

Baptism in Relation to Making Disciples

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Date: 22 May 2022

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 0 0] Once again this morning, I extend a very warm welcome to you all and all of those who are joining us online as well. As you can see, today we are having a baptism service and that will be at the end of our service today. The baptisms are six children being baptized.

Fathers are sitting at the front and mums will come in with the children near the end of the service. At the end of the service, they'll come in and take their place along with the fathers here. Now there's tea and coffee being served in the hall today. I don't say some of the intimations here that it'll be on the 5th, but they decided, the girls decided, ladies decided that because there would be visitors today as well, we would start the tea and coffee and we're glad to be able to do that. It's something we had regularly every Lord's Day morning after the service until the COVID situation came along. So we're now able to restart that and everybody's very welcome to stay and have a cup of coffee or tea in the hall and just have a short time of fellowship there.

Now tonight, the Big YF meets in the hall at 7.45 and P7 children are actually welcome tonight as well. The speaker is Dina MacLeod. And you can see the midweek meetings and the Saturday meeting and the reference to the Assistant Minister, Reverend Callum Murdo-Smith, who's accepted the congregation's call. And that will take place, the induction, God willing, will take place on Friday 1st of July. We're looking forward very much to having Callum Murdo installed as the new Assistant Minister. But we're still delighted that the old Assistant Minister is actually here as well and continues to be with us. Sorry, I shouldn't have said old, but former is the right word. Do notice the reference to Manuel Lopez Franco. If you wish to collect, if you wish to add to the collection that's been taken, just follow the directions there. It's just the usual. Just have an envelope, please, if you want to leave it in the plate, just mark it to Manuel Franco and it'll be forwarded to him in his ministry. An intermission there for a curry night, which is on Friday the 10th of June here in the hall at 7pm. This is actually a fundraiser for Kin Craig Kids Free Church Camp and that's going to raise funds for that. So if you need to receive a place, please contact Ali Moli on any of the numbers or the number or the email that's mentioned there. Now these are all the intimations for the moment. Let's begin our worship now and today we're singing firstly from Psalm 100. Psalm 100 and in your Psalm books, that's on page 362.

We're singing the first version of the Psalm, page 362. I should have said we're pleased to have so many visitors with us today. This is usually the case for a baptism service. We do welcome you all, those who are connected with the families being children baptized today, so we extend a very warm welcome to you with us. Psalm 100.

All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. Him said with mirth, his praise forth tell, come ye before him and rejoice. The whole of the psalm and we'll stand to sing this psalm.

[4 : 1 2] is glorifying power and above the psalm and Heés, visiting with me next to me. the whole of the psalm is holy and air, ■■■ must be Syrian, such as soldiers in the philipset ange ■ft they love them. this isabel hoster. Our psalm and viney start with me earth. The whole of the psalm and we'll have but this isabel and that the cawo■■■ isiyor. And with me next to you will you will deal with us. Whither third set, three years will return. You will deliver with us for ourVolta beef and Profen butt this, workologists. Those 74AT of the year.

Cocks and Rahola winding lead us to me both continue and hope to me with us in the welcomeach metrics and■■■■■■■■. We will become saved for Anduerdo1 hablaba and Clark the back of honor. P toilet and kitchen fiers, and for dining shopites■■ES of our hands When turned in his gates with fist, approached with joy his courts unto, Praise God and bless his name, Always for it is simply so to do,

For while the Lord our God is good, His mercy is forever sure, His truth at all times firmly stood, And shall promise to it endure.

Now we're going to call upon the Lord in prayer. Let's all join together in prayer. Our gracious and loving God, we give thanks that these words we have sung in your praise have reminded us and teach us that you are our creator, that you have brought us into being to be your people, to glorify your name, to bear your image in this world.

Oh Lord our God, we thank you for the privilege that that brings to us. And we pray that today we may be conscious of how we carry this about with us, wherever we go, that we are indeed a people who have the responsibility of showing that the Lord is our God.

[7 : 18] We bless you today for this privilege of worship, and we thank you for the desire in our hearts to be here today. We pray that you would bless to us this occasion.

Bless to us, Lord, your word, as we read it and as it's preached. Bless the singing of your praise. We thank you for the way in which we're able to sing praises to you, and from our hearts express our devotion to you.

We thank you for the access we have to you in prayer. We give thanks, O Lord, that we can speak with you, that we can listen to your voice in return, speaking to us through your word.

We pray today for your spirit to be active in our midst, the Holy Spirit who takes the things of Christ and makes them real and powerful to his people.

We pray today that your spirit will be evident amongst us, that we will each of us know that your spirit has indeed touched our hearts. We pray, Lord, for thankfulness too, in regard to our circumstances, that we have freedom to gather as we do now, a freedom that is not the lot of many others in the world today.

[8 : 30] And we pray that our hearts, as we express our thanks, will all the more seek to be devoted to you. You called us to give praise to your name at all times, so that whatever our circumstances may be, we know that you are worthy of our worship, worthy of being praised, worthy of being served.

And we ask, Lord, today that you would draw near to us as we seek to draw near to you. And we pray for each and every family represented here today. Bless us, Lord, we pray, in our homes. Bless us in our relationships. Bless us to our neighbors. Bless us in our various spheres of activity and work in the world. We ask, Lord, that you would make us bright lights to shine for you.

We pray that we may at all times be conscious of our responsibility to carry forward into the world the values of the gospel. And we pray that you would be with us today, Lord, so that we may be strengthened in the ways of the Lord.

We are so conscious, O Lord, that we meet with many challenges in this life, that whatever our circumstances may be, there will be elements in them that challenge us and bring us testing times.

[9 : 52] O Lord, we pray today for your strength. We pray that you would help us to trust in you, to be like the psalmist who trusted in you as his great rock, who knew you as the God who was foundational for him, upon which he could safely stand and base his life.

And so today we pray that this may be so for each of us here, that we may be conscious, Lord, that the things of this present world, even the very best of the things of this world, will not last for us and will not prove to be a means of conducting us safely into eternity.

But we thank you for Jesus Christ. We thank you for your eternal Son. We thank you that you sent him into this world, that he came willingly even to die the death of the cross.

We thank you that he has risen from the dead and is today at the right hand of the Father on the throne of heaven. And we thank you today that we worship him as we worship the Father and the Holy Spirit, the one God.

We thank you too for the sacraments you have given to your church, for baptism, for the Lord's Supper, to be means of your grace being channeled into the lives of your people.

[11 : 07] And we thank you for all that they represent, that they represent to us how you deal with our sins in forgiveness, in cleansing, in washing us spiritually, and how you feed your people with the bread of life represented for us and conveyed mysteriously but wonderfully through the Lord's Supper.

And we pray today for the families especially who are bringing their children to be baptized. Lord, remember them, each one, in their own homes, and remember the children especially.

We ask that this day may be for them, a day that they will look back upon as they grow up, significant and meaningful to themselves, a day that will be in their recollection, a reminder to them that, as they are dedicated here in baptism, to be brought into the visible church on earth.

So they are dedicated also to God and pledged in the parents' pledging to be brought up in the ways of the Lord. Bless them, bless the parents too.

Be pleased, Lord, to grant us the grace that enables us to fulfill all the responsibilities and the duties and the privileges that are ours in this life.

[12:22] Now remember, we pray, those who can't be with us, remember those especially of our number who are ill, who are confined at home or in hospital or in hospice, graciously bless them all.

Bless those today who have sadness, who are mourning the passing of loved ones and their families. We pray that you would be near to them, Lord, to comfort them, enable them to draw their strength from you.

And we ask, Lord, that you would bless us too in our community, in our wider community here locally and even throughout our land and throughout the world today. Let your blessing flow out, we pray, that many will come to be made disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so remember us now as we confess our sin, our need of your cleansing, of your pardon. We thank you for the assurance your word gives us that if we confess our sins, you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So may it be so, Lord, for each of us here, for we ask all of these things in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. I know the order of service actually, he says we're going to have a children's address at this point, but I know the children will be coming in later, so I'm going to leave the children's address just now until they come in, which will be just before the baptism.

[13:49] So I'll say a few words to them specifically, and it's going to be in relation to baptism and what baptism means for themselves, and that will be applicable to adults as well, and we'll also have the Lord's Prayer as part of that.

So if we turn now to read the word of God, we find our reading today in Matthew, Matthew chapter 28. Matthew 28, and we're going to read the whole of the chapter.

It's the first book in the New Testament. It's in Pulpit Bible, page 1006, so it'll be around about that point in your pew Bibles as well. So it's the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 28.

Now after the Sabbath, towards the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him, the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

[15:15] He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead.

And behold, he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him. See, I have told you. So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples.

And behold, Jesus met them and said, Greetings. And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid.

Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me. While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place.

When they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, Tell people his disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.

[16:17] And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble. So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread abroad among the Jews to this day.

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. And the prayer is that God will bless to us that reading anew of his word today.

And we're going to sing some more verses to God's praise. This time Psalm 25. This is on page 29. Psalm 25, verses 4 to 9. O Lord, reveal to me your ways and all your paths.

[17 : 32] Help me to know. Direct and guide me in your truth instruct me in the way to go. You are my Savior and my God all day, I hope, and you alone. Remember, Lord, your love and grace which from past ages you have shown.

Do not recall my sins of youth or my rebellious evil ways. Remember me in your great love for you, O Lord, are good always. Because the Lord is just and good, he shows his paths to all who stray. He guides the meek in what is right, and teaches them his holy way. These verses in Psalm 25, O Lord, reveal to me your ways.

O Lord, reveal to me your ways.

And all your hearts and me to know. And all your hearts and me to know. Direct and guide me in your truth.

[18 : 46] Instruct me in the way to go. You are my Savior and my God.

All day I hope in you alone. Remember, Lord, your love and grace which from past ages you have shown.

Do not recall my sins of youth or my rebellious evil ways.

Remember me in your great love. For you, O Lord, are good always.

Because the Lord is just and good. He shows his path to all who stray.

[20 : 33] He guides the meek in what is right, and teaches them his holy way.

Now, please turn with me to Matthew chapter 28. Matthew chapter 28.

And for a short time this morning, we're looking at verses 18 to 20. We can read again from verse 16, that short passage.

Now, the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

[21 : 40] And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. And these verses 18 to 20 are usually referred to as the Great Commission.

Because in them, Jesus is commissioning his disciples, his church as they are represented in the disciples there. He is commissioning them to go forward, to go out to make disciples.

In other words, it's a mandate for mission for the church. A mandate to go out and make disciples for Jesus, to make disciples of whoever it is that we come across and seek to come to follow the Lord.

This is his mandate, this Great Commission. This is what he left with the disciples shortly before he was taken back to heaven.

And you can see that it's important even from the words that are being used there. Because any church that does not make disciples is going to be in serious decline and possibly even in terminal decline.

[22 : 50] I know that all things ultimately are in the hands of the Lord who is sovereign. But as we look at our responsibilities as a congregation, as a church, whatever we think about, it's our responsibility to make disciples, as Jesus is saying here, so that by the blessing of God, his own church, his own cause, will continue.

And indeed, as we pray and hope, will be multiplied and strengthened in this world. And you can see that it's actually in the form of a commandment.

Go, therefore, and make disciples. We are commanded to evangelize. It should be our delight. It should be our desire. It should be our commitment anyway, as Christians, to do that.

But here is the Lord reminding us that his commandment lies behind what he is saying here about making disciples, going out to make disciples for him. But I want you to notice, especially today in relation to the fact that this is a baptism service, that the two elements that are mentioned particularly in relation to making disciples are baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and secondly, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.

And these two elements, these two important matters, the baptism and the teaching, together actually form part of making disciples.

[24 : 25] You cannot think of the church making disciples without taking these two elements and keeping them together, baptism and teaching the things of the Lord.

And so today, I want just to briefly go through these verses and look at how mission is in relation to making disciples, and how baptism and teaching actually come into that.

First of all, our mission is carried out on Christ's authority. The mission of the church to make disciples is carried out on Christ's own authority.

It's not something we have invented. It's not something that the church thought would be a good idea. It's something that the Lord himself in his authority lies behind in order to send his people out into the world to make disciples.

And that's as the risen Christ and as the sending Christ. These two things in regard to our mission carried out on Christ's authority. Secondly, our mission in making disciples consists actually precisely of making disciples.

[25 : 36] That is the core element of the church's mission. Whatever other things may be added on to that rightly, whatever other things may actually be adjuncts if you like to making disciples.

Making disciples is the primary business of the church as this passage shows. And that involves, as we said, baptizing them and teaching them.

Thirdly, our mission is assured of Christ's presence. Behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

At no time is the church, when involved in the matter and business and the privilege of making disciples, at no time is the church to be anything other than aware of Christ being present with them.

What a great encouragement, what a great strengthening that is, even as we think of what it means. That Jesus is with his people in all their concerns, privately, individually, but as a church, he is with you always, you plural, to the end of the age.

[26 : 50] Let's just briefly go through these points that I've mentioned as our headings. Our mission is carried out on Christ's authority. Now, he's saying here, Jesus came and said to them, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

This is Christ risen from the dead. This is Christ with Jesus with death behind him. He was buried. He was in the grave. And he's risen from the dead.

And that's what we find in this chapter. After the Sabbath, they went to see the tomb and the body of Jesus was not there. He had risen from the dead as the angel said to them, come and see the place where the Lord was placed, where he was laid.

He is not here for he has risen. And it's interesting that this actually took place on a mountain, the mountain that Jesus had specified earlier that they were to go to.

That's what you find here. They came to this mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And in the Bible, many important things happen on mountains, but especially when certain things are to take place that really form a new chapter, if you like, in the history of the church or of God's people.

[28 : 04] For example, Moses was on the Mount of Sinai used by God to give the law to the people of Israel. And being on the mountain is associated with an ascending up, not just physically, but represents, if you like, an ascending spiritually to God in heaven.

And here you find the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. That's where they came. And it reminds us that the Jesus that we worship, the Lord that we worship, is at this very moment at the highest position in creation.

Philippians 2, we have been looking at the book of Philippians for some time. In chapter 2, you remember, it speaks about having humbled himself and become obedient to the death of the cross. Well, for God has highly exalted him and given him the name that is above every name. The exaltation of Jesus was to the highest possible place in the universe, at the right hand of the throne of God.

And in fact, as you go to the likes of Revelation chapter 5, the first five verses of it there really give in an imagery there the way in which Jesus is in charge of all the events that take place in the history of the world.

[29 : 26] It's pictured by a scroll that was taken out and the question was then answered, who has the authority to take this scroll and open its seals? The seals with which it was closed.

And then this lamb came forward, the lamb who was in the midst of the throne, this Jesus who died, came forward and he took the scroll and he began to then open the seals.

Today, that's who is ruling in this world, in the events of history, in our context even here today.

Today, this Jesus who is here spoken of as having gone to this mountain and met with these disciples who said, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

And then you notice the word, therefore. Therefore, go therefore. Now this is Jesus having been given all this authority in consequence of all that he has done by his death on the cross and achieved that salvation for his people and risen from the dead.

[30 : 34] And now coming to meet the disciples here, he says all authority in heaven and on earth, not just some, but all. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. We don't worship today a small Jesus, a merely human Jesus, though he is human.

We worship this great figure of the Son of God who sits on the throne of the universe, who directs things according to his will and his purpose, who calls us to bow before him and lovingly give obedience to him.

Well, he says, therefore, go and make disciples on the basis of the authority that I have, on the basis of my authority as foundational to you as my church, on the basis of my authority which will always be behind you, go and make disciples.

He is the sending Christ. He commissions them. And he himself, as the risen and sending Christ, is the one who specifies that they are to go and make disciples of all nations.

In other words, this is their commissioning. This is their command by the risen Christ as the sending Christ. This is where we are today as a church. This is where Christ's church has been in the world ever since this incident took place.

[31 : 55] They are commissioned by God as his disciples to make disciples of others, of all nations, and bring them that way into the church of Christ.

Now, that's very important that it's this Christ as Jesus, this authority of Jesus that lies behind our mandate in the gospel. It's important not just for our own encouragement, for our own assurance, for our reassurance, but also important when you meet with objections in that world out there, when you try and bring the gospel lovingly, tactfully, we hope, before the world of the day that doesn't want to know about God, by and large, many at least don't, and you present them with the claims of Jesus, you present them with the way that he is calling us through the gospel to repentance, to turn from our sins, and to place our trust in him, you'll meet the objection, who has given you the right to say this to me?

Who has given you the authority to actually go forth as Christians? If you want to be Christians living your own life the way you think the Bible directs you, that's absolutely fine, but don't bother me in my life.

Don't actually try and tell me that I need to come in to that same sort of view of life. Well, of course, you're going to meet, you cannot actually force anybody, and we're not in the business of forcing people.

Sadly, that's the impression that many people in the world today have of the church, the church, and where the church has gone wrong in past times by trying to force people into a certain mindset and way of life, even as a Christian mindset, has been entirely wrong.

[33 : 39] We're not in the business of forcing people against their will. We're in the business of persuading, and we're in the business of persuading, not just by our own authority and by our own ability, which wouldn't take us far, but on the authority of Christ, and in the power of the Christ who has risen from the dead.

So friends, remember that you do have the right, but please, and I say to myself, do it tactfully and lovingly and patiently as you interact with the world, and especially as you interact with people who are resistant and hostile to the gospel, and also to those who are just apathetic and couldn't care one way or the other.

Present the claims of Jesus, and that will show that you have been given the authority to go and make disciples of all nations.

Secondly, our mission consists indeed of making disciples. That's obvious by now. But notice who this is. These are Christ's own disciples here as they represent the church, and from then on, of course, in the book of Acts, you find an account of how the church multiplied and grew from this small group.

And you notice that it's the disciples, that it's the church, who is to go and make disciples. This is not saying that God makes disciples.

[35 : 06] God makes converts. God brings people to know himself. God converts people. God comes powerfully into the lives of people and brings them to know himself, to turn from sin and to

follow him.

But it is the church that makes disciples. It is we who are charged with making disciples, making followers of Jesus. That's what a disciple is, a follower or a pupil of Christ.

And that's the business of the church, to actually make disciples. And to make disciples particularly through these two elements that are mentioned here. Go and make disciples of all nations.

It doesn't leave any of them out. There's no prejudice against any particular nation or group of people or race. It's all nations. Firstly, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Now, of course, the nations were actually the pagan nations at that time that surrounded, this place surrounded Israel. And what Jesus was saying and what happened in the book of Acts, as you find recorded in the book of Acts, is that the disciples, the church actually went out with the gospel, followed the direction of Jesus, took the promises of Jesus, brought the message of Jesus crucified and risen from the dead before the world of the pagan nations.

[36 : 29] And as you go through the New Testament, you can see how God blessed that in various parts of that pagan world. Great cities like Corinth and Ephesus and Colossae, where many were turned from their paganism, from their idolatry, from their licentious and sexually immoral ways into the ways of God.

And that's what Jesus is saying, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one God who is these three persons.

And that's what we are going to be doing today. Nothing in this passage precludes the baptism of infants. We respect the views of our Baptist brethren in Baptist churches.

We value their partnership in the gospel. We give thanks to God for the many of them that are committed to the gospel and to preaching the gospel, soundly.

But that doesn't actually remove from ourselves the conviction that our children are to be baptized, following the analogy and the practice of the Old Testament, where circumcision marked the children, or at least the male children, of those who are God's covenant people.

[37 : 48] So that baptism is really whether we are adults or baptized as children. It's the formal admission of us into the visible church of God.

Now, I have to say that very carefully because it would be very wrong to think that baptism confers salvation. Whether we are adults or children when we are baptized, our baptism does not make us, itself, saved people of God.

It doesn't wash away our sins of itself. It represents what God does in our salvation, in our washing from sin. And that same principle applies to the New Testament because circumcision in the Old Testament was not a racial sin.

It was not a sign that set apart the Jewish people from all other people in the world, although they had been made by God, his covenant people. Because circumcision was a sign of their covenant with God.

And that the privilege was extended to their children to be brought into that visible body of people that were in covenant outwardly with God.

[39 : 03] That's what we find with baptism as well, as we understand it. It's not a racial sign. It's a spiritual sign of being involved and incorporated into the covenant people of God, with all the covenant promises that God has given us in the gospel.

Now, there's a lot, we could say a lot more about that, but I want to move on because the time is moving on. And the second element is teaching. Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. As we said, making disciples involves teaching those who are baptized the things of God. The things that Jesus himself has commanded. And remember, we're not just talking about the four gospels where you find extracts from the speeches, from the sermons, if you like, of Jesus. This whole word, this whole Bible as the word of God is in fact what Jesus is commanding.

You find so many times in the gospels themselves, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, that Jesus took those he was speaking to back to the Old Testament. And he took them back to the Old Testament in a way that obviously showed that this was his word as well.

[40 : 20] This authoritative word of God. And when he's saying here, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. It's right that we should include the whole Bible in that.

And that is the business of the church. I know it's the business also of parents in their homes. And the parents here are going to be pledging today in the vows they take that they will bring up the children in the ways of the Lord.

In the nurture and training of the Lord. That means teaching. Teaching them the ways of God. They cannot leave that simply to the church to do for them.

But nevertheless, the fact that children are taught at home does not remove the responsibility of the church to teach its disciples. To teach those that are made disciples.

Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And that teaching is not just by the preaching of the gospel as it is here today. That's a primary part of it.

[41 : 22] But we actually have along with that other ways by which the truth of God is conveyed to our understanding, to our minds. We have Sunday schools. We have younger children than that, actually, in twinnies or in creche even.

We have older ones in youth fellowships. We have adults taught in various ways. We have various means by which we are taught the things of God. And that's part of the business and the privilege of the church.

See, that's why it's important to be in church. Although I never nowadays actually say to people, if I meet them and they're not in the practice of attending church, I never tend to say to them, would you like to come to church?

Because it's a lot more than just coming to church. It's better to say to people, would you not like to become part of this covenant people, this congregation, so as to be part of all the things that take place there, particularly the teaching of the Word of God.

That's what making disciples involves. And that teaching is two things. It's not just what to believe. It is that, very much so.

[42 : 39] But it's also how to behave. What kind of conduct God expects of His people. Now those two things are always to be kept together.

You cannot actually know the conduct that God expects of us without the teaching. Without the actual believing going before that.

You believe the Word of God. You believe this is from God. You believe that His authority is behind it. And so you actually come to think of the conduct and the lifestyle of what followers of Christ aim to be like.

And that's including teaching people of what baptism itself signifies and is about. And I have to say, honestly and personally, I don't think we're very good at that in terms of either our preaching or our practice.

But that is what, in fact, we are charged by God to be carrying out. Baptizing them and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

[43 : 46] Remember, I did say previously, it's not a forcing of people's minds. It's a presenting of the truth of God. It's a presenting of the truth of God. Lovingly, tactfully, in dependence on God.

But it's also recognizing our responsibility under God to receive that truth. To comply with that truth. To seek to obey God through that truth.

To have our lives shaped by that truth. To be indeed His disciples in this world. So our mission is carried out on Christ's authority.

It consists of making disciples. And our mission, thirdly, is assured of Christ's presence. Behold, I'm with you always to the end of the age. You'll have noticed, reading through the chapter, the word behold mentioned there repeatedly.

And every time we find it used in that way in the Bible, it's really something of a spotlight for us. God is holding things under a spotlight to make them so clear to us.

[44 : 50] Because in His mind they are important. They are being highlighted by God Himself. And here's the spotlight here at the end of the chapter, the end of Matthew's Gospel. The spotlight is actually set upon this great promise.

It's so important to God that we actually take this to heart. It's so important for our encouragement. It's so important for our strengthening. And it's so important for us in our perseverance as Christians.

Behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Notice He's saying, always. Even when we ourselves seem to be a failure.

And confess to be a failure. When our mission at times may turn out in our own estimation to have been a failure. God is saying, Jesus is saying, I am with you always.

That's not going to change. I'm with you always. And what an encouragement that is to parents here today. Especially those who are bringing their children for baptism. That you can build on the promise of Jesus.

[45 : 55] That He's going to be with you always. As you teach your children. As you involve them in the church's life. The presence of Jesus is promised.

And isn't it amazing how much is built into that little word, I. I am with you. I am with you. I am with you. The one who has just spoken of all authority in heaven and earth being given to Him. I am with you. Not just somebody less than that.

But Jesus Himself. The powerful, risen, exalted, reigning Son of God. What greater privilege could you and I have in our lives.

Than that that person, this glorious Jesus, has promised to be with us. As we carry out His mandate in mission.

[46 : 56] In baptizing, in teaching, in instructing those who belong to the church of Christ. And we pray God will bless these thoughts upon His word to us.

And we are going to sing some more verses now. We are singing from Psalm 103 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 103 on page 369.

Singing verses 1 to 5. And while we are singing these verses, the mums will come in with the children. And any others who are coming in as well.

And also the children will come in from the tweenies. And Sunday school children have been in the hall. They will also come and take their place in the place of the reserved section of the church here.

So, we sing through these verses. And if we need to wait until everybody is actually in the church, then that's absolutely fine. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord.

[48 : 04] And all that in me is, be stirred up His holy name to magnify and bless. Please, verse 5, we stand again to sing.

O thou my soul, bless God the Lord. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord.

O thou my soul, bless God the Lord. And all that in me is, be stirred up His holy name to magnify and bless. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord.

O thou my soul, bless God the Lord.

Assume my soul the Lord I know, and not forget for thee.

[49 : 12] Of all his gracious hand, he hath restored all these.

O thine iniquities to God most graciously forgive.

O thine disheets, the soul and grace, doth heal and heal me.

O thine disheets, the soul and grace, doth redeem my life but thou.

To death is not all done. Who deal with loving kindness, love of tenderness she's come.

[50 : 46] Who with abundance of good things, doth satisfy thy love.

So that he has the needless age. We knew it is thy youth.

I did say that I would have the children's events. I would have the children's events until now.

And I would have to say a few things about baptism for yourselves and children. And it's really to do with what baptism is for. And being baptized, what do we then think about?

What do we do with baptism? Well, it's God's way of teaching you three things. It's God's way of teaching you, first of all, that you belong to his church in this world.

[52 : 05] And it means that it's not just adults who do the wrong church. Is that working? Is it working?

k k Okay, that's better, is it?

Can you hear now? Okay, it's God's way of teaching you that you belong to His church, the visible church. The people that actually come to worship God together regularly, we are made part of that number formally by baptism.

Baptism a lot more than that, but it actually reminds you and teaches you that you belong to the church. So it's not just adults who belong to the church. When we think about the church of Jesus here, this is the church.

It involves all of you as children as well, and we're so glad about that. It means, secondly, that your parents gave you to God. All of you are baptized.

[53 : 43] Of course, this means all of us as adults as well. Your parents actually gave you to God in what they did with your baptism. It was a pledge of handing you to God and saying, I'm devoted to this child to bring up this child for you, Lord.

That's really what they're doing in giving children over to be baptized. But that means that you yourselves as children then must come to give your life to God by accepting Jesus as your Savior as you grow up.

Not just that you belong to the church by baptism, but baptism reminds you you belong to God, and therefore you are to deal with God as someone you pray to, someone you actually confess your sin to, that you'll be saved.

And thirdly, baptism shows us something outwardly of how God loves to forgive our sins. God loves to wash us from the defilement, from the guilt of our sin.

And that's really what God does in our forgiveness, not through the water of baptism itself. And that means we need to come to God to confess our sin and actually have our sins forgiven.

[54 : 56] So let's say the Lord's Prayer now at this point, seeing we left it out in the service earlier. Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Now could I ask the Father, please, to stand at this point?

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, just to explain to the congregation what's happening now with the formal baptism part of the service, I'm going to be asking them questions by which they are going to pledge or vow certain things before God.

And then after that, there'll be a short prayer. And then after that, I will call each of them up to be baptized here. And then they'll go back to their places each in turn.

[56 : 07] And after that, there'll be another short prayer after all the baptisms have been carried out. So, first of all, I'm going to ask these three questions. And I'm just going to ask you one time.

So, if you can just follow with your answer, please. Do you acknowledge God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God, as the only true God and your God?

Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and men? Do you now promise to bring up your child in the discipline and instruction of the Lord?

Thank you. Let's now engage in prayer briefly. Almighty God, we thank you today for the privilege of being here as worshipers of your holy name.

And we thank you, too, for the sacrament of baptism, which represents to us the washing of sin. We do, Lord, confess our sins before you and acknowledge that we all require your washing, your forgiveness.

[57 : 19] And we thank you for every reminder we are given that when we confess our sins, you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We thank you for all of these parents and for all the other children gathered with us. What a great thrill, O Lord, it is to our hearts to have them here, to see them, and to see them participating even in the Lord's Prayer.

Lord, our God, we thank you for the way in which that gives us such a lift and encouragement. We thank you for the voices that children make, reminding us, Lord, that our congregation and your people include those who are even of the youngest age.

And we pray, O Lord, for the parents at this time and for the children to be baptized and ask that you would now bless them. Hear us, we pray, and pardon our sin for Jesus' sake. Amen.

I'm going to ask the congregation to stand. It's normally the case that we stand during the administration of baptism. Just leave that there in case you need it.

[58 : 30] Just watch it doesn't fall. Yes, you can both come up. I'm going to call them up as couples. So, first of all, Murdo and Caroline McLean, whose son Finley McLeod is being baptized.

So, just come up there, please. Okay, just step forward. Caroline, just come forward. The camera, I'll pick you out there. Just hold them down a wee bit for me. I hope this is not too cold. Amen.

[64 : 41] Please remain standing for the benediction afterwards. Amen. In the Lord whose word I honor, in my God I praise His word.

I will trust and not be fearful. What can man do to me, Lord?

I have taken vows before you. To my God I will be true.

Sacrifices of thanksgiving, I will gladly give to you.

For you kept my feet from stumbling, and from death you set me free, so that I may walk before you, and the light of life may see.

[66 : 07] Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.