

Questions About Baptism

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 January 2014

[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. Look, if you would, at Matthew chapter 3. And I want you to know that when Jesus got baptized, the Father said, This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased.

And today what I'd like to do is take the time to answer some questions about baptism. So I'm going to answer five or six questions about baptism that you might have. And it won't be verse by verse in this chapter.

Because I really think that there are times that we need to hone in on certain things. We talked about baptism last week. We'll talk about it this week. Then we'll go right back to verse by verse. And next time I get around to baptism will probably be Mark.

When we get to the book of Mark. But I want to answer some questions. So if you would, you can go ahead and open your Bible with me to Romans chapter 3, verse 22. And I'm going to have a word of prayer.

And I'm going to ask God to help us understand this issue of baptism. Father, I love you. And I praise you. And I thank you for what you're doing. I thank you, Lord, for the act of baptism.

[1 : 04] For this ordinance of the church. This thing that we do in church. And that we should understand. And we should understand clearly. And I pray that you would help your people to understand it. I pray you'd help it to be the beautiful act that it is.

And I pray that those who have not followed you in believers' baptism would do so. And I pray for you that deal with hearts. That they would understand why we get baptized. And how we get baptized.

And exactly what it does. And they would have a Bible answer to give to people that might ask them. And I will give you praise and honor and glory for all that you do. In Jesus' name, amen.

First question I think that most people end up asking is. The first question is. Do I have to be baptized to be saved? Do I have to be baptized to be saved?

Now if you've got your Bible open. We're going to read through some verses. Now look this way just a second. Before we read the verses. Can I get you to look this way? You know. Baptism. We talked about it last week. It's by immersion. It is underwater.

[2 : 02] We'll talk about that again a little bit today. It's going underwater. It is a symbol. And it is not necessary for salvation. But you need to know that. And so I'm going to take you through it.

There's no such thing as what's called baptismal regeneration. Or baptism that saves you. There's a whole denomination built about it. The Church of Christ has been built around the idea that you must be baptized to be saved.

We have to do nothing more than believe the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved. And so I want you to know today that. What does the Bible say? Do I have to be baptized to be saved?

So the first thing you might write down is this. No external act is necessary for salvation. Why don't you write that down? No external act is necessary for salvation.

The Bible says in Romans chapter 3 and verse 22 and following that it is faith alone so that none of us will be able to brag about what happened. Nobody, nobody gets to heaven with any bragging rights.

[3 : 06] Nobody will be saved that has any bragging rights. Nobody can say, well I got baptized by so and so who was a famous preacher. I got baptized by Jesus. I got baptized by Paul.

I got baptized by John the Baptist. I got baptized 25 times. I got baptized in the Jordan River. But external things cannot be bragged about. So read with me if you would Romans 3 22 and have your Bible ready to underline it.

Look it up in your Bible so you can underline it. The Bible says even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe there is no difference.

I want you to underline in your Bible in verse 22 which is by faith of Jesus Christ. Would you underline that? How do I get saved? Faith of Jesus Christ. Which is a faith of Jesus Christ.

And then look at verse 22 and underline this. Upon all them that believe. No mention of baptism is there. Go if you would down to verse 24. Romans chapter 3 verse 24.

[4 : 08] And I want you to say the third, the second, third, fourth, fifth word there with me. I want you to read it out loud with me. It should be up behind my head here where you can see it. Verse 24. Being. What's it say?

Justified. By. We are justified how? We are justified how? Freely. By His. So we are not justified by some baptism.

We're not justified by man. We are justified freely by His grace. You should underline that in your Bible. We are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

So skip down if you would to verse 26. Romans chapter 3 and verse 26. To declare, I say at this time, His righteousness. Now look at this. We're going to declare His righteousness.

The Lord Jesus' righteousness. That He might be just. And underline this part. The justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus. Would you read the last part out loud with me?

[5 : 05] Jesus is the justifier of who? Help me. Of. Him which believeth in. Come on, help me now. Do it again. He is the justifier of? And so look at verse 27.

This is where He really sums it up. And you need to put a circle here. You need to put a star here. Look what He said. Where is boasting then? Where is bragging then?

It's outlawed. It's excluded by what law? By works? By what law? Of works? Nay. But by the law of faith. In other words, there's nothing to brag about here.

Nothing to brag about here. You didn't buy your salvation. You didn't purchase it at a great price. You didn't get baptized. You didn't get held underwater longer than everybody else got held underwater. You didn't get baptized three times.

Once in the name of Jesus. Once in the name of the Holy. In the name of the Father. In the name of the Son. In the name of the Holy Ghost. I met a guy. He told me. He said, do you have a problem with my baptism? I said, I don't know. I don't know anything about it.

[6 : 04] He said, I got baptized three times. I said, well, three times how? He said, all at once. He said, they just bend you over into the water. And they go in the name of the Father. And in the name of the Son. And in the name of the Holy Ghost. And I said, you know, that's not really what the Bible is talking about.

We're talking about baptism is a symbol. Amen. But the point is, it's by the law of faith. Verse 28. Read with me. Romans 3.28.

The Bible says, Therefore, we conclude. Paul's ending up in chapter 3. And he said, we conclude that a man is justified. How? Say it out loud with me. By faith. Without what?

Without the deeds of law. Without any rules. Without any externals. Without anything on the outside. We are justified by faith. Go down to verse 30. And you'll just get the last two words.

So you underline them there. Seeing it as one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith and uncircumcision through faith. We are saved through. What's the main word?

[7 : 03] We are saved through faith. We're not saved by being baptized. It's not external. It's nothing that I do on the outside. There are no externals necessary to be saved.

Go with me, if you would, to Romans chapter 4 and verse 5. You know, interesting. We just finished preaching through the book of Romans. Look at Romans chapter 4 and verse 5. What does he count as righteousness in our life?

What does he count as righteousness in our life? It's not what we do. Look at Romans chapter 4 and verse 5. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for...

Okay, look at this. Would you? I want you to... You've got to notice who he justifies. Look in the verse, in the middle of the verse, and put a circle around this. Believeth on him that justifieth the who?

Wait a minute. Did you catch that verse? Justifieth the who? The ungodly. Not the godly. Not the good guys. Not the good guys, but the bad guys. Who does he justify? He justifies the ungodly.

[8 : 03] And he says, and what is counted for righteousness? Look at the verse with me. Romans chapter 4, verse 5. What is counted for righteousness? I can't hear you. What's counted for righteousness?

His baptism, right? No, it is his faith. It is his faith that is counted for righteousness. When the Lord said, I'm going to write that down and say he's righteous, it's not because he went to church.

It's not because he got baptized. It's not because he got circumcised. It's not because he gave a certain amount of money. It's because he had faith. His faith is counted for righteousness. Go with me to Galatians chapter 2 and verse 16.

I want you to know. I want you to know. Number one, the first thing we're looking at is that I do not have to be baptized to be saved. There are no externals necessary.

Galatians chapter 2 and verse 16. There is absolutely nothing you do in your body that gets you salvation. I have heard some of the most foolish things. There are people who believe that by being baptized they get saved.

[9 : 03] I actually heard a guy say that God doesn't hear your prayers unless both knees are touching the ground. He had a whole message on how some preachers bowed on one knee. And he said, do you realize they're only half humble?

And if they're only half humble, God's not hearing. And here's what's going on. It's not about the externals. It's not about the externals. Look at the verse, if you would. Look at the verse, if you would. In Galatians chapter 2 and verse 16.

The Bible says, knowing that a man is not justified. How? Not justified by? The works of the law. But by what? Faith of Jesus Christ.

Even we which have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified how? Justified by what? Help me. By faith of Christ. And not by. And read the last part with me.

For by the works of the law. Say it. By the works of the law. What? By the works of the law. What? Okay. By circumcision. By praying on two knees.

[10 : 02] Or three knees. Or walking a hundred miles. Or whatever you do. Nobody goes to heaven based on any of that. It's not you. Salvation is not you.

Salvation is him. He's the one who does his haven. Look at Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 8 and 9 with me, if you would. Ephesians chapter 2. Do I have to be baptized to be saved?

The answer is a resounding no, no, no. Ephesians chapter 2 verse 8. For by grace are you saved through faith. And that.

Would you even see this? Read this from me. And that what? Not of yourselves. He said, hey. He said, for by grace are you saved through faith. And I'm not even that.

So of yourself. It's a gift of God. Not of works. Lest any man should boast. I want to be found in Jesus righteousness. Not mine. Look at Philippians chapter 3 and verse 9.

[11 : 00] Philippians chapter 3 and verse 9. Look what the Bible says. It says, and be found in him not having mine own righteousness. Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, that which is through the faith of Christ.

That's what I want. That's through the faith of Christ. The righteousness, which is of God by faith. Now I just want you, this is the last verse about externals. Here's what you want to be found in.

When you show up at heaven, you don't want to walk up with your Sunday school. Did anybody go to Sunday school back in the old, old days? Maybe in the Southern Baptist church like where I went to, where you got this ring for going to Sunday school and not missing all year long.

Anybody ever been to one of those? Hold you had me and Trent. Two or three of you. And did you ever see something? People, man, they had hangers on everybody. I mean, that thing flopped way down there. But they never missed. They hadn't missed Sunday school in a gazillion years.

You don't want to get to heaven going, check out how much I've been to Sunday school. Check out my baptismal certificate. Check out my ordination as a pastor. Check out my ordination as a deacon.

[12 : 01] Check out all the Bible courses. I don't want to be found in what I've done. I want to be found in His righteousness. I want to step up before God and God look down and say, You look like Jesus did something in your life, buddy.

And then I'll get into heaven. Say, man. That's what it's about. No externals. Read that last part of that verse with me if you would. Read Philippians chapter 3, verse 9. He said, I want to be found in Him.

First part. Be found in Him. Not having my righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ. I want what Jesus did. So the first thing.

No externals. Second thing. The Apostle Paul, when he explained to us the gospel, doesn't even mention baptism. When he explained to us the gospel, he doesn't even mention baptism.

Look, if you would with me, 1 Corinthians chapter 15. 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verses 1 through 4. When Paul's going to explain to everybody, he writes to the church at Corinth, and he said, Let me explain to you what the gospel is.

[13 : 02] He doesn't even mention baptism. It's not even a part of the subject or the conversation. Nor is the Lord's Supper, nor are so many other things. Here's what he's going to say. I'll tell you what, before we read, here's what he's going to say.

The gospel is that Jesus died and was buried and rose again. And all of this, according to the scriptures, Jesus died and Jesus was buried.

But Jesus died for our sins and was buried and rose again, according to the scriptures. Read with me. 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 1. Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel, which I preached unto you, which also you have received and wherein you stand, which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you believe in vain.

For I delivered unto you the first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins. Put a 1. First step. Christ died for our sins, according to the scripture.

Number 2. And he was buried. And number 3. And he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures. That's the gospel. That's the gospel. The word baptism is not even mentioned in the scripture.

[14 : 12] The guy who God is going to use to write at least a third of the New Testament. Your New Testament was written by three main writers. Luke, who will write the book of Luke and the book of Acts.

John, who will write the gospel of John in 1st, 2nd, 3rd John in Revelation. And then Paul, who would be probably one of the first, if not the first one, Romans, through up to or including Hebrews.

So a big writer. And he's the one who writes almost all the church epistles that tell us how to work in a church, that tell us how a church is supposed to work. And here's what he's going to say about his own ministry.

I wasn't sent to baptize. Now, if baptizing is important, you'd think that he wanted to be Paul the baptizer. But read what he said in 1 Corinthians 1 and verse 17.

1 Corinthians 1 and verse 17, he said, For Christ sent me not to baptize. What? Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

[15 : 13] Not with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. Paul said, you know, I'm the guy who's writing the book of Romans, 1st, 2nd, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st, 2nd, Thessalonians, 1st, 2nd, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and maybe Hebrews.

And God did not send me to baptize. The reason is because baptism doesn't save anybody. He said, God sent me to preach the what? Gospel.

What is the gospel? Could you help me? What is the gospel? The gospel is the, that Jesus died for our sins. Say that with me. The gospel is that Jesus died for our sins and that he was buried and that he rose again the third day.

Say it again. What's the gospel? That Jesus died for our sins, that he was buried and that he rose again the third day. And all that according to scripture. And Paul said, he didn't send me to baptize.

He sent me. He wasn't against baptism at all. But baptism is not necessary for salvation. One of the proof verses that many people who believe you must be baptized would use is Mark 16, 16.

[16 : 21] So I want you to look that verse up with me and then we'll move to the next part. First thing I wanted you to find out is baptism is not necessary for salvation. Mark 16, 16. Some people read this verse and they say, look what it says.

It says, he that believeth that is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. Now how do you get damned in the verse? Which is condemned, sent to hell.

How do you get damned or sent to hell? Talk to me. By not. By not what? Believing. So he that believeth that is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned or sent to hell.

You know, you can get married. Can I just ask an interesting question here? If you don't want to answer the question, don't answer it. How many of you men, I'll just ask men, do not wear a wedding band, but you are married?

Would you hold your hand up? Anybody? Who doesn't wear one? My dad never wore one. Here's one firefighter. Probably one of the reasons you didn't wear it. My dad didn't wear it because of his job. He doesn't wear it. Does that make you less married?

[17 : 21] The fact that you wear a wedding band or not. My dad, he didn't. He was a maintenance man and people got their fingers ripped off because the rings got caught. And in substance, he never wore a wedding band. Does that make him less married?

No, it doesn't make you less married. If I don't get baptized, it makes me less saved. No, it doesn't make me less saved. Baptism is a symbol. Baptism is something I do as a testimony. We'll talk about it in a minute. But it doesn't make me saved.

Okay, so number one. I hope you got it down. There are. There is no Bible proof that you need to be baptized to be saved. Salvation is by grace.

Salvation is by believing in Jesus Christ. Number two. So why the confusion about what baptism means? So why the confusion about what baptism means? There's a lot of confusion.

There's a lot of arguments and discussion here. I mean, some of us think we've been baptized because when we were six days old, eight days old, one year old, sometime there, somebody took us to church. They poured some water on our baby's head or sprinkled some water on our baby's head.

[18 : 20] And they said they were baptized or christened or any other word that they might have wanted to use. Then maybe at the age of 12, somebody came along and did that. My wife had all this stuff. Everybody, this has happened to her. At the age of 12, they put more water on her head and she was in the church.

And they call that baptized. But that's not baptized. That's not when the Bible uses the word baptized. That is not baptism. And you will know that before the day is over. Being sprinkled as a baby is not baptism.

Being sprinkled as a baby is being sprinkled as a baby. And being sprinkled as a 12-year-old is not being baptized. It's being sprinkled as a 12-year-old. Baptism is a very serious thing.

If I took my wedding band off and put it on Ed's finger over here and I said, Ed, you can wear my ring, it would not make him married to my wife. And my ring would fall off of his little big hand anyway.

But that doesn't make him married to my wife. So why the confusion? Here's the first reason. The word baptism, it's translated from a word in the Greek that means literally to dip.

[19 : 21] To immerse in water. It has always meant that. The early church fathers practiced only immersion for baptism.

You can find, they find, when they do their diggings, they find baptismal fonts. Places where they baptized. Calvin and Luther, leaders of the Reformation, recognized that the early church fathers only baptized by immersion.

But they felt like that they could substitute a symbol for what they called a symbol. They said, well, if baptism is only a symbol, I can substitute a symbol for the symbol. But we're going to just say, if God said, I like my symbol to be getting baptized, we'll just stick with his symbol.

Amen? In other words, I didn't buy my wife a cigar band for a wedding ring. And we're just going to stick with more of what God said it is.

Number three, who should be baptized? Who should be baptized? Here comes some things from you. Go into your Bible if you would to Acts chapter 8 and verse 12. First, listen to this.

[20 : 25] Look here. There are no infants ever baptized in the Bible. The whole New Testament never once did anybody take their child to a priest, to a prophet, to a pastor, to an elder, to a bishop to get baptized.

Never happens in the entire New Testament. Not mentioned. In the New Testament, those who got baptized were those who believed of their own accord.

And I want you to look it up in the Bible so you know that. Acts chapter 8 and verse 12. When they believed, underline it, when they believed Philip preaching these things concerning the kingdom of God, the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

I want you to underline two parts in the verse. When they what? When they what? Believed. Then they were. So what came first?

Believing. And then what happened? Baptizing. So we call it believer's baptism. In Acts chapter 16 and verse 30. The Bible says, and they brought them out and said, sirs, what must I do to be saved?

[21 : 35] And here is a perfect time for them to say, get baptized. He says, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Then they spake unto him the word of the Lord. Verse 32. They spake unto him the word of the Lord.

And all that were in his house. They spake the word. And then they were baptized in that verse. In Acts chapter 18 and verse 8. Acts chapter 18 and verse 8.

And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house. And many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized.

What did they do first? What did they do first? Help me. They believed. Then what did they do? They got baptized. They believed and they were baptized. Baptism is reserved solely for those people who have placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3.27, the Bible says, for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. It is a symbol. I must admit to you that before I ever got ordained, before I ever started working in a church, I had baptized a few hundred people.

[22 : 44] I've been going to church all my life. I got saved just before I turned eight. And so, and there was a creek that ran in front of our house. And so we'd always go down there and go swimming. And all the kids would be down there swimming.

And I was always a preacher. And so I would tell them, I'm John the Baptist today. Y'all get over here. And I'd sit there and I'd hold my hand up. I'd say, all right, I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost. I'd say, come on, I'm going to baptize another one.

I baptize them all. I baptize some of them people 10, 20 times. That's not baptism. That was a kid playing. That was a kid playing. I used to play preach too. I used to play baptize.

But baptism is reserved for believers. People who have chosen to put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. So what is baptism?

According to the Bible, what is baptism? It is a symbol or picture of what God has done in your heart and in your life. It is a symbol of what God has done in your heart and in your life.

[23 : 40] Would you open your Bible to Romans chapter 6, verse 2. Romans chapter 6, verse 2. Here's a picture. It's just a picture of what has happened. In Romans chapter 6.

In Romans chapter 5, we've got one of the most wonderful verses in the Bible. It says, well, if sin abounds, grace does much more abound. In Romans chapter 6, verse 1, the Bible says, what shall we say?

Then shall we continue in sin that grace abounds? God forbid. And in verse 2, look at what it says. Romans chapter 6 and verse 2, the Bible says, God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?

Do you understand that when you're saved, you're saying, I don't want to live in sin anymore. I don't want to continue going to the same place as I used to go. I don't want to continue doing what I used to do.

I don't want to hang out. Hey, if you get married, you quit going to the singles bar. Say amen. You get married, you quit going to the singles bar. And so when you get saved, you're saying, I don't want to do that anymore.

[24 : 39] That's my old life. And I am dead to that. That's no longer true about me. Look at Romans chapter 6 and verse 3. In Romans chapter 6 and verse 3, it says, know ye not. That so many of us as we're baptized into Jesus Christ, we're baptized into his death.

It identified us with Christ. We did it as an identity thing. We do it in weddings. There's tons of things in weddings that are symbols. And we have the rings and the symbol of gold, pure love, the circle that has a no-ending love.

There's a symbol. And in baptism, I am baptized. I was baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit. And I'm in him. And outwardly, I get baptized to say publicly what God has already done in me.

It's a symbol. Look at Romans chapter 6 and verse 4. Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism in the death, that 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 baptism is a symbol. Now look this way just a second. Listen, baptism is a symbol. It's a symbol saying, hey, I am not the guy I used to be.

[25 : 49] And you stand in the baptistry and you're standing there and what you're saying is you stand there. And you need to understand that. When you're getting baptized, you're standing up and saying, hey, I used to be that other guy. But I have now trusted Jesus Christ.

And I am a different person. And they're going to bury me with Christ. I'm buried with Christ. I am now identifying myself with Christ. And I'm raised to walk in newness of life with Christ. Christ, same thing in a wedding.

Everything in a wedding is a symbol. Everything, you know, we had Jason and Cherry Rischel's wedding a week ago yesterday. And everything in that wedding was rehearsed. Not one bit of it was off script.

Except when I flipped an extra page in my notes. And I said, excuse me, just jumped a page. Needed Holly there to help me. She always keeps me straight when we do weddings as a team here. But anyway, so we did the wedding.

You know, when I looked at Holly and I looked at Holly, excuse me, I looked at Cherry and I said, you take this guy? She didn't go. Let me think about it. That was already a done deal. When you're getting baptized, you're not getting saved. When you get baptized, you're saying, hey, everybody look.

[26 : 47] This is my moment to say I am identifying myself with Christ. I am saying my old life is behind me. I'm burying my old life and I'm rising to walk in newness of life with Jesus Christ.

It is an outward revelation of an inward reality. It is an outward revelation of an inward reality. I was deeply in love with a young girl named Betty Ferguson.

And I thought that I would like to marry her. But I kept it hidden because I was afraid she'd say no. And I kept working up my nerve. And finally, one day, the outward or the inward reality, I whispered to her, would you marry me?

And she waited three years to answer me. It seemed like it was only a few seconds, but it seemed like forever. And she said, yes, but my asking was only an outward revelation of my inward reality.

Something had gone on in my heart. I get baptized to say something happened inside of me. It is a way to give testimony of that. In Matthew 10, 32 and 33, which we won't take the time to read, Jesus said, if you won't confess me, I won't confess you.

[27 : 52] That's not a threat. But the whole point is, if you love Jesus, you want to confess it. You love Jesus, you want to confess it. I meet very few people who want a wedding where nobody comes.

I mean, we said, no, we're talking about the wedding. The guy usually says something like this. Let's get it over with as quick as we can. And the girl usually says something like this. I ain't getting all dolled up and doing all this. It's my day.

I want everybody to see it. I asked Jason, I said, how long do you want the wedding to be? And he said, I don't know. How long does it have to be? And I asked Charity, she said, well, people coming from everywhere.

It's a girl thing, you know. She's coming down the aisle in her fancy dress and all the people are there. That's the way it works, amen? Well, here's what you're saying. I have believed in Jesus and I want to state it publicly. And I want to make a statement that I have placed my faith in Christ.

It's a testimony of your turning from sin that you acknowledge that you have been forgiven by the grace of God. It's acknowledging and saying publicly.

[28 : 50] How everybody look. That's not a big deal in our country. Everybody gets baptized here. And they get baptized numerous times. But can you imagine Morocco? Can you imagine Morocco where the two Peruvian guys have been arrested and are waiting to find out what their fate will be tomorrow?

Morning at 9 o'clock in the morning when they'll find out if they get kicked out of the country or put in jail or something else happens to them. If they're fine, who knows what could happen to them. And they're waiting for that. Can you imagine?

Do you know what it's like when a person, a Muslim, gets, when a Muslim gets baptized? They say he's no longer a Moroccan. Saeed was in, Saeed got arrested one time who's one of the Moroccan believers.

And when Saeed was arrested and they had him in the jail and he had a Bible there and they said, what are you doing? He said, I'm a believer in Jesus Christ. I'm a Christian. They said, you can't be a Christian and be a Moroccan.

He said, I am. And they said, that's impossible. And they said, how did that happen? He said, I'm glad you asked. And he preached to them for about an hour. He told them about Jesus. Told them how he got saved. Told them how Jesus changed his life.

[29 : 50] And the judge said, we're going to take Muslim off your identity card. And Saeed said, thank you. I'm not a Muslim. I am. And everybody in that country, to be Moroccan is to be Muslim. That's the way it works.

But there was an identity thing. There was pictures of Aaron and Saeed baptizing people. Somebody took them at one of their baptizers, put it on Facebook and put it on the front page of the paper, embarrassing them, threatening them.

It was a step to say, I am no longer a Muslim. In our country, I am no longer an unbeliever. I'm no longer a sinner. And in this country, you don't get in trouble for it. And we even give you a hair dryer, let you dry your hair before you go home so you don't even look like you ever got wet.

Give you a fancy outfit so you can wear. But in many countries, and in Bible days, it was like saying, this may be my death sentence. But I believe in Jesus. And I am deciding to follow him.

It was a testimony that they were given. They were identifying themselves with Christ, like in Romans chapter 6 and verse 4. They were giving the picture of the death and the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, like in 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

[30 : 54] Last question. When should I get baptized? When should I get baptized? Let me give you a few answers to that one and we'll be done. We call it believer's baptism.

So when you believe, you should be baptized. In the New Testament, they believed and they were baptized immediately. You only get baptized when you're old enough to make your own decision and you do so fully realizing what you're doing and why.

In our churches here in the southeast, we often see people baptizing very small children. Four, five, six-year-old children get baptized. For many years in many Baptist churches, they've never allowed that to happen because they said, does that kid really know what he's doing?

Is that kid doing that of his own free will? You should only get baptized when you're able to say, I know I was a sinner. I know I deserve to go to hell. I know that Jesus died on the cross and paid sin that and I have decided to follow Jesus.

I'm a believer. Then you get baptized. That's when you get baptized. You only get baptized when you realize that salvation is purely by grace and you receive no merit, no points, no good works for being baptized.

[32 : 02] When you get baptized up in heaven, God doesn't say, give him one more brownie point. Add another point to his saying, put another star in his crown. You're just simply saying, I have decided to follow Jesus.

You get baptized when you realize that baptism is not essential for salvation. Now, it is essential for obedience, but it's not essential for salvation.

A good Christian wants to be baptized according to the New Testament. A good Christian gets baptized according to the New Testament. So if you really believe Jesus, you want to publicly stand up and say, I believe in Jesus.

I'm not the kind of guy that got married to Betty and said, I don't want anybody at the wedding and I'm going to leave her at home and tell nobody I'm married to her. I want to proudly say, that's my wife. And when you get saved, you stand up and say, I want to be baptized.

Get everybody in the church that you can to watch. I want to tell everybody, listen to everybody, I made my decision. And you're obeying Jesus Christ. You get baptized after you fully realize that you're saved.

[32 : 59] You're not hoping you're saved. You're not expecting any water to wash away any sins. You get baptized by immersion, even if you were falsely baptized some other way. If I baptized you at Trace Creek, out in front of Daddy's farm when I was a kid, that didn't count.

If your mama got you baptized when you were six weeks old, that didn't count. If somebody baptized you at 12 by sprinkling, that certainly didn't count. If they baptized you at 12 and you hadn't believed that didn't count.

If you got baptized somewhere along the way and then later on you found out you really got saved, then you know that really didn't count. Baptism is only a symbol when it's associated with what it is.

This wedding ring is only a symbol. I can't even get it off my finger. It's only a symbol of what happened on August the 18th, 1973. This ring does no value, no value anywhere else with anyone else.

I was in a store and a guy said gold is going up in value. And this ring cost like \$30 back in 1973. And they were selling the same ring that day for \$300.

[34 : 06] And I said, I'd like to sell it. I'll take half price. I was joking. I laid the ring out there and he said, let me weigh it. He weighed it. He said, I think I can give you \$30 for it. I said, \$30? That's what it cost in 1973?

He said, see there, it didn't lose any value, did it? So he said, we're just going to melt it down is all we're going to do with it. Baptism is only a value when it's associated with what it was meant to be associated with.

I have put my faith in Christ. You get baptized when you realize that water does not wash away sin. It does not put you in the covenant.

It does not get you closer to God. It does not wash away idemic sin or the sin of Adam. It's simply a symbol of what already happened in your heart.

You get baptized when you publicly want to say that you love Jesus and you've given your life to him. You get baptized when you want to say that you're leaving your old life and living a new life.

[35 : 03] Being baptized as an adult is humbling yourself. Pretty easy for a child to be baptized. Pretty hard. Sometimes adults are like, I don't want to go up there and just let somebody put me under the water.

I don't want to, I don't want to, that seems childish to me. But being baptized as an adult is humbling yourself and saying what Jesus wants from you is more important than your pride. I'll give you one more thing here, a little story.

My goal, I've traveled to lots of places. My goal trip, the one trip I want to make one day, and it won't be a ministry trip, I'm going to go to the Holy Land.

I just want to go there. I want to go and I want to see all those places. I want to take Betty and I just want to do a little vacation there. Can I just tell you something about that little trip? I'm not going to get baptized in the Jordan River. You always hear everybody talk about how they got baptized in the Jordan River.

Well, it wouldn't be nothing but getting wet in the Jordan River. Because baptism only had value when I publicly stood to say, I have believed in Jesus Christ. Well, I said that, I said that in 1962.

[36 : 01] I think that's like 50-something years ago. Baptism is saying publicly, I love Jesus. I love Jesus. Baptism. If you're here and you're a part of our church and you attend all the time and you say, you know, I've never joined the church.

You ought to join up. Put on a uniform. If you're here in the church and you've never been baptized, you ought to stand up and say, I am ready to be baptized because I love Jesus. I want to put him first.

I know it's not a matter of me gaining any points. I know it doesn't get me saved, but I want to honor Jesus. Baptism. Baptism. Jesus is 30 years old in Matthew chapter 3 and he comes to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness to give you an example.

If you've not been baptized, I challenge you to. If you have been, I hope you understand it better. And we'll move on. But I really want you to understand why we baptize people the way we do. Father in heaven, I love you and I thank you for the chance to serve you and I thank you for your word.

And I pray that you would grow your people and build a church that brings honor to your name. And I pray you'd show your power in our lives. I'll give you great honor and glory for all that you do. I ask you to work, God. I trust you. I believe in you and I look to you.

[37:10] I'm excited about what you're going to do. I pray, God, for some that need to be baptized that they'll take that step and honor you through obeying you and believers baptism. I love you and thank you. 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.