

Buried in Baptism: A witness to God's Life-Changing Power

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[0 : 00] And people might not know, but I have a grandfather that I've never met. My dad's father died when my dad was only 15.

In that frosty hard soil.

And he died early because of smoking. Now I hate cigarettes because they do damage people. But friends, I could demonstrate digging a hole, but there's some freshly dug holes just up the road. Just up the road here. There's some freshly dug graves. And we are conducting a funeral today. There is a burial service later on today. A burial service.

What am I talking about, you might say? Okay. There's several people here this morning about to get buried. That's the sense of it. That's the sense of it today.

[1 : 11] The significance of it. What am I talking about? Talking about baptism. Baptism. Baptism by immersion. It's symbolic of burial. And the word baptism means to bury, to plunge, to immerse, to dip.

It's a picture of what the Lord has done for us. And every baptism pictures four things. Four things you could say. Really, it's the gospel.

As Paul defined it in 1 Corinthians 15. Four factors that are the gospel. We see, Paul says, I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received.

That Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. And that he was buried. And that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. So we see death, burial, and resurrection.

And really, you could say these four factors are the gospel, the death, burial, and the resurrection of Christ. And also, the fourth one, being seen as witnesses.

[2 : 12] So that's why we'd love you to be a part today to come and watch the baptism. Baptism identifies us with Christ. And so we see in Romans 6.4 it says, Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.

But like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. So we accept the death, burial, and the resurrection of our Saviour as being for us.

His victory over sin and over death. And the going under the water is a symbol of death. It speaks of our dying to the dominion of sin. It speaks of leaving the old life behind.

And it pictures some things. We could say it pictures a lot of things really. Baptism, it signifies a cleansing of sin. Now the baptism, waters don't wash away your sin. It's the blood of Jesus. Amen? But the baptism signifies the purification that comes from salvation. Baptism signifies that public declaration of our faith.

[3 : 18] Before witnesses. Now we could do it in a church, but even better to do it in public. Even better to do it in a public place. And so I think it's even more fitting. That public declaration of your faith in your Saviour.

It's a witness of our devotion to God too, isn't it? As we make that point. Yeah, I'm going to make that step. I'm going to take that step by faith. It's a sign of our union with Christ.

That we're one with Christ. It pictures our coming out of the watery grave as we come out of the water. Of our rising up. As a people risen with Christ. And we see the resurrection of our Saviour.

It tells of our newness of life. It shows our new life in Christ. And so it pictures our regeneration.

That we're born again. The water doesn't make you born again.

You're born again. Then you go into the water. We believe in believers' baptism. You have to be saved. Then you're baptised. But it's a picture of that regeneration. That you've got new life.

[4 : 18] And so your baptism shows to the whole wide world. This witness that you love God. That you trust Jesus. That you've put your hope in Christ. And so there's a burial there.

And so it's a very special day for these ones. I'm going to call them up shortly. To just come and we can pray for them. And they might want to say a few words. We'll shortly do that. So these ones are going to be buried.

They're actually picturing that they've died. They've died to self. They've died to the world. And they're alive to Christ. There was a time in the Word of God. When someone witnessed to someone.

And they said, see here is water. What does hinder me from being baptised? And the answer was. If you believe with all your heart. In Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Then you can be baptised. You know, what's hindering you? Sometimes it's self. Sometimes it's just the natural nerves. Or, you know, the flesh. That, oh, people are going to be watching me. Or I'm a bit afraid.

[5 : 13] Or it could be the devil that's hindering us too. But, you know, really, simply put. If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then what's stopping you? What's hindering you?

So, your baptism is that witness of. That you're burying your old self to the. To the. In the water. You're leaving behind your sins. And your worldly ways. I was kind of thinking.

And, look, I'm not picking on people that smoke today. But, you might. If you are a smoker. And you're wanting to get baptised this morning. Leave your cigarettes in your pocket. And let them perish in the water too.

Amen. Amen. Take your cigarette packet. Put it in your pocket. And when you're baptised. Those cigarettes are just going to be fit for the bin. And they can perish. You know, those cigarettes. You can bury your cigarettes this morning.

Amen. I'm just being a bit light hearted. And honestly, I'm not saying you have to give up smoking. But, wouldn't it be a great testimony? Wouldn't it be a good thing to do? Amen. Wouldn't that be a good thing to do?

[6 : 08] And say, I'm finished with those things now. I'm burying them in the water. They're going to be buried. But, thank God. You know, baptism represents your transformation. It represents God's going to give me the strength to do right.

God's going to help me live according to his word. God's going to give me the strength to follow Christ's example. Strength to resist sin. And embrace holiness. Sure, I'm still going to have my faults and failings.

I'm still a flesh. But, God's going to help me with all of that. And so, Romans 6.11, it says, you can make a decision to reckon some things. Reckon some things. And whether you're getting baptised today or not, you can say this too.

Amen. Likewise, reckon you also yourselves to be dead. Indeed, unto sin. But alive unto God. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. This is just, you know, it's a special day for these ones.

But, these are words that apply to all of us, aren't they? To make a decision. Yeah, I'm going to reckon some things today. I'm going to make a statement here. I'm going to make a stand here.

[7 : 06] I'm going to draw a line in the sand and stand for God. And baptism is that great point in your walk with God that you mark it down. That you cross the line.

That you make that commitment. You're God helping you to walk with God from here on. And so, we can all be reminded, those that are baptised, to our own personal time. That, yeah, that was me back then.

And baptism is a symbol of death. And we witness that we are dead. We're dead. Dead to the old life of sin. And I love, furthermore, how it speaks about resurrection.

It speaks about the resurrection of our Lord. Of our new life. And our baptism, really, it serves as a testimony to others. So, I'm going to ask those that are wanting to be baptised this morning to come forward.

Just come to the front here. My name is Mark. Just a few months ago, I learnt how I could be saved. I had to accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour.

[8 : 07] Admit I was a sinner. And ask his forgiveness. Doing that was easy for me. I now want to be baptised. To declare myself a Christian. Who wants to live a Christian life. Amen.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hello, I'm Rachel. I'm Peter Roger's daughter.

And I've been around Christianity my whole life. Okay. Hallelujah. Sorry. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. God's been working with me a lot lately. Amen.

I've always hesitated being baptised because I thought, I don't know, I wasn't ready or, I don't know. But he's been working with me a lot lately. It's to show me that it's one of the first steps.

[9 : 04] It's not, you know, something that you do later on. And it's one of the first things you're supposed to do when you believe in God. Yeah. Thank you. Anyway, I just wanted to read Psalm 28 because it's one of the psalms that, you know, has got me here today.

So, at my lowest point, you know, I opened my Bible and I hadn't done it for a long time. And I read this verse and now I've been coming back to church. And I just want to read it. Yeah. Unto thee I will cry, O Lord, my rock.

Be not silent to me, lest if they'll be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit. Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry unto thee.

I lift my hands towards thy holy oracle. Draw me not away with the wicked and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.

Sorry. Give according to their deeds and according to the wickedness of their endeavours. Give them after the work of their hands, render to them their dessert. Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands.

[10 : 31] He shall destroy them and not build them up. Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications. The Lord is my strength and my shield, and my heart trusts within him, and I am helped.

Therefore my heart greatly rejoice, and with my song I will praise him. The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed. Save thy people and bless thy inheritance.

Feed them also and lift them up forever. Amen. Rachel said, the Lord is my strength and my shield. And I know her dad, Peter, is going to be helping with the baptism. He says he's baptising his daughter and his sister at the same time. So we'll continue. I thought I would actually go first, but my dad jumped in in front of me.

So thanks for that, Dad. But good morning all. My name is Jaya, for those of you who don't know, or I haven't had the chance to meet yet.

[11 : 44] I've been attending this church here for about six months now. And I feel very blessed and very happy to be standing here today. I spoke to Pastor Andrew during this week about baptism and getting baptised.

And what I might say when it was my time to speak. And he said, Jaya, you are in good company here. Just speak from the heart. So that's what I intend to do.

So this will be kind of a shortened testimony, I guess, in a sense. Maybe one day I'll get to share a longer one.

Anyways, I've prepared some notes here. So please bear with me as I try to get through this. Just a little bit about myself. From my earliest memories as a young boy, I grew up in a Christian environment.

I remember attending church services in Sunday school. Interesting fact, I've actually come to find out quite a few of you here today actually attended the same church.

[12 : 51] Northside Baptist Church. And many of you may even remember myself and my family attending those days. I'm turning 40 next year, which is quite hard to actually even say that.

And something that my dad likes to keep on reminding me. So it's been a while. And it's just really amazing to see how the Lord works.

After all these years, we end up reuniting here at this church. So I also attended Christian school. So I guess you could say I grew up believing there was a God.

But I was, at the time, probably too young to know the Lord personally. And what it all meant for my life. I was told and I believed that heaven and hell were very real places.

So I used to pray nearly every night that God wouldn't send me to hell. And that if I was a good boy, I would go to heaven. Anyway, this was the extent of my Christian knowledge at the time.

[13 : 55] But unfortunately, I didn't stay in that. Something happened in my life. And I guess it was my teen years. They came and I pretty much forgot all about that.

Gradually, the world and worldly desires became more attractive to me. And then praying and going to church, these things were just not part of the picture anymore.

This continued all throughout my adult years. But if someone had asked me if I believed in God or was a Christian, I would have said yes. I'm just not one of those churchy kind of people, you know. I was living as if there was no real need for God in my life. I was selfish. And I did what I pleased without a need to answer to a God. Lukewarm at best and certainly not living a Christian lifestyle.

I'd say this continued. And I lived this way maybe right up to about two, three years ago. When a massive change happened in the world. And I'm pretty sure a lot of you here today might know what I'm alluding to.

[15:02] But I saw and witnessed the world changing around me. I could see that something was very wrong with the world. And a very real evil existed.

Obviously, I know now that God is ultimately in control. But at the time, it made me very angry. This sent me on a search for the truth. An information overload.

And I scoured every deep and dark rabbit hole I could go down. And while I do believe that what I discovered during that time was very real. And it changed my perceptions of the world.

I was still left with this empty feeling. It made me angry and lose hope for the future. Something was still missing in my life. And it was during this time as if some divine intervention.

I feel God woke me up out of my slumber. The answers I was searching for would have been found in him. And I'd been living very far from that. Still not fully knowing the Lord.

[16:03] But now aware of his presence. I decided it was time for me to start reading the Bible. For the first time. Being someone that likes to do things in a linear fashion. I wanted to start from the very beginning in the Old Testament.

And then went my way through to the New. And I don't know about some of you. But I did find some of the language hard to understand. And it was the King James that I read. And when I said I read it.

I read it word for word. The details of the tabernacle. The lineage. Every single word. I did not want to miss one word. I was retaining a lot of what I was reading.

And certainly had more of a clearer picture. Of the history of creation. And understood more about the fallen man. The Israelites.

Captivity in Egypt. The promised land. Exile etc. But I still didn't fully grasp what it all meant for me. I then decided it was time to start going to church again.

[17:02] It wasn't this church. It was another church. But I did finally hear the gospel for the first time. And I finally understood it for the first time.

The good news. Jesus came and suffered and died on the cross for my sins. He sacrificed himself on the cross. So that I might be saved by grace through faith.

The wages of sin is death. But Jesus paid the price for me. When I finally understood this. So I immediately broke down and cried. And got on my hands and knees to confess my sins to the Lord. And ask him for forgiveness. I put my faith and trust in him. And was saved in that moment. So I stand here before you today.

Feeling blessed and ready to be baptized in the name of the Lord. This is a confession of my faith. And hope and trust in him. And I now want to dedicate my life to following him.

[17:57] And serving him in whatever way he guides me. Thank you very much for listening to me today. And God bless. Bless you. Hi, I'm Paul.

I want to start with Psalm 13, number 5. But I have trusted in thy mercy. My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I was raised in a Catholic family.

My dad, mum, two brothers and I went to church fairly regularly, but not always. I was christened, had holy communion, confirmation, and I believed in God because that's what I was taught.

And I'm grateful for my upbringing because it gave me an understanding of God. When I married my wife, Elise, we often talked about faith and how we would raise our son, Sebastian, to be Christian, but had not found a church to attend until five years ago when we started coming here to Church for You.

I have always liked what was being preached. Elise and Sebastian were baptised two years ago, but I still did not feel in my heart that I had the conviction to trust the Lord.

[19:09] But over time and reflection, I knew that I have been blessed and I've been kept safe by him. And upon this realisation, I have felt at peace and my heart is different.

I know I'm a sinner and only Christ will grant me salvation and I'm ready to live my life for him. Amen. Hi everyone, I'm Cruz.

I'm 23. When I was probably 18, 19, I'll start by saying I was raised not necessarily an atheist, but my parents aren't...

My dad's not a Christian. My mum, she is a Christian, but she doesn't really practise it. And it wasn't... It wasn't... I wasn't raised a Christian in that sense.

But I feel like I found the Lord when I was probably 18. Not through Christianity, just through... Just through a sense that there was a God that's real.

[20 : 23] And it led me on a path of self-discovery. And through that, I did find a connection with the Lord.

However, probably maybe a year and a half ago or so, I maybe got a bit ahead of myself and decided to fall into sin and just things that are...

Just... I don't even... I'm not exactly sure of the word for it, but... Falling into sin. And just, you know, one sin and then, you know...

Just that, once you start to fall into that trap, it's like you... The thought of turning back is... It becomes a bit of a rabbit hole in itself.

So after... At a certain point, I... I did decide to go to a church. I was referred by a friend. It was not this one, a different one.

[21 : 34] And I did begin to read the Bible. And go quite deep into Christianity. I found joy. It's been a very, very... A very great help for me on this...

On this journey. And I did recently... Confess that I accept that Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins.

Amen. And... I choose to be baptised today to... As a declaration of my...

Of accepting Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour. So... Thank you for listening. Thank you. Did you want me to help you?

So, Christine, have you trusted Christ as your Lord and Saviour? Yes. Yes. Yes. I've always believed in God. But as a child, my parents didn't go to church very much.

[22 : 41] But they believed too. As I got older, we came out to Australia. And we still didn't go to church.

But we always believed. Anyway... I had two tragic incidents. Just three years ago, within 12 months of each other, I lost my mum and then I lost my sister.

After my sister died, which is in 2021, I knew that I was searching for something. I could feel it.

But... So I walked out onto the street and I walked up to... I didn't realise this church was here. And I walked up the end of the road, Yorktown Road, because I'd seen a church there.

And it was closed. So I sat outside and I cried a bit. And I walked back all the way home again. And straight away, the next day, I went out and bought a Bible.

[23 : 50] I had an old Bible from the school I used to go to in England. Because they used to give us Bibles. But all of a sudden, I just felt, I need...

I needed God. I need Jesus, our Lord. I felt it so strongly. And I knew that this is what my mum and my sister want.

And my dad. But it was for me as well. So I started reading the Bible. And I just felt this real lifting, uplifting of peace inside me.

Yeah. And I found this church. I was walking past it. And I'd been shopping down at the local supermarket. And I thought, I'm going to go in and ask.

And I've been coming for six months. And I'm so blessed to be in this church. And I just want to thank everybody for welcoming me.

[24 : 51] I accept Jesus as my saviour. God sent his only begotten son down to shed his blood for our sins. So that we could be forgiven.

And he died. And he was risen up by God three days later. So thank you. Praise the Lord.

Lord, we thank you for these ones that have made this public testimony today. Of their faith.

They've all got different faith journeys. Lord, they've all come to know you as their saviour and Lord. And they wanted to make this special declaration of their faith today by Baptists. We pray you bless them. We pray for others that might be present that are still thinking about it. As you put on their heart to Lord.

Whether it's today or another time. There's still time today. Or the next time. And we just pray each one might be encouraged. As we heard these confessions of faith.

[25 : 53] And consider our own faith. How it can grow. And how we can walk closer to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. God bless you.