc3EF2M.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/baptism-and-salvation-from-the-world/>

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