

What Does Baptism Mean?

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Date: 07 May 2017

[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Take your Bibles, if you would, and turn back with me to Mark chapter 1. I don't know of a doctrine that causes any more confusion than the doctrine of baptism.

And we're going to talk about that this morning, just a little bit. If you were to go out and try to witness to people, and I'm sure that you have done this, when you say to them, hey, do you know if you died today that you'd go to heaven?

They'll either say no, or most of them, many of them will say, well, I got baptized. They'll say, I got baptized.

And I will say, well, I didn't ask you if you got baptized. I ask you if you know that if you died today, you'd go to heaven. And they would say, well, yeah, I'm a member of the church. I got baptized. And so they believe, for some reason, that that's going to take them to heaven.

[1 : 03] So baptism causes a great deal of confusion. And it would be a good thing if we had an idea of what the Bible says about it. Now, baptism is important. It's a very important thing because when Jesus starts his public ministry, he starts his public ministry with getting baptized.

And so, obviously, the first thing he did as an adult in his ministry, in his public ministry, was go to John the Baptist and get baptized.

So that makes it very important. If Jesus did it, then I have to think to myself, if he did that and it pleased the Father, which is what the Scriptures say, then it must be very important.

And it's mentioned in the Scriptures about how he was baptized. And then from there on, we're going to follow baptism throughout the Scriptures. But I want you to know today that no matter where you stand and no matter where you've been, I want you to know that I love you, and I'm just going to show you some Scripture.

You know that the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice that we have. We determine what we believe, not by what our parents showed us, and not by what you've heard theologians say or what a pastor said, but by what the Bible says.

[2 : 13] So we look at the Bible to find truth. We base truth on the Word of God. Now, my beautiful wife of almost 44 years has had every kind of baptism you can get.

I mean, if anybody's been wet enough to fix things, she has. So as a little girl, she was christened or baptized and placed into the membership role, the temporary membership role, or whatever it's called, at the United Methodist Church.

And then when she was old enough, at about the age of 12, she was confirmed and baptized a second time, which would be hopefully what it would mean to be saved.

Then when my wife got to college, an evangelist came to town. And this evangelist was preaching, and so a bunch of the students in the college, we were going to the same college, and we weren't dating yet.

But we, so we were going to this meeting. And so one night, a girl named Diane came back from that meeting, walked into my wife's dorm room, and started telling her that they were going down to hear this guy preach.

[3 : 20] And he was preaching the gospel, and they were so excited about it, and started telling her. And my wife started crying. And, you know, she wasn't such a crybaby back then like she is now. Those of you who know her know she cries all the time now.

And she wasn't known for that yet. And she started crying. And so the girl looked at her and said, Hold on one minute. I know what you need.

And the girl ran to her room, got her Bible, and came back and opened the Bible and explained to Betty the steps that she needed to understand to be saved. She showed Betty that she was a sinner.

She showed Betty that she deserved, because of her sin, to go to hell. And she showed Betty that Jesus had paid the sin debt. And Betty said, For the first time in my life, I understood that I was a sinner, and I needed to be saved.

And that night, she trusted Christ as her Savior. I met her later, and started dating her. And she started attending church with me. And not long after that, she was baptized by immersion as a believer, which is what I will teach you a little bit about today.

[4 : 25] I just want you to know that if you were baptized as a baby, that's okay. Your parents had good intentions, and they were trying to do what they knew to do. And if you went to a church where you got confirmed, I'm sure your parents were concerned about that, and they were showing a great interest in you, and they were baptizing you, and I think that's great.

But we want to find out what the Bible says. Now, probably the first thing I'd like to show you is about infant baptism. Being baptized as a child, like my wife was baptized.

I would like to show you the Scripture on it, but there isn't any. And so I'm going to have a little bit of a problem. I am going to show you why they think it's okay, and I'm going to show you that.

But I would like to explain to you just a little bit about why some churches baptize. Before I do, you do know what baptism is about, right? Let me explain to you again what baptism is about.

Baptism is so important in every church. Fact is, I was doing research all week long. I was looking up all kinds of churches to find out what their statement was about baptism.

[5 : 28] And I looked up a Presbyterian church, and the guy said, the pastor of the church said, you do know we're Baptists here too. It's on his website. He said, we're Presbyterian, but we're Baptists because we baptize too.

Just like the Baptists baptize, but we do it a little differently. And then he went on to explain what he did. Now, we believe in what we call believer's baptism. Believer's baptism.

And let me explain to you what that is. So in the Bible, and I'm going to show you this through the Scripture, but in the Bible, what you're going to find is a person of age, and a person who understands what they're doing, comes to a place in their life that they realize they've sinned, and they realize it's between them and God, not mom and dad, not the pastor, not the church, and not others, but in their own heart, they realize, I have sinned against the holy God.

And in their own heart, they are convinced of their sinfulness. They realize that they don't measure up. They realize that they deserve to go to hell.

That's what the Bible says. The Bible says, for the wages of sin is death. That's Romans chapter 6 and verse 23, the first part of that verse. So when you sin, you earn death.

[6 : 44] And that death is first physical death, and after that, it's the second death, the Bible calls it, or the lake of fire or eternal condemnation. That's what we earn because we're sinners.

And one day, those who get baptized ought to know, before they ever get baptized, they ought to hear this, I am on my way to hell. I believe that. I understand that.

I don't like it at all. But I am on my way to hell, and there's nothing I can do about it. But trust Jesus. That's all I can do. And Jesus died on the cross to pay my sin debt.

The Bible says in Romans chapter 6 and verse 23, so it starts off, it says, For the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The gift. So you had wages at the beginning of the verse, which was what you earned. And then after the but, so you got wages, but gift, what you earn or what you can get given to you.

[7 : 45] The gift of God, God's gift to us is eternal life. God gives you eternal life, but he does it through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ our Lord. So that's how salvation comes. And so when a person understands that he's a sinner, understands he deserves to go to hell, trusts Christ, then he publicly professes his faith in Christ.

And he says, hey, I am saved. I've trusted Christ, and I want the world to know it. And God gave a way to do that. And the way God gave to do that was through baptism. So that by being baptized, you would, in effect, you would be standing in a baptistry, and you're in a swimming pool, or in a river, or in a lake, but you're in a body of water.

That's the Bible way. And you're standing there, and you actually are saying, you're actually saying, dying to my old way of life. I have died to my old way of life. I am burying that old person.

I am being raised to walk in the goodness of life. It's like you're saying, this is not what I'm doing. I'm not doing this to be saved. I'm just telling you what I did. And so I got saved, and he saved me, and he changed me.

[8 : 57] And I have left that old man, and I've been raised to walk in the goodness of life in my Sunday school class. This morning, one of the men gave a beautiful testimony, and his wife gave a beautiful testimony.

And I think it's okay with him to not tell you this, because he said it publicly in my class. But he had an alcoholic problem, and he had all kinds of sin problems. And he said, you wouldn't even understand if I tried to tell you what all I've done.

And he said, but I went to, this happened many, many years ago. He said, but I went to this detox center because I had so many problems, and I was laying in there, and I got down beside my bunk, and I trusted Jesus Christ as my Savior.

And I got up full of joy and ecstasy. That's the word he used. He said it took a long time for it even to dim just a little bit, even though it's a different kind of joy and happiness that came later.

His wife said, his wife said in the class in front of the other people in our Sunday school class, she made the comment when he came home, he came home a totally different man that went away. He walked in the house, and she said, then he went over to the bed, got down by his bed to pray, and she was like, I was married to a different guy than a guy I was married to.

[10 : 07] That's what this is about, that God changed his life radically, and that he publicly announces that by being baptized. It's very similar to getting married.

It's very, very similar to getting married. You and I both know this church does a lot of weddings. We probably do more weddings than most churches you've ever been a part of, unless they're a massively large church. We're a pretty small church.

They have so many weddings. I think I'll be at least watching or partaking a little bit in three weddings in the next month or so. I mean, that's just the normal routine around here, it seems.

But, you know, in weddings, all of that's pageantry. So when they come into that wedding, and, you know, I never even ask the question, who is there? If there's anybody here that doesn't think they ought to get married, I never ask that.

We're not in a saloon, and the in-laws aren't there trying to break up the marriage, amen? I mean, it's all, we all know. We had rehearsal the night before. I mean, we rehearsed everything. So it'd be kind of funny.

[11 : 07] We have rehearsal, and everything's going good, and we're in the real wedding. And I say, anybody here got a reason they shouldn't get married? And the father-in-law said, yep, me. I'm going to get it. I said, well, you didn't say that last night while we was rehearsing. And so we get in the wedding, and we're doing the whole wedding deal.

And I say to him, do you take her? And he goes, yes. I have never had a one of them look at me and say, no, I don't even know how I got here. My daddy brought me here.

This is a shotgun wedding. I've never had anybody do that. I've never had anybody get married and wake up the next day and say, I don't know how this happened. I don't know how this happened. They did it of their own will.

They did it happily. They wanted to get married, and the wedding service was really kind of what happened afterwards because before that, they had this long discussion when he asked her.

You know, I asked Betty. I was sitting on the steps of Marshall Curlin's house, his mom and dad's house. We were, I had my own singing group. I know y'all don't believe that. It's called the Good News Singers.

[12 : 05] I don't know where that name came from either. I invented a dumb name, I know, but I used to sing. And they quit asking us to come, but you can figure that out. But anyway, I asked Betty to marry me, and I said, well, do you think you'd marry me someday?

And she took forever to answer me. I mean, it was like dead solids for two hours there. She says it was only a second, but it felt like two hours to me. But when she said we was getting married, the next day I got up and I'm like, we're getting married.

So we went and talked to her parents. They said, well, when you got married? I said, I don't know, how about three months? And we were married. I was still 18, and we were married. You know, that wedding ceremony was just a formality.

It was saying, this is the love we've already cited we have. And a baptism is a formality to say publicly to everybody, hey, hey, I just want everybody to know I'm not the man I used to be.

I'm not the woman I used to be. Jesus saved me. And I am a new person, and I want everybody to know it. So you watch, because I'm standing here to publicly testify to you that I have left that old life.

[13 : 11] It is buried in the grace of God, and I have been raised to walk in newness of life. Now, the first thing I'd just real quick like to mention to you is that why do some churches baptize babies?

Why do some churches baptize babies? By the way, I have spent the week looking at all their web pages. And I actually had slides to show you, but I'm not Sam Wilson, and I'm not so good at showing slides.

And Sam is just real, he's good at it. But if I did it, they'd all get messed up back there, and I'd get messed up. So you'll just have to look them up for yourself. But number one, you know why we baptize babies? It's a tradition.

It's what mom and dad did. It's what grandma and granddaddy did, and it's what they've been doing for a long time. And so we're just following along. You know why we baptize babies? Because parents are trying to do the right thing.

They're good people, and they're trying to do the right thing. And they're like, I really, man, I just want to make sure my kid turns out right. I just want to make sure my kid knows about God. I'm just trying to get my kid started in the right way.

[14 : 12] So they got a good reason for doing it. It's a misguided reason. I'm going to show you that. They don't know that. Now let me show you the reasons that you would find on website pages.

Number one reason, to wash away original sin. So they get baptized because since Adam and Eve sinned, and it's like this baby's born with this original sin still on him, and that baptism will wash away that original sin and give him a clean start in life, and he won't be polluted by what Adam and Eve and his mom and dad did, and he'll get a clean start.

I think it's a good-sounding thing myself. Not in the Bible. It's good philosophy, but it's not in the Bible, and that's one of the main reasons they do it is to wash away the original sin.

And by the way, I could show you that in plenty of places. Let me show you a Bible verse so you'll know, though. Romans chapter 5, if I could get you there to Romans 5, 12. And look what the Bible says in Romans chapter 5 and verse 12.

Now you do need to understand. Listen to me. Hey, look this way a second. If you're human, you're going to die. Is that a news flash for any of you? Is anybody sitting in the room going, well, I didn't know that.

[15 : 21] I knew everybody else died, but I wasn't sure I was going to. No, I think you all know that. But watch what the Bible says. Why do people die today? Wherefore, as by one man, that's Adam, sin entered into the world, and death by sin.

So when sin came in, sin kills people. Sin kills. Wherefore, by one man, Adam, sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Now in Ephesians chapter 2, we're by nature children of disobedience. And so you are, listen to me, you were born on the wrong side of things. I don't care how rich you are born.

I don't care if your parents had a lot of money. I don't care if you had a silver spoon in your mouth when you were born. You were born on the wrong side of things. Because every human being was born into a sinful world with a desire to sin.

And you sinned when you got old enough to do so. So you can understand why they came up with that original sin idea. And to try to get rid of that, they were looking for a way to do that.

[16 : 24] But on beginningcatholic.com, this is what it says. The sacrament of baptism is the beginning of life. Dash, supernatural life. Because of original sin, we came into the world with a soul which is supernaturally dead.

We come into the world with only the natural endowments of human nature. The supernatural life, which is a result of God's personal and intimate dwelling, is absent from the soul. Original sin is not, in the strict sense, a blot upon the soul.

Indeed, original sin is not a something at all. It's an absence of something that should be there. It's darkness where there ought to be light. And then they say, Jesus instituted the sacrament of baptism to apply to each individual soul the atonement which he made on the cross for original sin.

So they believe it washes away original sin. Now, all that sounds real good. Here's the problem. We decided that we have to go to the original source.

How many of you were ever in college and took a class and they said, don't use secondary sources? Use the primary source. Go to the one that originally spoke it so you know what truth is.

[17 : 35] In other words, when you're doing a research project, you need to get to the guy who originally said it and why he said it and how he said it and not to go talk about what the guy said. Well, you know what the primary source is? It's this book right here.

This is the primary source. See, everybody's interpreting this. But you are not too dumb to understand this. You need to listen to this. I mean, I spent 20 years with a bunch of people who would say, I can't understand that.

That's just above me. It's way beyond me. I would never be able to understand what it says. They say, you don't understand. We've been taught all of our lives. If we read it too much, we'll all go crazy. And I said, they know you could understand it if you read it.

There's a guy named Tyndale that was translating the Bible into English. And he had the audacity to say to the churchman of his day, he said, I'm going to translate the Bible into English. And when I get through the plowment, I'll know more than the guy in the pulpit.

Because you can read it for yourself. This is a primary source. This is where we find out the truth. So, when you talk to a Roman Catholic, when you talk to a Baptist, when you talk to a Presbyterian, when you talk to a Methodist, they're all saying, well, this is what we think the Bible says.

[18 : 43] Well, here's what you get to do. You get to find out if they're right. You get to go look for yourself. That's the beauty of this. Because how many of you believe this is God's word? Say amen.

Now, listen to me. You have a copy of the word of God, and you can consult it and find out what the Bible says so you'll know what's true. Here's what the Bible says about baptism taking away original sin.

Are you ready? Okay, I finished. Nothing. In fact, the term original sin is not used. And baptism taking away original sin is not used.

It doesn't take away original sin. Second thing that people do, this would be like Presbyterians, a lot of Presbyterian type people, they do it to get their children into the covenant.

They do it to get their children into the covenant. It's the same basic idea. It's kind of like mom and dad are both Christians, and we want our child to be on the roll, on his way, to have some help to get all the way through to God.

[19 : 47] And so we're going to baptize our baby, and he becomes kind of a member of the church. Lutherans, Presbyterians, even Methodists do a lot. It's a lot of the same thing where my wife would have come from.

It's like to start the work of grace. It's a desire to have their children be safe and secure. What's the Bible say about that? Nothing. It's good parents.

Good parents. My in-laws were good people. They raised the most wonderful woman I have ever known in my life. And I've spent the last 44-plus years with her.

But the Bible didn't say it. Did they have right intentions? Did they have a good heart? Were they trying to do a good thing? Oh, definitely they were. The next thing that we hear about, and it's a baptism, is a confirmation.

Roman Catholic Church does it. Presbyterian Church does it. Methodist Church does it. Lutheran Church does it. Almost every church does it. And so what the confirmation is, is I baptized you as a baby, and now you're 12 years old, give or take.

[20 : 51] And we go through a catechism, and we explain all these things to you. We ask you questions. You memorize the answer. We give you the question. We give you the answer. You memorize that. Then we have a meeting. And once you've learned enough to pass the test, you get confirmed.

And so they baptize you again. It's usually sprinkling. They baptize you again. And that's to confirm what the original one did. By the way, check all the websites you want. It says that right there. Just as clear as day on their website.

It frequently asks questions about baptism in your church. I mean, and I just looked up their churches. And I looked up even the denominational headquarters. So confirmations like, well, we made a decision for you to get baptized when you were too little to make a decision.

I mean, you're a few months old, a few days old, a few weeks old, a few months old, maybe a couple, three years old. We baptized you. Did you make a decision? Did you decide to serve Jesus? No, Mom and Dad decided that for you.

Well, I think that's great that Mom and Dad love you enough to want to do that. But it'd give you kind of a false security if you thought it meant anything. You might even think, hey, I'm okay. Mom and Dad took care of that for me.

[21 : 55] But Mom and Dad can't take care of that for you. Not one time in the Bible do Mom and Dad take care of that. One more thing about that before I'm going to show you the Bible reason they do it, what they would say the Bible reason is.

So I'm giving you the fair benefit of a doubt. The other thing that's really dangerous that's frequent everywhere is called baptismal regeneration. And that is, baptism saves you.

Baptism brings you to life. Baptism gives you life. And so that's another idea that's taught. So the Church of Christ, for example, they would believe that when you get baptized, that's a part of getting saved.

But many churches believe that. They believe it in different degrees, but they believe that. They believe that baptism somehow saved them. At least one will tell you.

The Bible doesn't say that. The Bible doesn't say that. I'm going to show you what the Bible says in just a second. We're just getting warmed up. I'm going to show you. The Bible doesn't say that. So here's the deal. Does water save somebody?

[22 : 55] Could I take water and start baptizing people? Could we just go out and get a bunch of people and baptize them? One of the funniest things in the world happened. I read while I was doing all this research, one church baptized some kids that didn't have permission from their parents, nor the kid.

They baptized them, and they were being sued for accidentally baptizing somebody they shouldn't have. Well, that'd be a really good thing if you believed that water did something, wouldn't it? They just grabbed a kid and baptized the kid.

I thought it was ridiculous, but still, the attitude, the desire is a good attitude. Now, let me go with you to Acts chapter 16 and verse 31. So if you go to their websites, they're going to mention several of these verses, and I'm only going to take time for one today because we don't have a lot of time, but I want to show you they believe that mom and dad can baptize you because of this passage.

This is one of the passages actually used on many of their websites, Acts chapter 16 and verse 31, because it says, it talks about household baptisms, household baptisms.

In Acts 16, 31, they said, Now, do you have your Bible open? Underline, and thy house.

[24 : 08] That's what they would base this on. But if you can read English very well, notice what the house had to do along with everybody else in the house. Look at it. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Verse 32 says, And they spake unto him the word of the Lord to all that were in the house. So everybody in the house, to all that were in the house, they were all in there.

And so when it says it, see, these churches will say, Well, it said the whole household, so that would mean mom and dad, kids, babies, everybody in the house got baptized. Well, the verse kind of says no, because it said he was preaching to all that were in the house, and they were all baptized.

And in verse 34, it says, Believing with God, believing God, in God, with all of his house. There's other verses about that. Now, watch this real quickly. Here's what the Bible says.

The Bible says baptism's for a believer, someone who has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm going to say something. I don't want to, I would not hurt you.

[25 : 14] I promise you I don't want to hurt you, and I'm not trying to attack anybody. But if you were to believe that you were going to go to heaven because of something your mom and dad did, that'd be a very dangerous thing to believe. You're not going to go to hell if your mom and dad baptized you into the Lutheran, the Lucifer church, the church of Satan.

Your parents can't make that decision. You must get old enough to understand truth. And you must believe. So mom and dad can have all the best intentions.

But moms and dads train their kids, and they go wrong anyway. They baptize them, and they still go wrong. They baptize them, and they confirm them, and they still go wrong. They don't believe in God, don't even go to church. So it's not really what mom and dad do.

You must decide. That's what he said in Acts chapter 16. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you want to go with me to Colossians chapter 2 and verse 11, I'll show you another one of the verses that's misunderstood and mistaught.

Colossians chapter 2 and verse 11 says, In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands and the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.

[26 : 27] Now look this way just a second. You say, what in the world is that? That's the verse right off their webpage. So I'm just being fair and honest with you. Okay, if you're a Bible reader, if you're a real Bible reader, you're going to catch on to something.

The Old Testament is about God's dealings with the nation of Israel and how they were to take the gospel to the entire world. And the New Testament is about the church, the Gentiles and Jews together in one body that are going to take the gospel to the world.

And then you get later on in the New Testament and you'll find out that he's going to bring those Jews back to do that work. And you've heard plenty of that. I think even last week you heard that. So what happened in the Old Testament, when you were Jewish, at eight days you got circumcised.

So mom and dad would go in and circumcise their boy with the man of God. They would circumcise their little boy babies and they would be a part of Israel. And so these other people, when they get to the New Testament, they think, well, we need to do that, but we don't think we ought to have circumcision services at church.

But since Israel and the church are the same thing, and they think that the church started way back in Israel or the church took Israel's place, then we still need to circumcise.

[27 : 43] But there's a circumcision made not with hands. Baptism. And so they baptized babies to do the same thing they did in the Old Testament. Well, that sounds good.

They can only find like one or two verses that even give the hint of that. But if you'll look at Colossians 2 and verse 11 real quick, let me show you what it actually says. Go with me to verse 12 and notice what it says.

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith. Through the faith of the operation. That even sounds like circumcision operation.

Through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead. Notice what happened. We've already gone over that. The Colossians, we went over circumcision several years ago in vision as we went through the book of Colossians.

But listen to this. Underline in your Bible, through the faith. It was even through faith then. And an eight-year-old child doesn't have any idea about that faith. And a three-month-old baby has no idea about that faith.

[28 : 46] Or an infant has no idea about that faith. So salvation is a prerequisite. Faith is a prerequisite. Believing is a prerequisite to getting baptized.

So I just want you to understand that in the Bible, and I'm not trying to be at all harsh or condemning, I just want you to realize, religion is trying to solve a problem that God's already solved.

They're trying to figure out, we've got to get our kids into this somehow. We've got to get our kids involved in the church. So let's baptize them as a baby. And they're trying to do that, and they're using the Old Testament to base it on.

But hey, girls never did get circumcised in the Old Testament. So why are they circumcising, why are they baptizing boys in the New Testament, or girls in the New Testament? If we're going to follow the Jewish principle, let's follow it all the way. Because it really breaks down and it doesn't work.

So what's the problem with these faulty views of baptism? What's the problem with these faulty views of baptism? First, let me just say, it is great that parents are concerned about their kids.

[29 : 48] Don't you think that's great? I think if you're not concerned about your kids, you probably aren't a very good parent. You ought to be concerned about whether or not they eat. You ought to be concerned about whether or not they sleep. You ought to be concerned about whether or not they get exercise.

You ought to be concerned about whether or not they learn about Jesus. You ought to be concerned, and that's a good thing. But the problem is, it's a wrong teaching from the Word of God.

And it leads to all sorts of things that aren't found in Scripture. It leads to the idea, the fact is, some of you just might be there. Please listen to me. You might be sitting here saying, hey, I'm okay.

I'm okay. I was baptized as a baby. Yeah. I mean, I'm one up on you, Baptist. I was baptized as a baby. And then I was baptized at the age of 12.

And I'm okay. That'd be good. But the problem is, it's not taught in the Bible. So if I said to you that this is what it means, and I said to you that this is what it says, and you never read it for yourself, you might believe something you ought not believe.

[30 : 54] That's why here at Vision, you notice we always put the verses on the wall, on the screen. And you'll notice also, people bring their Bibles here, and you're told regularly, open your Bibles so you can look and so you can know.

Because this is important stuff. This isn't, Austin can spout out whatever he wants to say. Austin needs to say, look, it's right here in the Bible.

Read it for yourself and understand it and figure it out. Because you, this is eternal, forever stuff. You can't go by what mommy did for you and think that's okay.

You ought to at least figure that out for yourself and know what's true. There's a big problem. It's false hope. It's misplaced confidence. Watch this.

Your problem was never that you needed to be wet, sprinkled, or baptized by immersion. You can't fix internal problems with external means.

[31 : 52] You can't fix what's wrong on the inside by cleaning up something on the outside. There's a problem with that whole thing. So, who can be baptized? Who can be baptized?

I think we ought to ask that question. So, if we go to the Bible, and that's what we do, we go to the Bible, who can be baptized? Every instance of New Testament baptism, you have someone that is of an adult type age, someone who can on their own understand and make a decision.

So, if you came to me and you said, hey, Austin, would you baptize my three-month-old? Well, I'd say, well, yeah. Let's see if your three-month-old can understand and explain to me the decision they've made. Oh, they can't?

Well, we're going to have to wait a while. Because you have to decide. Now, you know, prearranged marriages probably have worked in many places, but there's no prearranged salvation.

There's no moms and dads. Moms and dads can pick your spouse, but they can't pick your eternity. Moms and dads can pick your spouse, but they can't pick your eternity. Every person in the Bible that got baptized believed first.

[33 : 05] We're going to look at some verses to show you that. Baptism is an outward revelation of an inward reality. So, take your Bibles, if you would, and go with me to Acts 2 and verse 41.

I'm skipping where we are in Mark, but in Mark, just let me say it this way, in all the Gospels, when John the Baptist is baptized, and he says to every one of them, don't you come here to get baptized unless you're ready to confess your sin and bring forth fruit worthy of repentance, because if you don't know you've been wrong, you can't get baptized.

No news starts without it being real. No news starts without it being real. Look at Acts 2 and verse 41. These people gladly received His Word.

Mark it in your Bible. It says, Then they that gladly received His Word were baptized. You need to underline that. Who got baptized? Those who said, Show me what the book says.

And then they said, Ah, I see it. I'm a sinner. There's none righteous, no, not one. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The wages of sin is death, but Jesus died for me and I can be saved.

[34 : 12] I'm happy to hear that. I believe that. I'm excited about that. And you trusted Christ. You heard gladly. Children can't do that. Little bitty babies can't do that.

They can get to an age where they can. They need to be old enough to gladly receive. Go with me to Acts chapter 8 and verse 12, if you would. Here's another interesting thing about their getting baptized.

They were believers. In Acts chapter 8 and verse 12, the Bible says, But when they believed, underline that in your Bible, when they believed, Philip preaching, the things concerning the kingdom of God in the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized.

When were they baptized? They were baptized. They were baptized when they what? They were baptized when they what? Believed. The first guys, when they gladly received the word.

These guys, when they believed. Go with me to Acts chapter 8 and verse 36. The next thing about getting baptized is they asked to be baptized. Children can't ask.

[35 : 11] See, children can't believe. Babies, we're talking about babies here. We're talking about people that aren't old enough to have the use of their reason. They can't do that. They gladly received the word.

They believed. And they asked to be baptized. Look if you would in Acts 8, 36. And as they went on their way, they came into a certain water. And the eunuch said, See, here is water. Why can't I get baptized?

Okay, so the eunuch was coming down from Jerusalem. He'd been reading in the scroll of Isaiah. And he'd found out about Jesus dying on the cross and Philip, the evangelist, had come running up beside him and explained the gospel to him.

And he heard that and he believed. And now as they're riding along, they see a pool of water. And the eunuch says, Hey, there's some water. I could get baptized. Why can't I? Look at verse 37.

Acts 8, 37, if you would. The Bible said, And Philip said, Here's the condition. If you believe with all your heart, then you can.

[36 : 13] And the eunuch answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And they commanded the chariot to stop in the next verse and he got baptized.

So I need to finish up. So let me just say this to you. Let's understand something. Listen to me. The gospel is not baptism.

The gospel or good news is not baptism. The gospel or good news is not church membership. The gospel or good news is that Jesus died for sin.

Go with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 3, I believe it is. The guys can throw it up there for me. 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 3. Look what the Bible says in your Bible. He's explaining to them.

He starts explaining to them up earlier in verse 1 that this is the gospel. And in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 3, he said, I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received. I'm telling you what they told me.

[37 : 15] This is how it worked to me. This is how to work with you. This is how I got saved. This is how you can get saved. How Christ, look at it, died for our sins according to the scriptures.

That's powerful. It's a lot more powerful than you think it is because according to the scriptures means the Old Testament says this. The whole Bible says this. It was Jesus who died for our sins.

Do you know why Jesus died on the cross at Calvary? For our sins. Look at it. Look at it. That Christ died for our sins. Change that.

He died for my sins. You know why Jesus died? He didn't die for his sins. He died for my sins. So here's the deal. I deserve to die. The wages of sin is death.

And Jesus died. I sinned. I deserve to die. He did not sin. He did not deserve to die. He chose to die. And he died on purpose to pay my sin debt.

[38 : 17] Verse 4. 1 Corinthians 15, verse 4. Look what the Bible says. Very next verse. And that he was buried. And that he was buried. See, he was really dead. This wasn't some ritual.

He really died. And he was dead, dead, dead, dead for three days. And then it says he rose again just like the Bible said he would according to the Scriptures.

According to the Scriptures. Now in Romans chapter 6 and verse 4, even when it talks about baptism, the Apostle Paul is talking about baptism, he compares it to that.

In Romans chapter 6 he said, We are buried with him by baptism into death. That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in the goodness of life.

So it's a picture. Do you know what happened? When you had to come to a place. And if you haven't, today's your day. You had to come to a place when you said, I see my need.

[39 : 18] We're not talking about Mama seeing my need. We're not talking about Daddy seeing my need. We're not talking about the pastor seeing my need. I see my need. I deserve to go to hell.

I've done wrong. And my sin's going to destroy me. But God loves me and Jesus died for me and I see that. And I'm trusting Jesus as my Savior.

Your pastor can't do that for you. Your church can't do that for you. Only you can trust God. Only you can trust God. And then when you get baptized, you know what you're doing?

You're standing up and saying, Hey everybody. Hey everybody. Everybody listen. Listen, I was on my way to hell. And I understood Jesus died for me.

And I turned from my sins. I turned to Jesus. And I am saved. And now I'm going to give you an illustration of what happened. I died to the old person.

[40 : 15] And I'm raised to walk in newness of life. The lady in our Sunday school class said, I came home from work. He got on his knees that night and prayed beside the bed. And I realized I was married to a different man.

But it was the same man. And by the way, I'm pretty sure they'd be more than willing to stand up here and give you their testimony. Did you ever come to a point in your life where you knew you had sinned?

Not mom and dad. I got kids and grandkids. The fact is I got like 19 grandkids and number 20 is on the way. I got grandkids. I love grandkids.

And I would do anything to get my grandkids to go to heaven. But I can't. I'm a pastor. But I can't. I married a great godly woman. But she can't. I've got great godly kids.

But they can't. Every one of my kids are going to have to make a decision. They're going to have to decide to believe God or not to believe God. That's what you had to do. Did you ever come to the place that you believed God?

[41 : 23] If you didn't, today's your day. By the way, some of you have been going to church all your life depending on what mom I told you. Go to the Bible. This is your eternity.

Don't trust a theology book. Read it for yourself. Don't trust a pastor. Read it for yourself. Pray about it. Read about it. If you're saved, you should be baptized by immersion after that.

I'll explain that another time. But if you're trusting baptism to go to heaven, you're going to be rudely surprised and shocked because you won't go to heaven.

But today, he stands ready to save you and to give you eternal life if you'd simply trust it. Father in heaven, I pray you'd do a work today. I pray your name would be glorified.

I pray you'd save somebody that's not saved. And I pray you'd help somebody today to decide to serve you and honor you and magnify you. With your heads bowed and your eyes closed just a minute, maybe you're here and you've never trusted Christ.

[42 : 27] And you've heard this and you realize, I've been relying on my mom and dad. I've been relying on what they told me. But today, I realize my need. And I know I need to make a decision.

And I need to do something. Would you just simply stand up and step towards the back where some good men will take the Bible? And if you're a lady, they'll find a lady to help you.

If you're a man, they'll find a man and they'll help you. And they'll answer your questions and help you know the most important decision you ever make in your life is to accept or receive or to reject Christ.

Are you saved? Would you get out of your seat right now? Nobody's going to embarrass you. We're here to help you. Would you step out of your seat and step to the back and I want these men to help you right now?

There's some other Christians in this room and you know your baptism wasn't done biblically. You've read enough to know that. You've been relying on mom and dad. You've been relying on the church. But after reading the Bible, you know it's time for you to be baptized biblically.

[43 : 26] Why don't you get out of your seat, come to the front, and have a time of prayer. And say, God, I'm going to obey you. I'm going to take this step of believer's baptism. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.

Thanks. . .