

# The New Covenant and the Kingdom of God

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon focuses on the significance of baptism as a public declaration of faith in Jesus Christ. It includes personal testimonies and reflections on the journey of faith, emphasizing the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit, seeking righteousness, peace, and joy in the new covenant, and the transformative power of God's love and grace.*

**Scripture:** 3 John 1:4, Matthew 3:16, Acts 1:8, Matthew 6:15, Luke 16:13, Philipians 4:4, 2 Timothy 1:7, Numbers 6:24

**Topics:** "Baptism as a Declaration of Faith", "The Transformative Power of God's Love"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Please be seated. There are a few things I'd like to say about myself, since some of you may know me, but many may not. I've had the privilege and honor of speaking at this church since 1999, every year for 24 years.

From the time when you all used to meet in O'Brien. And I've been so encouraged. And all those messages, many of them anyway, are on YouTube.

And the messages preached here have gone to many, many countries around the world. I praise the Lord for that. A little about myself.

I'm 82 years old today. Not today, I mean now. I was born in a Christian family.

My father was born again, but I never knew what it was to be sure that I was saved. But he used to take me to meetings, and I think from the age of 13 onwards, I must have asked Jesus to come into my heart a hundred times. Never sure.

Did he come or didn't come? I don't know. Finally, I joined the Indian Navy, and I was commissioned as an officer there. And when I was 19 1/2, 63 years ago, I read one verse in the Bible.

I used to read it daily, and that day my portion was John 6.37. I say this, it may help someone here who probably has a need for it. John 6.37. Him that cometh to me I will not cast out. And it came to my heart like a revelation.

I said, Lord, I've come to you hundreds of times. He said, I never cast you out. That day, 63 years ago, I dropped an anchor, and my ship has never drifted since that day.

Put your trust in the Word of God, and any of you who are not sure whether Christ has accepted you. It's so important. My spiritual growth began that day.

The next step was to take baptism, because I was baptized as a child in an Orthodox church. Then I took baptism, and that was another step forward. And then I said, Lord, if you want me to serve you full time, I'll leave.

And the Lord called me a few years later, and I left the Navy 56 years ago. And I've been serving all these years in India, with wonderful opportunities to plant churches in the villages. And the Lord has raised up many churches, about over 100 churches now in 14 countries through the years.

We praise the Lord for that. Another wonderful thing happened in my life. 54 years ago, I got married.

And I got a wonderful wife, Annie, who's here. And we traveled together. You know, the Lord sends people out two by two.

And she's the heart that you never see, that pumps the blood for the tongue to speak. So I'm very thankful for that. So what I want to share with you today is something that changed my own life.

We have a Bible which is divided into Old Testament and New Testament. And Jesus, in the last day when he was breaking bread and passing the cup around, he used an expression which is never found any other time that he used it. He said, this is the new covenant in my blood.

We know about the blood. We all know about the blood of Christ. Do you know about the new covenant? I did not.

I knew it as an expression. But I want to turn to that verse first of all in Hebrews chapter 8 and verse 13. Hebrews 8 verse 13.

When God said a new covenant, he has made the first obsolete. That's no longer existing. Obsolete means it's gone.

America was ruled by the British up to 1776. It's gone. Nobody wants to go back to that.

India was ruled by the British in 1947. Nobody wants to go back to that. That was a period.

We have another period now. The new covenant was established on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon people. And that day the old covenant was abolished.

It says obsolete. I'll tell you what I've seen in many, many countries of believers. They are living under the old covenant.

And perhaps many of you are without knowing it. What is the difference? It says the old covenant is obsolete and the old is disappeared now. It was ready to disappear at that time when this book was

written.

It's gone. Well, I never knew about it because nobody ever taught me. You know, it's like all the children in a class failing in math because the teacher is not a good teacher.

Don't blame the children. So I never knew about the new covenant because even though I was in a church that preached a new birth, they never explained what the new covenant was. They told me I need to accept Christ as my savior.

God was my father. All that I understood. A couple of things they never told me like I couldn't follow Jesus if I didn't take up the cross every day.

They didn't explain to me what it meant, take up the cross. And nobody told me about the new covenant. And the result was I was defeated in my life.

I was born again. But I knew what to do if I sinned. Go to Jesus.

Confess my sin. He's faithful and just to forgive my sins and to cleanse me in his blood. I knew that.

And that would happen again and again and again. And I would fall into the same sins. I'm not talking about gross external sins like the things listed in the Ten Commandments of idolatry or adultery or murder.

No, we don't do such things. It's other things like getting angry, losing your temper at home or with somebody else. Most people don't take this as serious.

But do you know that Jesus said our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees. He said that in Matthew chapter 5 and verse 20. Matthew 5 verse 20.

Your righteousness must be more than the righteousness of the Pharisees. So let me use that to explain the old covenant and the new covenant. Your righteousness in the new covenant has to be higher than the righteousness of the old covenant which the Pharisees had.

The old covenant was for the nation of Israel. It's not for the church. The new covenant is for the church.

And in the new covenant, our righteousness is above the righteousness of the old covenant because that's how we enter the kingdom of heaven. And then we say, Lord, what do you mean by exceed? Is it that they gave 10% and we got to give 15%? No. It's got nothing to do with money.

Even money in the old covenant, there was a law. But in the new covenant, it is give as God has prospered you. Give cheerfully.

Those are the laws in the new covenant. Not give 10% or 5% or 20%. Give as the Lord has prospered you.

It's up to you. And give cheerfully. So laws are so different.

God makes us free. But Jesus explained what the righteousness of the new covenant was in the succeeding verses in Matthew 5. We know it as the Sermon on the Mount. I'll give you a little gist of some of the things he said in the Sermon on the Mount.

He said in the old covenant, they said don't commit murder. Matthew 5, 21 and 22. I say don't get angry.

Uh-huh. How many Christians have you met who equate anger with murder? That means what is murder for an old covenant Israelite for a new covenant Christian is anger. I never took it like that for many years after I was born again.

I thought angry. Everybody gets angry. Who doesn't get angry? Lord, forgive me.

I'm cleansed. I'm happy. It was like a, you know, these merry-go-rounds and the children's parks and all where you sit on a horse, wooden horse.

And there's a lot of movement and movement and movement. And if you calculate the distance you've traveled, it's probably miles. But you're still at the same spot.

A lot of Christians, their growth is like that. A lot of movement, singing, going to church, listening to sermons, even preaching perhaps and activity, witnessing. But at the end of it all, you're defeated by the same old sins that they were defeated by 25 years ago when they first accepted Christ.

Is that God's will? The Bible speaks about Christian growth like getting educated. How many parents would like to see their children sit in the kindergarten for 25 years? Never learning anything more than addition or subtraction. Not going into higher classes and learning about multiplication and division.

As much as every parent longs that their child should grow, know more about math and more about chemistry and more about physics and things like that, I want to say God is a loving father. My dear brothers, I'm not saying this to discourage anyone, to encourage you. God wants you to progress.

And he wants to help you. And Jesus said, I'll give you another example of what new covenant is from the old covenant. It's all here in Matthew 5. The old covenant law was don't commit adultery, which is a physical thing with a man and woman.

In the new covenant, he says, don't lust with your eyes. How many Christians are there? How many of you here would say, I equate lusting with my eyes after a woman as equal to adultery? That is the new covenant standard. You say it's impossible.

Absolutely right. Without God's help, impossible. All of these things.

And he said many other things. He said, never do your righteousness before men. And don't pray to impress people.

The old covenant is okay. You see these great prayers that people prayed in the Old Testament. Long, long, many verses.

But he said in the new covenant, don't pray to impress people. And I'll tell you how it was with me as a born again Christian. Whenever people asked me to pray in public.

Which, you know, I was born again. I was attending meetings and sometimes I would pray. Sometimes I would pray just others or everybody was praying.

And I would also sometimes lead in prayer. I was so conscious that people were listening. I was praying to impress them.

I'll tell you honestly. Confessing my sin. I wanted people to be impressed.

And if occasionally somebody said in Hallelujah or Amen, that excited me. Because I was praying to the people, not to God. And I'd go home and I'd say, Lord, I'm disobeying you.

You said I must not pray before men, but that's what I'm doing. I'm so conscious of men more than you when I pray. Forgive me.

I'd confess my sin was forgiven. My heart was clean. But the next week when I prayed to the same old thing.

I said, Lord, there's got to be a better way. You can't give me a standard in the new covenant. And make it impossible for me to reach there.

Just keep me frustrated, frustrated, frustrated. I want this life. I've discovered one thing in the Christian life.

You don't get what you just ask for. You get what you hunger and thirst for. Jesus said, Blessed are those, Matthew 5 verse 6, who hunger and thirst.

Hunger, he used two expressions. Hungry and thirsty for righteousness. For this righteousness of the new covenant.

What is the promise? Matthew 5, 6, they shall be satisfied. I said, I want to be satisfied. I want a Christian life that satisfies me.

Not one that I'm ashamed as people discover my private life. Ashamed as people come into my house and see how I talk to my wife. Ashamed of their discovering something the way I'm handling my finances.

Something unrighteous, something unclean. Ashamed of allowing people to come to see what's going on in my thoughts. Especially as a preacher.

Lord, I hunger and thirst for righteousness. I remember the days when I used to fast and pray. Even when I was working in the ships in the Navy.

I'd sometimes go two days without eating, just drinking liquids and praying. I said, Lord, I want an overcoming life. I want an overcoming life.

But it never came. I don't know why. And I'll tell you, it went on like that.

Up and down. And I would preach. Sometimes I'd preach.

But I knew I was a hypocrite. I wasn't living what I was preaching. I was preaching the standards, alright.

As I said, I was not committing any external sins. Anybody who watched my external life would examine every area of my external life. Absolutely clean.

I never cheated anybody. I paid all my taxes. I wasn't fooling around with women.

But my inner life was dirty. My thought life was dirty. I was exactly like what Jesus said about the Pharisees.

You clean the outside of the cup, but the inside is dirty. I said, Lord, that's exactly what I am. So clean.

I'm not one of those people who keep the outside dirty. You know, a lot of people, their external life itself is unclean. They got a bad testimony before people.

I wasn't like that. I think all my life I had a good testimony. All these 63 years of being a Christian, I had a good testimony before people.

But for at least about 16 years after I was born again, I was a defeated Christian. Defeated and preaching. And I got so fed up.

I said, Lord, I have to give up the ministry. I won't give up being a Christian. But I'm sick and tired of being a hypocrite.

I'll sit somewhere in the back of some church, but never preach again. You've got to do something for me so that what I preach is true of me inside. That people can come and surprise me anytime in my home and see how I live, how I behave.

How I live with my wife. How I bring up my four sons. And that's when God began to open my eyes to see the difference between the new covenant and the old covenant.

The old covenant was obsolete. I've discovered it's true. You have to hunger and thirst.

And I hungered and thirsted. I saw this promise, you know, in Matthew 6, 33, which is a very well-known promise. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Very well-known words. And the promise is all these earthly things that you need. Not what you want, but what you need.

I thank God he doesn't give us what we want. He will destroy us. He gives us what we need.

The promise in Philippians 4, 19 is my God will supply not all that you want, but all that you need. So, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things will be added unto you.

That's another expression that I used to use, but I couldn't understand what it meant. Kingdom of God. What does that mean? I thought that was heaven.

But Jesus said in a passage in the gospel, the kingdom of God is here in your midst. So, I've discovered now the church, every church, even this one, has to be an expression of the principles of the kingdom of God. That means this is the kingdom of God on earth.

One day this kingdom will cover the whole earth as the waters cover the sea. But right now it's little pockets here and there. In wealthy countries like this, in poor countries like India.

Living churches. So, what does the kingdom of God consist of? When I first read it, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things will be added to you.

All that you need, food, clothing, shelter, everything. I thought the kingdom of God means going around preaching. Tell people about salvation.

Tell people about the gospel. And I traveled a lot. I traveled right from the north to the south of India, from the east to the west.

I spent years traveling up and down. I traveled up. And I traveled at my own expense.

And I said, Lord, I'm trying to spread the kingdom of God. Till one day God opened my eyes to read Romans 14 and verse 17. Then I understood what the kingdom of God was.

It wasn't preaching. Romans 14. Because not everybody has the gift of preaching.

Most of you here don't have the gift of preaching. That's a gift. You don't have to be ashamed of it.

God gives that gift. I'm absolutely certain God gave me that gift. I was not a public speaker.

I never spoke in public speaking in school. And nowhere else either. But God anointed me and gave me a gift.

So I can't take any credit for it. It was 100% a gift. So don't be bothered if you can't preach.

That's a gift. He gives it to some. He doesn't give it to everyone.

But I discovered that the kingdom of God is not preaching the gospel. Romans 14 and 17. The kingdom of God is not even eating and drinking.

It is three things. Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. That is the kingdom of God.

Just like the old covenant was for Israelites, a kingdom of earth was for the Israelites. The kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God is for us Christians. And the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God is the same thing.

Matthew calls it the kingdom of heaven. Other gospels call it the kingdom of God. It is not a physical thing.

It's in our heart. The kingdom of God is within you. If you have righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, that's the kingdom of God.

That is the new covenant. They didn't have it in the old covenant. In the old covenant, even a man after God's own heart like David fell into sin with somebody else's wife, killed her husband, and married her.

God permitted it. God even permitted their son to become the next king, Solomon. That was the low level.

Can you imagine if a pastor did that today? What do you think of him? Commits adultery with somebody's wife, kills the man, and marries her, and then his son becomes the next pastor. He wouldn't dream of such a thing happening today. But that was the level of old covenant.

And that was a man after God's own heart who started out like that. Old covenant standard was very low. When Elisha, somebody, we read in 2 Kings, one of the great Old Testament prophets, when somebody made fun of his bald head, and made fun of his Elijah being taken up to heaven, and said, go up, go up, you bald head, they told Elisha.

Elisha turned around and cursed them. And bears came out of the woods and ate them for those young people. That's old covenant.

You dare not speak against a prophet. There are preachers today who threaten people like that even today. Don't dare speak against me.

I say, you can speak against me, you'll be forgiven. You know what they called Jesus in Matthew 12? Beelzebul, prince of devils. Take some time to read Matthew chapter 12.

You know what Jesus said to them? You're forgiven. The worst sin that was ever committed on this earth, the worst, was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. And as soon as he was crucified, he said, Father, forgive him.

That is new covenant. There is absolutely no sin that should remain unforgiven, that you have not forgiven others in your life. It's a wonderful life.

We think that's difficult. That's where God comes to help us. It's righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

That's what they didn't have in the old covenant. In the old covenant, the Holy Spirit is always upon people. Upon, upon, upon.

Gave them power. Power to tear lions to pieces. Power to kill Goliath.

And power to drive armies in flight. In the new covenant, this power that is upon came within. And gives us strength to defeat the enemies within.

To defeat lust in our mind. In our eyes. Anger.

That's what the Holy Spirit has come within to do. The kingdom of God is within you. Righteousness inside.

Joy inside. Peace inside. Jesus defined righteousness like this.

It is written in the Old Testament too. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind. That is the vertical pole of the cross.

And then the horizontal one. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Those are what the two arms of the cross symbolize.

Love God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind. And love others as you love yourself. You know why Jesus died on the cross? Because he loved his father first of all.

And obeyed him. To suffer hell on the cross for me. And you.

And because he loved us. That's why there are two arms on the cross. When Jesus said you've got to take up the cross to follow me.

That's what he meant. I've got to love God with all my heart, soul, strength and mind. And love my neighbor as myself.

And I say Lord that's impossible. The Lord says right. That's why I give you the Holy Spirit.

And so I began to seek God for the power of his Holy Spirit. Not to do supernatural things. I mean not to heal the sick or something like that.

I don't have the gift of healing. But I said Lord I'm much more interested in that. I'm more interested in being pure inside.

To never have a bitter thought against a single human being. To forgive everyone who's ever harmed me in my life. And today I can testify God's done it.

There's not a single human being. Anywhere. Whom I've not forgiven in my entire life.

Totally forgiven. Does the memory of what they did to me come back to my mind? Yes. I have no control over my memory.

But I do have a control over my will. What I choose to do. I have a control over my attitude towards someone.

I have no control over my memory. That delivered me from being guilty. Because the thought would come back to my mind what somebody did.

But I would immediately say Lord I've forgiven him. I can't. God does not allow our memory to be erased.

For some wise reason. He knows best. But I want to say to you.

This is righteousness. That I love God with all my heart. And I'll tell you something.

If you were to ask people in the world. What are the two. Who are the two masters in the world.

Almost everybody would say God and the devil. That's what I thought for many years. As I began to understand the new covenant.

The Lord showed me those are not the two masters. Luke 16 verse 13. And.

Verse 13 yes. Luke 16 verse 13. He said you can't serve two masters.

And he said the two masters are God and money. Aha. That puts an altogether different color on this.

If I were to ask you. How many of you serve God and Satan. All of us would say no.

We never serve Satan. We hate him. If God calls me here and Satan calls me here.

I know where I'll go. I know where you'll go. But let me ask another question.

If God calls you in one direction. And money invites you in another direction. Which way do you go? It's very easy to find out who is a master.

Supposing there are two people sitting here. And they both say Zack is my slave. Very easy to find out.

Tell them both to call me. You tell them to call me. And the one I respond to.

I'm that person's slave. In different situations in your life. God asks you to take a particular stand or do something.

Money invites you in another direction. Whom do you respond to? Whether you know it or not. You're a slave of that person.

God or money. Be honest about it. I was honest about it.

I said Lord I want to be honest. I love money. I'm born again.

But sometimes not all the time. I didn't live for money. I mean I decided that I would support myself and serve the Lord.

So I wasn't running after money that way. But Lord in my heart. I found an attraction to money.

And I don't want to go that way. It's like if your wife may be true to you living with you all the time. But if in her heart she's attracted to another man.

How will you feel about it? I mean it's not enough that she's living with you. She should not have any attraction to another man. That's a true wife.

And I said Lord I'm your bride. I should not be attracted to this other master that's ruled me earlier. Money.

I want to be free. And God does even that. But I've realized that you've got a hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Forgiving everyone. Make sure my dear brothers and sisters. Jesus said in Matthew 6 and verse.

15. These are serious words. I've been especially burdened by the Lord to emphasize this in the past few.

Months. If you do not forgive others. Matthew 6 15.

If you do not forgive one person. Your father will not. Forgive your sin.

And if you die in that condition and death can come at any time. Where will you go? Is there another purgatory after death where you can cleanse yourself? No. It's appointed unto men once to die.

And after that the judgment. Before you die my brother sister. Forgive everyone.

If you don't do it because you love Jesus. At least forgive everyone because. Otherwise you'll end up in the wrong place.

If you do not forgive others. Your father. Matthew 6 15.

Will not. Forgive your sins. Heaven and earth will pass away.

But those words of Jesus will never pass away. God's not saying telling us to scare us. He's warning us.

It's like we warn children. Don't play with fire. It's dangerous.

It's not you're not trying to frighten your children when you say don't play with fire. You're going to be careful. So it's like that.

Peace. That's another thing. The kingdom of God is peace.

That's another thing I thought I didn't have. You know. Anxiety.

Discouragement. Sometimes condemning myself. And I said Lord I want peace in my heart.

And I want peace with all people. Let me begin with the outside first. Before we go inside.

Peace with everyone. I've used an illustration to show how we can have peace with people. When people come together.

They often clash. Husband and wife. Sometimes you and somebody else.

How to avoid the clash. If one person says no I refuse to. I die.

There'll be no clash. That's what the Lord showed me. If one person refuses to cooperate in a clash.

There'll be no clash. So between a husband and wife. If one person refuses.

There'll be no clash. There'll be peace. Pursue peace with all men.

And it says in Hebrews 12. Without which we will not see God. So that's the second aspect of the kingdom of God in the new covenant.

And the third is joy in the Holy Spirit. That's another thing. The Bible says in Philippians 4.4. Philippians 4.4. Rejoice in the Lord always.

You begin to think. Paul did you mean always? And that's why he says after that. And again I say rejoice.

I meant it. Always 24 hours. That means I'm not grumbling or complaining about anything.

That's another problem I had. I'll tell you honestly. And finally.

How is this possible? Jesus said in Acts 1.8. You shall receive power. When the Holy Spirit has come. There's so much confusion.

Concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit. But I've come to see the Holy Spirit has come. To bring the kingdom of God inside me.

To bring righteousness. Peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. He's a loving father.

Let me just show you this verse. In Matthew's Luke chapter 11. And verse 13.

If you evil fathers. Know how to give good gifts to your children. Will your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? All of us who are good fathers.

When your children are hungry. Even without their asking. You give.

And if they ask daddy. Give me this. Give me a loaf of bread or something.

You'd run to get it. You mothers. Won't you do that? Now listen to this.

How much more? Will the whole God. Your father in heaven. Give the Holy Spirit.

To those who ask him. How shall we ask? John 7. Verse 37. Jesus said if anyone is thirsty.

Let him come to me and drink. The Holy Spirit will be given to him. I want to invite you.

My brother sister. To have a. Thirst from today onwards. For the life I have described.

Not what I described. What Jesus describes. Life from the Holy Spirit.

A life of overcoming. First for the Holy Spirit. For this reason.

Not. For the gift of tongues. Some people have that.

Some don't. But power to live a godly life. That we must all have.

And I want to say to you. More than any. Father on earth.

Would give to his child. What the child asked for. I promise you in the name of Jesus.

If you thirst. Not if you just ask for it casually. But you say Lord from today onwards.

I'm not going to rest. Until you fill me. With the Holy Spirit.

And give me an assurance. That I'm filled with the Holy Spirit. My wife and I both had that experience.

And one of the results was. We have four sons today who. Are all following the Lord.

They're all disciples of Jesus. One of them is leading a church in Colorado. Another leading a church in San Jose.

And Sunday was here playing. He's. In the past been an elder here and.

Three of them are priests in this church. And they are filled with the Holy Spirit. If you.

Go that way. That'll be the way for your children to go. As a young preacher I used to say Lord.

Your word says. That if a man cannot bring up his children properly at home. What's use is preaching to other people.

So I felt my first congregation. Was my home my children. My wife and I said.

This is our first church. Our children. And if you can't bring them the right way.

So I know it's my preaching to other people. If it doesn't work at home it doesn't work anywhere. God's been gracious to us.

Wonderful thing can happen when you're filled with the Holy Spirit. It's the answer to every problem in the Christian life. I want to read a little poem finally.

In conclusion. You know. David said.

The Lord is my shepherd. My cup runs over. I love that.

If you can put it up on the screen please. You know when our cup runs over from a tea cup. It flows into the saucer.

So this. It says drinking from the saucer. Can you put it on the screen? Yeah.

I'm not a famous man. And I'll never be one now. But it really doesn't matter.

Because I'm happy anyhow. As I've gone along my journey. I've reaped better than I've sowed.  
I've been drinking from the saucer. For my cup has overflowed. I didn't have a lot of money.  
And sometimes my life was tough. But with my wife to stand by me. I was always rich enough.  
I thank God for all the blessings. That he on me bestowed. I've been drinking from the saucer.  
All my life. For my cup has overflowed. God gives me strength.  
And courage. When the way grows steep. And rough.

I do not ask for blessings now. For I've been blessed enough. Now it applies to all of us.  
May we never be too busy. To bear or lift another's load. Then we'll be drinking from the saucer.  
For our cups will overflow. May you and I. Never be so busy. As to help lift or bear another's load.  
Then you will be drinking from the saucer too. Your cups will overflow. And we bow our heads in prayer.  
Our Heavenly Father. I believe you have great purposes. For every single head bowed here today.  
And I pray that faith will be born in me. Many hearts. Right now.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit. To enter into the new covenant. Help us Lord we pray.

Thank you for this time. In Jesus name. Amen.

Thank you very much. Dear brothers and sisters. Amen.

So meaningful. We are going to share with you our last song. And we have our baptism shortly after which.

So we're going to share and sing. I Stand Amazed. Amen.

I'm free. Singing. How marvelous.

How wonderful. Can my song. Shall ever be.

How marvelous. How wonderful. Is my Savior's love for me.

He took my sins and my sorrows. And made them His very own. And poured the burden to Calvary.

And suffered and died alone. And my song shall ever be. How marvelous.

How wonderful. Is my Savior's love for me. In the ransomed in glory.

His face I at last shall see. It will be my joy through the ages. To sing of His love for me.

Hallelujah. I don't think they're quite ready yet. So we're going to sing another chorus of that.

Amen. My song shall ever be. How marvelous.

How Savior's love for me. Amen. It's always a little strange getting into a warm pool in front of all of you.

I say, you know, I always can come up with a joke. It's a lame joke at some point or another. But this is like literally the best thing I get to do as a pastor.

And so I hope that you just will, I hope that the joy of this moment will overwhelm us. You all can be seated too. You don't need to stand for this whole thing.

As I mentioned earlier, we have six candidates for baptism this morning. Amen. Which is just awesome.

Five of them are from our Safari Kids ministry. So there's this little verse in the book of 3rd John that I'm going to paraphrase. I don't know that I'll get it exactly right.

But he says, I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. And today we get to witness that our children are walking in the truth. So just as a reminder, we do not believe that baptism is what saves somebody.

We believe that salvation is only by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. But we believe that Jesus Christ commanded that we be baptized to publicly demonstrate our alignment with the covenant community of God and to show the world that we believe Jesus Christ is the Lord and Savior of our life. And so that's what we are celebrating this morning.

And with that, we're going to get started. So we've asked each candidate for baptism to introduce themselves and then share a few words about why they want to be baptized this morning. Come on in, Farzana.

Good morning, everyone. My name is Farzana Saleem, and I'm here to rededicate myself. I was baptized as a baby, and I wanted to be baptized today with my own autonomy as an adult to rededicate myself to the Lord as a symbol of sacrifice and leaning into the purpose that he has for my life.

Farzana, do you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins, and that he is the only way to be reconciled to God? Yes, I do. Based on your profession of faith in Jesus Christ, I baptize you now in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Hi, my name is Kiana, and I'm 11 years old.

I decided to follow Jesus when I was around 6 years old. I want to get baptized because I believe that Jesus died for my sins, and I want to continue my faith with Jesus. Kiana, based on your profession of faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I baptize you now in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Hi, my name is Aniston, and I'm 8 years old. I decided to follow Jesus when I wanted to learn more about him. I want to get baptized because I believe that Jesus died for my sins, I decided to be baptized because I want people to know that I'm a follower of Jesus.

The Bible verse that I will keep in my heart, and will help me remember that I am God's child, is 2 Timothy 1, verse 7. For God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment. I'll have you do it the other side. Aniston, based on your confession of faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, we baptize you now in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Hi, my name is Lange Fisi Kairos Pagatho. I'm 13 years old. I gave my life to Christ on March 21st, 2015.

And today in front of my family, my church, and my friends, I want to obey God's command to be baptized. So I'm making a public statement that I am a follower of Jesus Christ. Lange Fisi, based on your

confession of faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I baptize you now in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Hi, my name is Maggie Anderson. I asked Jesus into my heart when I was four. I wanted to get baptized because I love Jesus, and I want to give my life to Him.

And I know that this is an important step in my walk with God. I want everyone to know that He is my God, and I will serve Him and follow Him for the rest of my life. This is my daughter.

Margaret, based on your confession of faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I baptize you now in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Hello, my name is Howie Anderson. I let Jesus into my life a long time ago, and I've had a steady walk with Him since.

And I want to get baptized today because I want to make a public declaration that I've made Jesus the commander of my life. And this is my son. Howard, based on your confession of faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I baptize you now in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Isn't that awesome? We are going to continue to do, I pray, many baptisms here at Abundant Life Christian Fellowship in the months and years to come. These will be the last ones in this baptismal, but we're going to figure out some great new baptismal that we're going to use as we move forward. Thank you for being here.

Thank you for being a part of this. Part of our responsibility as the family of God is to come alongside these people who have made this public declaration this morning, and help them to become all that God has called them to be. Would you stand for the benediction? The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Until we meet again or until our Savior comes, and then forever.

Amen. You're loved, and you're prayed for, and you're sent. Amen.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/SVUswkAF0k0.mp4>

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