

BAPTISM

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A Sermon Preached in Evangelism.

John Bunyan of Pilgrim's Progress spent 12 years lying in the old Bedford prison because he believed and taught baptism. He lay there literally rotting in that old prison for 12 years because he believed in baptism as taught in the Bible. When he was asked is it worth it? He said, "It is a mercy to suffer for so good a cause." You know, I always feel that we ought to appreciate some of these great truths in the Bible. They have come down to us stained by the life-blood of the saints of God.

Take the Sabbath, literally millions have died cruel deaths for the Sabbath truth. Baptism - hundreds have suffered for it. It reminds me of the story of Captain Murray, who staggered into the Scottish Council, he lay down the Scottish flag before them and he said, "Gentlemen take it and treat it as a sacred thing for the stains you see on it are the life-blood of your kids."

You and I friends, ought to appreciate the great truths that have come down to us stained with the life-blood of the saints of God, and baptism is one of them. You'll read about it here in the last command that Christ gave before he raised his hands in blessing over his disciples and started back for the land of Glory. He was out there on the little hills of Bethany. I walked out on those hills not very long ago and it was from those hills that Jesus ascended and there He gave His final command. You'll read it in Matthew 28:18 "And Jesus came and spoke unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go you therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world."

You notice friends, there are four 'alls' in that little passage. "All power is given unto me. Go you therefore and teach all nations. Teaching them to observe all things ... and lo, I am with you always." And when you have a statement like that from one who is all powerful and he's going to be with us always, well, then we certainly can be of good courage.

Now you'll notice that baptism is one of the things that Christ has commanded, for we are to go and teach people to observe all things whatsoever has been commanded. That is, we should go and teach all the commandments and when you've taught all the commandments, then people are to be baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. And one of those things of course that you are to teach, is Baptism. People ask me is it really essential to salvation. Could anybody be saved who wasn't baptized.

Well I know of at least one person who will be in heaven who wasn't baptized. And that was the man who died with Christ on the cross, the dying thief. Christ promised him a place in paradise and he wasn't baptized. He had his legs broken and he lay probably at the foot of the cross until he died. He wasn't baptized and yet he will be a saved man. But, if that man had lived and had the opportunity of baptism and had refused it, that would be a totally different matter. For baptism is a very essential and a very important teaching. First of all, however, I want you to notice that first they must be taught. Go into all the world and TEACH all nations. Of course, one of those truths that they are to be taught is baptism. Turn over to Mark 16:16 - you have a very strong statement made by Jesus "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned." And so you see friends, nobody needs to expect salvation if they neglect baptism.

If you are planning on going to heaven, you had better plan on baptism, because Christ has promised those who believe and are baptized will be saved, but those who don't believe will be damned. And the first requirement of all is to be taught. That's why we don't rush people into baptism. That's the reason too, friends, why I never baptize babies. You can't teach a baby the gospel. And until a person is old enough to be taught they are not old enough for baptism. There is no such thing as baby baptism in the Bible.

It's not so much as a matter of age either. I have people putting in questions what age should a person be? But friends, it's not a matter of age so much. You can be as old as Methuselah and not be ready for baptism. It's a matter of whether you can understand the gospel and whether you believe the gospel and whether you are going to live the gospel and then you are ready for baptism. It says, "Go and teach people," Peter says, "Repent and be baptized." That means to quit sinning. It means to be so sorry for sin that you stop it and get

in line with the commandments and be baptized. Go and teach people. People are to believe as Jesus said, in Matthew 16, and be baptized. And so until a person is old enough to be taught, until they are old enough to believe, until they are old enough to repent of their sins, they are not old enough for baptism. A baby can't repent. In fact an innocent baby has nothing to repent for. It has never sinned. It doesn't need baptism. But God is dealing here with people who know what they are doing.

Of course I know that some people think that Jesus was baptized as a baby. Turn over to Luke 3 and let us notice verse 21: "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved son; in whom I am well pleased." "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age." He was a grown man when he was baptized. And there you have Jesus coming up out of the water of the river Jordan, the water dripping off him and the Holy Ghost descending in a bodily shape upon him and his Father's voice speaks from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased."

Some people get worried about the Trinity in the Bible. There you have it at the baptism of Jesus. You have Jesus on the banks of Jordan, you have the Holy Spirit in a bodily form and you have God the Father speaking from heaven. And it's rather significant when Jesus sent His disciples out to preach, they are to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Jesus said if you don't believe that you couldn't be baptized. How anybody who doesn't believe in the Trinity can be baptized, I don't know. They are not baptized according to Christ's instructions, well then their baptism is entirely useless, because that is the baptism that Jesus gave and instructed. And so here we have that babies can't be taught, they can't believe, and they can't repent and hence baby baptism is not found in the Bible. But Jesus our Lord was baptized and always remember that Jesus is not only our Savior but also our example. I turn over to 1 Peter 2:21 "For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps."

A Christian is to be like Him. We aim at following Jesus. Those terms are synonymous, for what the commandments taught, Jesus lived what Jesus lived the commandments taught. He said "I have kept my Father's commandments," and if you follow in the footsteps of Jesus you'll certainly keep the commandments - you couldn't do otherwise, and if you keep the commandments you'll walk in the footsteps of Jesus because they were the steps that Jesus walked. And so if you take Jesus as your example it will certainly solve the question as to which day you'll keep, for there was only one day that Jesus ever kept and that was the seventh day Sabbath. Jesus never kept Sunday, not for five minutes. And Jesus is our example in all things. You know it is a wonderful thing to have an example to follow. We are made that way. It is much easier to follow an example than mere instructions. If I said to you, I want you to make a box for me and I want shelves in it and I want some drawers in it, etc., and by the time I have finished describing it you say I wonder whatever does he want. Well, I give all the instructions and you wonder what on earth it is all about, but if I said not listen, you watch, and I took off my coat and got my saw and hammer and I built the box in front of you. Now, I want you to make one just the same.

It's comparatively easy. As Edgar Guest said, I would sooner see a sermon, than hear one any day. I would sooner somebody showed me, than merely pointed the way. So Jesus not only gives us instruction in His Word as to how we should live, but He came down here and He lived that life and He left us the instruction that you'll find in just about every page of the New Testament, to follow Him, to be like Him. And in the last days we are told Jesus will lift a people from this earth home to heaven and those people will be like Him, they are following in His footsteps.

And, you'll never make a mistake in following Christ. I have people come along to me and they say, Oh, well, if so and so gets to heaven I'll be there. I'm as good as so and so. Well, listen friends, if you are going to pattern your life after somebody on this earth, you'll have their mistakes plus your own, and I guess you've got enough of your own. In fact it reminds me of a man who had a very beautiful vessel that was made in China and he valued it quite a deal and one day a servant knocked it over and it was broken. He gathered up the pieces and glued them together but of course there were the ugly crack marks. So he decided to send it back to China with the strict instructions that they make another vessel the very same. Eventually it came back. The Chinese had carried out the instructions to the letter, it even had the crack marks on it. You pattern your life after anybody else and you'll have your own mistakes plus theirs.

A Christian has only one pattern, and that pattern is Christ Jesus. And so we have the example here of Jesus and we are to follow in His footsteps, and Jesus was baptized as an adult. Now just how should people be baptized? You know there are four different ways that baptism is practiced today, under Christendom.

You go along to some churches and they will sprinkle a little drop of water on you. You go along to others and they will take a little cup of water and they'll pour water on your head. In fact when I was lecturing in a certain city, I was given a baptismal cup, a beautiful little silver cup. I said, Brother, it is a bit small. You'll conclude that by the time I am through tonight. Then you'll find other people will lay you under the water three times face down. They call it trine baptism. Others will lay you under the water once face up. So there you have four different methods of baptism. Some just sprinkling, some pouring, some what they call trine baptism and they put you under face down three times, and the others - they call it baptism by immersion, they lay you under once face up. Well now, how should people be baptized? Turn over to Mark 1 and we'll notice that the Word of God has something to say about it. Mark 1:9 "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water" - you see he was baptized by John IN Jordan "And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven saying Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Then when Jesus was baptized he was in Jordan and after the baptism he came up out of the water. It must have been a baptism by immersion for he was in the river and he came up out of the river, out of the water when he was finished his baptism. They tell me when they screened the picture some years ago entitled, "The King of Kings", they had John the Baptist kneeling on the bank of the Jordan and labeling water up out of the Jordan with an oyster shell and pouring it on the head of Jesus. Some people tell me you learn an awful lot of the Bible when you go along to these pictures. If you want to learn the Bible, I don't think you'll learn very much there. For the Bible doesn't say he was on the banks of the Jordan pouring it up with an oyster shell, but what does it say he was doing he went down into the Jordan and after the baptism he came up out of the water. John 3:23 "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came and were baptized."

When Jesus was baptized he needed a place where there was much water. Well, if all you had needed was that oyster shell full, a bucketful would have baptized a lot of people wouldn't it? But when John baptized he needed much water. Some time ago there was a group of 25 people, they were being questioned in a certain church as to how they wanted to be baptized. The minister would baptize them any way they wanted. Some wanted sprinkling, pouring etc. and when he got along to the end there was a girl of about twelve and she said she wanted to be baptized just as Jesus was. The minister scratched his head and turning to his assistant he said, Well, I suppose to do that we will have to take her out to the river." He knew quite well if he had to baptize like Jesus was baptized, they would need a good deal of water to do the job. Now we only have one record in the New Testament as to exactly how the apostles baptized after Jesus went back to heaven and you'll find it in Acts 8:36 "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water, what does hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believes with all your heart, thou may.

And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

You see, when the apostles baptized both the person who was to be baptized and the one who was doing the baptizing, they both went down into the water and after the baptism they both came up out of it. You see it is a story of baptism by immersion. However, when you come on to the question of the significance of baptism, well then it settles the question forever as to how people should be baptized.

I want you to now notice the significant of baptism. Colossians 2:12 "BURIED with him in baptism, wherein also you are RISEN with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Baptism first of all is a burial. You are buried with Christ in Baptism, and like as Jesus was raised from the dead, so we rise from the waters of baptism. Then baptism is a sign of a burial and a resurrection. It's the memorial of the resurrection of Jesus - not Sunday. I meet a lot of people who say they keep Sunday because Jesus rose on that day. You know you are never asked to keep Sunday as a memorial of the resurrection of Christ - not once.

But baptism is the sign of the resurrection of Jesus. Well, of course you can't have a resurrection unless you have died and were buried. And baptism is a sign of a burial. Now tell me - when a loved one dies and you bury them what do you do? Do you take them out there and pick up a handful of dust and sprinkle it on their head and say they are buried? No. Do you take a little cupful of dust and pour it on them and say they are buried? Not at all. Tell me friends, do you lay them down in the grave three times face down? Never. You lay them in once and always face up. And baptism is a sign of a burial. There is only one form of baptism that symbolizes the great significance of baptism for it is a burial. And the only kind of baptism that counts is one that lays people under the water once, face up. For they are showing their faith in a Savior who died, was buried and rose again, and they are going to follow in the very same footsteps. And this wonderful ordinance of baptism has those great features namely, the death of Jesus, his burial and his resurrection.

We are buried with him in baptism. And so friends, isn't it simple. Isn't it clear? That's what I like about the Bible, it becomes so clear. Turn over to Romans 6:3-4 "Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore 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 also should walk in newness of life." And so baptism is a sign of a death, a burial and a resurrection, not only showing your faith in those great acts of Christ, but that you are testifying to the world that you are going to die to sin. That's what the Bible says Repent and be baptized.

You are burying the old life, you are finished with it, and you rise to walk in newness of life. You've died and when a person dies they are buried, and you are ready to die to sin and to obey God, then you bury the old life and you rise to begin the Christian pathway, to walk the ways of God. Baptism comes as the beginning of the Christian life. A lot of people think they have got to be perfect before they are baptized. In fact I've had people come along to me and they say, I'm not going to be baptized until I'm sure I am perfect.

Well, I say, brother you'll never be baptized. Baptism comes as the beginning of the Christian life. Turn to Galatians 3:27 "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." You see, friends, baptism is the place where you put on Christ. There you begin to walk the Christian pathway. You die to the old life and when you die to it you bury it. And then like Christ, rising from the water and rising from the dead, so you rise from the waters of baptism to begin a new life - to walk the paths of Christ and

there in the plan of God, you put on Christ. Well, friends, if baptism is the place where you put on Christ, you can see how terribly important baptism is. For in the plan of God, at baptism you are to put on Christ. Before the cross they showed their faith in a Savior who would come by their sacrifices.

This side of the cross we show our faith by baptism and the Lord's Supper and so on. Those great things point back to a Savior who died, was buried and rose again. This is all part of the faith of Jesus. And there at baptism you put on Christ - you take the name of Christ, you become a Christian. It's like a marriage ceremony, when a woman is married to her husband, she takes the name of her husband. And so in baptism, we are married to Christ, we put on Christ, we take the name of Christ. We never need to be ashamed of Christ or His name. "Take the name of Jesus with you, Child of sorrow and of woe, It will joy and comfort give you, Take it then wherever you go." And at baptism you take the name of Jesus.

I've married many a happy couple and it is a very happy occasion, but I would a thousand times sooner marry a person to Christ in the waters of baptism, than marry a woman to a man on this earth. And baptism is a marriage ceremony and the church ought to be very happy about it too - far happier than any marriage ceremony that ever takes place on this earth between two human beings. There they put on Christ, there they take the name of Jesus, they are married. And you never need to be ashamed of Jesus. Often when I go along and talk to people, I say "Are you a Christian?" "Well", they say, "I hope I am. I'm trying to be a Christian. A man can only do his best."

Well, friends, if I come along to you and I say, "Are you married?" What do you say. "Well I hope I am. I'm trying. You know a man can only do his best." Is that what you say? Not at all. You are either married or you are not married. And you are either a child of God or you are not a child of God, one or the other. At baptism you take the name of Jesus, you are married to Him, and for His sake we try to be good Christians. And His power is right in here, because He is right in there to help us and He promises that He'll never leave us. He'll be right there through to the very end and He'll help us, for there we are to put on Christ. As I showed you last night, baptism is also Church Membership for in 1 Corinthians we are told that we are baptized into one body, we are baptized into the church.

People come along to me and say "I want to be baptized but I don't want to join the church." I say, "Look, friend, I would only be dipping you under the water, and I'm not interested in that." If you go through the waters of baptism there is only one thing in the plan of God and that is church membership - then you are baptized into the body of Christ which He says is His church. You put on Christ, you step into the fold of Christ to march with the fold of God right through into the New Jerusalem. And that is the plan of God. I have a question here in regard to re-baptism.

I have been asked once or twice if a person has been baptized once and they have backslidden, what about it? Should they be re-baptized? I have other people come along and say, I was once baptized before, but now I have come into this truth should I be re-baptized. Turn to Acts 19:1 "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were you baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism."

These people were genuine Christians but they hadn't heard all the truth. They said, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost,' but they were genuine Christians. But they hadn't heard all the truth for that time. That's something like some of you good people here. "And he said unto them, Unto what then were you baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism." And was that the correct form of baptism? Oh, yes, they had been baptized by immersion just the very same way as Jesus had. They were true Christians, they had been baptized by immersion - but if you have only been sprinkled as a baby you have never been baptized, in fact the very word baptize means to immerse. Of course it wasn't your fault when you were Christened you never had any choice in it. So here you have people who were genuinely baptized and they were baptized by John with the same baptism as Jesus.

"Then Paul said, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

So here you have the record of people who were baptized twice and they were baptized by immersion and they were baptized twice. So here is the record of rebaptism. Rebaptism is perfectly scriptural and you'll never make a mistake in rebaptism. In fact I would say this, here you have the experience of people who had once been baptized by immersion - and they were genuine Christians - but they stepped into fuller light and they were baptized. And some of you good people who were once baptized and you have come into fuller light, I would strongly recommend rebaptism. It is not compulsory but you'll never make a mistake in rebaptism and I would recommend it. For here you have the scriptural example laid right down which is the very same condition as some of you good people right here. On the other hand if you have been Christians and you have been baptized correctly, and baptized in the truth and you have drifted away into open sin and you've come back, you ought to be re-baptized. You see baptism is like a marriage ceremony. If a woman is married to a man and she goes away and divorces and goes and lives with another man if she comes back to her first husband she has to be remarried. And so baptism is a remarriage. You remember Jesus said, "Go you into all the world and preach the

gospel teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” When you were baptized first you weren’t keeping all the commandments were you? You may have been breaking some but now you have found your way into all the commandments of God, then my friends you ought to go forward in baptism for when you were baptized first you were baptized with many, many errors.

Now what about the program after baptism. In 1 John 2:6 “He that said, he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” When we rise to walk in newness of life from the waters of baptism we walk along just as Jesus walked. He’s our example. We walk along in the way of the commandments and that way friends, will lead you right home to the city of God. You say, well how was it, seeing the Bible is so plain, that they got right away from it and adopted largely, baby sprinkling. How did it come in?

Well, now friends, you know in the early days and for a long while they baptized by immersion. When I was over there in Rome some eight years ago I wandered around different places. I was in there just straight after the war and the troops were still in there, civilians weren’t allowed in. People want to know how I got in, well I tell them that is a war secret and you know you can’t divulge war secrets. Seeing there were no tourists and no civilians were allowed in. People want to know why. Things were pretty hard. After we had gone through the great cathedral of St. John Lateran, which is the oldest cathedral in Rome, it was the cathedral of Popes for centuries. It is far older and has a far greater history and I think far more interesting than even St. Peters. But after I had gone through St. John Lateran the guide wanted to show me a whole lot of other things but I wasn’t interested and asked what else he could show me. He said, I might be able to get you into the baptistry. He said it is the oldest baptistry in Rome. Tradition has it that Pope Sylvanus baptized Constantine I there. I was a bit doubtful about that but I said you lead the way and I’ll pay the damages. He ushered me into a room and lo and behold there was a baptismal font, I suppose 15 feet or 18 feet across - a circular font and in diameter it would be anything from 18 feet across. And I suppose it was that in depth. Of course one glance and I knew it was the story of baptism by immersion. But of course I couldn’t let the guide know I knew anything about it. For I found if they thought you were trying to catch them - dumb was the word and they would never answer you. So I walked around and when they told me things I just said, it’s wonderful. So when I had a look at this baptismal font and I played innocent. I said, Guide, that’s a big baptismal font. I said you know a fellow could dive in and have a swim in it. Yes, he said, it is big enough. I couldn’t let him know I knew why they had big baptismal fonts back there. And what is more I could take you to a dozen churches that I know of in Italy that have baptistries where they have baptism by immersion.

They are still there. But I didn’t let the guide know that. So I said, let me get this clear, guide, a baptismal font is a sort of a basin on a stand and the priest dips his hand in and sprinkles a little drop of water on the baby’s head. Yes, he said, that is right. I said, bless your heart why do you want a font like this, you could swim around in it. I was very mystified, or at least he thought I was. He smiled and said, back in the early days they didn’t baptize the way they baptize now. I said, didn’t they? How did they do it? He said, back in the early days they would fill that font up and they would both get down into the water, both the candidate and the one who was doing the baptizing and they would put the candidate right under the water. But, I said, they wouldn’t put them under head and all would they? Sure, he said, head and all. I was terribly tempted to remind him that his church boasts that she never changes, but if I had I wouldn’t have got any more information out of him.

So I said, why did they change? He said, I don’t know, they discovered that sprinkling a little drop of water was just as good. You’ve got to admit that it is easier. But there is the evidence in the oldest Cathedral in Rome, St. John Lateran, where they practice baptism by immersion; and you can find it where they are excavating the ruins of old churches in Asia Minor where they had the baptismal fonts where they baptized by immersion. And they practiced it right throughout the Christian world. Now, how was it that they drifted away? As the church began to drift away from the Bible as I have shown you night by night, they began to get the idea that the virtue of baptism was in the water. The water somehow or other became holy water and the virtue was in the water. And they got the idea that the waters of baptism washed away your sins.

Well, the only thing that will wash away your sins is the blood of Christ. They thought that it was not a good thing to be baptized at the beginning of the Christian pathway, you see the best thing is go right along and just before you die be immersed in the waters of baptism and you are washed nice and clean, you die and then you are right. You read church history and you can see those very things coming in and that’s the way they talked. Well, then it became very difficult. You get a man on his deathbed and immerse him and you’ll probably put him right out. And then they were in places where they couldn’t baptize by immersion, they had no place to put them. And so you read church history and you’ll find that they would roll a couple of blankets round and they would get a couple of buckets of water and try to pour it over them, try to immerse them that way. Well, then they reasoned if a bucket of water was sufficient, then a cupful of water ought to be sufficient.

And as you read on down through church history, you find they got less and less, and they felt the whole significance was in the water, and they got right down to the place where they adopted the pagan method, for the pagans too, had a method, and they would just sprinkle a little drop of water. And they began to get the idea that unless a person had that holy water on them they couldn’t get to heaven. Well, they said, what about babies that are born and die only a few hours old. They can’t get to heaven unless they have had this water on them. And so gradually they got to the place where just as soon as a baby was born they had to sprinkle a little drop of water on it’s head. And today even in Protestantism you’ll find some churches that actually teach that a baby can’t get to heaven unless somebody puts some water on their head.

I went into a home a few years ago in Tasmania. The lady asked me to come along because she had some problems that were worrying her. So when I went along to the home and I stepped there into the sitting room, right there on the mantelpiece was a photograph of a baby lying on some cushions. I picked it up and I said is this so and so, or so and so, And I named her son and her daughter. She said, "No, it's neither of them." She said that little baby isn't asleep, he's dead. He died when only very young and we photographed him after he died. It's the only photograph we have. She said that's what I want to ask you about. Could that baby be saved? We didn't have time to Christen him and we are worried. She said we were working so hard trying to save his life that we never had time until the little one had died. She said there was a minister in here a couple of days ago and I asked him about that baby, whether it would be saved. The minister asked if he had been Christened. The mother said no, they were sorry but he hadn't. Well, the minister said, I'm sorry too, but that baby will never be in heaven.

She asked me what I thought about it. I said I think that baby has a million times better chance of getting to heaven than that minister, and I'm sure of it. For my dear friends, our God isn't a monster. He won't shut an innocent baby out of heaven because somebody else neglected to sprinkle some water on his head. You and I are judged according to what we do, not what somebody else neglects to do. And God deals with adults. An innocent baby had never sinned. I said, listen, if you reach the glory land you'll find the little one will be there for God gives the guarantee that their offspring will be there with them. I was never Christened. It hasn't done me much harm and it didn't do me any good. If you've been christened it wouldn't do you any harm - you didn't have any choice in it and it won't do you any good. What God is dealing with is when you know what sin is.

But the Christians adopted the pagan idea for the pagans used to sprinkle holy water on the heads of their babies as a sort of a ritual. I was away out there in upper Egypt by the tomb of Tutankahmen and I went into the great terraced palace of Queen Hatshepsut. It's very evident now that she was the queen that rescued Moses from the bull rushes. You can always pick out where any of the tombs are in those ancient cities, they worshipped the sun towards the east and the sun set in the west and they always buried their dead in the west.

And you find the old city and go due west and you'll find their tombs. That's where the expression came from - "he's gone west". And over there in the west where there was once the great city of Thebes mentioned so often in the Bible, you'll find the Valley of the Kings, the tomb of Tutankahmen, and right over there is the great terraced palace connected with the worship of the dead, and the place of the palace of queen Hatshepsut. And I went in to the great ruined palace and I went right into the very back. And there they have all the paintings of the whole life of the queen. They liked to carve their whole life story and all their deeds right there in the stone. And right there in one place I noticed the birth of a baby, probably the birth of the queen. And lo and behold they are holding out the baby and the god has taken the baby and he's sprinkling from a little dish of water, he's sprinkling water on the baby's head. So I said to the guide, what's this? He said they are sprinkling holy water on the baby's head. I said what are they doing that for? He said, you know what a lot of Christians do today. I said, tell me how old is this? He said at least 4,000 years. 2,000 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem the pagans at the birth of a baby sprinkled holy water on the baby's head.

Don't you see where it came from? You go into the palace in Carnac and carved in stone is the very same story. I saw it again. But I want to tell you friends, there are some modern religionists who have gotten even further away and they tell us that baptism isn't important at all and they have ruled it right out. If there is anybody here who thinks that it is not important you let me read you a text in Matthew 3:13

"Then comes Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comes thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becomes US to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

And I want to tell you friends, you go through the waters of baptism with sincerity and the spirit of God again will speak to your heart, "This is my beloved son, my beloved daughter, in whom I am well pleased." And God is right there in the presence of true baptism. If you turn over to John 3 you'll read another text regarding baptism. John 3:5, "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man is born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." You say, what does it mean to be born of water. To be born of water means to come out of water. But friends you can't come out of water unless you've gone into water. But you come along and you die to the things of the old life and you bury the old life in the waters of baptism and you rise to walk in the Christian pathway. You rise to walk in the paths of Christ. You are born of water - you die to the old life and you bury it, and you rise in Christ.

As Peter said, repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. As we read a moment ago here where God plans that you put on Christ, you rise to walk in a new life, you are born of water. And Jesus said unless you are born of water and the Spirit, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God. And I want to say my friend, tonight, who has not been baptized. Written against your name up there in the record books of heaven, are the words "Cannot enter into the kingdom of God". You better plan on the first opportunity of having those words removed and go forward in the waters of baptism. And whether

you are young or old, if you're old enough to sin, you are old enough to be baptized, and I would like to invite the young to decide on baptism. Those of you in the prime of life, give your lives to Christ. Die to the things of sin and bury them in the waters of baptism and rise to walk in newness of life. And some of you that are getting well along the road and the gray hairs are multiplying, don't put it off friends, make sure that you are in the fold of Jesus.

I read some time ago about a man away out there in the back of Australia, and he was out of water. And you are in a bad way when you are out of water away out there. And he staggered on and he was done. His tongue was swelling and it was sticking to the roof of his mouth and he was just about finished and he was about to drop in the dust when he saw an old tin. Somebody had been there before him, and it gave him courage and he pressed on. A bit further he found the remains of a fire and it gave him more courage and he pressed on. And he came to a cattlemen's hut and he was saved. When I read it, I thought that's about the way it is down here on this old dying world of ours, we feel discouraged, but we see the footsteps of Jesus, he went down through the waters of baptism and outlined the road right through to the land of glory.

Jesus has been along the way before us. We can take courage and follow him and tonight I invite the young and the middle-aged and the old and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Let us pray.

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