

- I. I. Be Holy In All Your Behavior With A Holiness Like God's Holiness
  - A. Since I Peter 2:13, Peter has been teaching us much about being humbly submissive and respectful toward all people, with a special emphasis on being humbly submissive and respectful toward those in authority over us who are mistreating us.
    - 1. Near the end of chapter 3, Peter begins his transition from telling us how and when to be humbly submissive and respectful to what we must to do get into the spiritual condition to live this way.
    - 2. It is in this transition section that Peter reminds us that, like the flood waters that saved Noah, so baptism now saves us. But saves us from what? And as I taught last Sunday, baptism saves us from ourselves – that is, from our flesh, the world, and the devil – for in its essence, baptism is an appeal to God for a good conscience – through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
    - 3. Today, it is my intention to talk about how baptism saves us from ourselves.
  - B. I Peter 3:17-4:2 . . . For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong. [18] For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; [19] in which also [in the spirit] He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, [20] who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. [21] Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, [22] who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him. [4:1] Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, [2] so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.
  - C. Pray

- II. How does baptism saves us from ourselves, the flesh, the world, the devil?
- A. Last Sunday I compared the marriage ceremony and the activity that makes us one flesh to baptism. I used this example for three reasons.
1. First, the scripture compares the relationship between Christ and the church to the relationship between a husband and wife. And beyond that, the scripture says we are the bride of Christ, and He is our husband.
  2. Second, I wanted to demonstrate that there is a genuinely mystical and profoundly spiritual aspect to baptism, just as there is to the marriage ceremony and the action that makes us one flesh.
    - a. Now the reality is, you cannot see or measure or empirically prove the existence of this mystical and spiritual aspect of baptism any more than you can see or measure or prove the fact that a husband and wife become one flesh. And yet it is such an important truth that God brings this mystical and spiritual mystery to our attention in the second chapter and 24<sup>th</sup> verse of the first book of the Bible. He then He restates it four more times in the NT. And finally, He uses the mystery of the marriage relationship to depict the mystery of the union between Christ and the church.
    - b. So though the mystical and spiritual aspect of baptism is not something we can see or measure or empirically prove, the Word of God tells us it is real.
  3. Third, I wanted to affirm that though the mystical and spiritual aspects of baptism are real, they are not forces that overpower us so that we automatically live transformed lives from that day forward.
    - a. In other words, baptism is not a magic wand that in a moment of time transforms us from sick sinners to vibrant saints any more than a church wedding and becoming one flesh changes us from self-centered individuals to love-focused spouses who from that time forward live each day to love our spouse more than ourselves.
    - b. However, like the marriage ceremony and becoming one flesh, baptism gives us a good start – but after that, we must do our part, day in and day out, to bring baptism's grand beginning to its intended end.
  4. Of course, we can treat baptism as a religious tradition just as we can treat the marriage ceremony as a cultural tradition – and many do in our day as shown by the number of divorces and remarriage. And as for the activity that makes us one flesh, that too can be treated as something far less than the mystical and spiritual union it is. And

- here again, many do as shown by the number of people engaging in casual, premarital, multi-partner, and adulterous sexual relationships.
5. However, no matter how poorly or immaturely we treat baptism, or how un-Christian we live from the day of our baptism onward, it does not change baptism's essence.
- B. At the beginning of today's teaching, I said we would talk about HOW baptism saves us. But before getting to that, I want to point out the connection between baptism, salvation, the forgiveness of sin, and the receiving of the Holy Spirit presented in the scriptures – especially in the Book of Acts.
1. At the end of Jesus's three years of ministry, and just before ascending into heaven, He told His disciples to "Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them (*these new baptized believers*) to observe all that He commanded His disciples to do (Matthew 28:18-20). Mark adds these words of Jesus to His command to go and make disciples: "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16).
  2. In Peter's first sermon (Day of Pentecost), he responded to the crowds question of "What shall we do?" with these words: "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Luke concludes this portion with these words: "So then, those who had received [Peter's] word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:36-41).
  3. In Peter's second sermon, he exhorted his hearers to "repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:17-26).
    - a. It was in this second sermon that Peter points back to Moses' prophecy about Christ (Deuteronomy 18:15-19), which affirms our duty to "give heed to everything Jesus says to you – because those who do not heed His words shall be utterly destroyed.
    - b. Peter concluded his second sermon by saying that "God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways."
    - c. My point here is that Peter brought together the need of repentance, salvation, baptism, removal of sin, and sanctification in his first two recorded sermons.

4. From then on, Acts records a number of occasions where we see the close link between evangelism, salvation, baptism, and receiving the Holy Spirit. For example we have:
    - a. Philip baptizing new believers in Samaria (Acts 8:4-13)
    - b. Philip baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:34-39)
    - c. Ananias baptizing Saul (the future Paul) (Acts 9:15-19)
    - d. Peter and those with him baptizing Cornelius and those who gathered with Cornelius to hear Peter (Acts 10:44-48)
    - e. Paul baptizing Lydia and her household at the river (Acts 16:13-15)
    - f. Paul baptizing the Philippian jailor and his family (Acts 16:31-34)
    - g. Paul baptizing some in Corinth, including the leader of the Synagogue (Acts 18:7-8)
    - h. And Paul re-baptizing some in the name of Jesus who had previously been baptized with John's baptism (repentance) so they could receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-7)
  5. My reason for referencing these scriptures is to show you from God's word the part baptism played in the salvation and sanctification process.
- C. So just how does baptism save us from our flesh, the world, and the devil? I want to remind us here that this part of the salvation process does not save us from the penalty of sin. Only a perfect Lamb, the son of God, Jesus Christ, can do that for us. To pay our own penalty or to try and work off our own debt of sin leads to only one end – eternal damnation in hell.
1. For me, Romans 6 is an important chapter for answering the question of how baptism saves us.
    - a. In baptism, that is, in the immersion part, we die with Christ, and this death is to our flesh, our old nature, sin's enslaving power over us, and our willing submission and servitude to Satan (Romans 6:2-3, 6-7).
    - b. Of course, baptism does not leave us in a state of death anymore than we leave the one being baptized under water. Therefore, after immersing those being baptized, we raise them up out of the water which brings the baptized into a new life of no longer living for ourselves but for Him who died and rose again on our behalf. In other words, we mystically die with Christ to our old self and rise with Christ to newness of life – a life now lived unto God (Romans 6:4-5, 8-14).

2. In case you are thinking this truth is, at best, only found in Romans, let me point you to Colossians 2:9-12 . . . For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, [10] and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; [11] and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ (*mystical/spiritual*); [12] having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him (*mystical/spiritual*) through faith (*i.e., we accept this reality by faith*) in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.
3. And as Paul wrote to the church in Rome about working out their baptism in the everyday challenges of life, so he says something very similar to the Colossian Christians in Colossians 3:1-4 . . . Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. [2] Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. [3] For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. [4] When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.
4. Which brings us back to the question: “How does baptism save us from ourselves?” As Peter says, it is an appeal to God for a good conscience, and it opens the door to a good conscience by bringing us into a state of death regarding sin, our flesh, our old nature, and the enslaving power of the devil over us, and into a state of new life wherein we continue from that day onward to grow and mature in holiness with the intended goal of becoming holy in all our behavior as God is holy.
5. Once again I want to make it clear that baptism does not magically transform us, it starts the process of transformation by getting us into the right condition to proceed down the path of transformation.

### III. Conclusion

- A. With these thoughts in mind, I want to conclude by reading the words to the hymn, “More Holiness Give Me.”
  1. More holiness give me, more strivings within. More patience in suffering, more sorrow for sin. More faith in my Savior, more sense of His care. More joy in His service, more purpose in prayer.
  2. More gratitude give me, more trust in the Lord. More zeal for His glory, more hope in His Word. More tears for His sorrows, more pain at His grief.

3. More meekness in trial, more praise for relief. More purity give me, more strength to o'ercome, More freedom from earth-stains, more longings for home. More fit for the kingdom, more useful I'd be, More blessed and holy, more, Savior, like Thee.