

## BAPTISM & REPENTENCE

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### Mark 1:1-15

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets:

"Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.' "

John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. **Repent, and believe in the gospel.**"

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"John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." After Jesus had been crucified on a cross and then had risen from the dead on the third day, He said to His disciples,

"Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that **repentance and remission of sins** should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." (**Luke 24:46-49**)

Jesus also told His disciples after His resurrection, after His coming back from the dead,

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to **observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen." (Matthew 28:18-20)

Just before that passage it says "When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted." (verse 17) Jesus had risen from the dead, He still had the wounds on His hands and feet from the crucifixion but some still doubted. How much more then has Jesus been doubted on His calling us to observe all things that He has commanded us, to repentance, for a need to turn from the old way of life, not living anymore according to the desires of the flesh, the lusts of the flesh but believing on Jesus and **all** that He commanded. In John 15 Jesus talks about having to abide in Him, giving an analogy of abiding in the vine, Jesus being the vine and we are the branches. He says that those that do not abide in Him become withered and then are then thrown into the fire. Jesus says that as we abide in Him, we will bear fruit, much fruit. If we abide in Him we will keep His commandments and if we keep His commandments we will love one another.

It all begins when we are called by God through the Lord Jesus Christ to become one of His children, to abide in Him, to follow Christ and His example and His teachings. That is what being a Christian is. It is the dying to the old self and becoming a new creation in Christ Jesus. One may say, wait a minute we are under grace and we are no longer under the law just as the Apostle Paul said in **Ephesians 2:8-9**, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. That is true! Nothing we do can get us right before God. For all have sinned [against God] and fall short of the glory of God." It is true that "the wages of sin is death and the gift of God is eternal life in Christ." And it is also true what Jesus said in **John 3:16**, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Glory to God that we find a new life, a better way, a life to the fullest, and life eternal in Jesus Christ our Lord! The Apostle Paul also said,

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were

buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." (**Romans 6:1-8**)

When we are first called by God through the hearing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that He died for our sins and that He rose from the dead on the third day, conquering death, that He was God incarnate, that is God in the flesh, which is why the Holy Spirit came upon Mary so that she would be with child, that only God Himself could come to earth, live a sinless life, shed His blood for the remission of, or the taking away of our sins, which makes it possible to be reconciled to God so that we can have true fellowship with God the Father, and then He conquered death, paving the way for our rising from the dead as well.

So first we are called by God through the gospel of Jesus Christ to be saved, we are then called to repent, to stop sinning against God. **Romans 6:14** says, "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace." What does that mean? It means that while the choice is ours to make, whether we want to live God's way or our own way, it means if we choose God's way, and accept His free gift of salvation from our sin through Jesus Christ, that the grace of God and not pursuing sin any longer work together. Being saved means to believe first on the Lord Jesus and by grace we then follow Jesus and repent of our sin. It also means to follow His command to be baptized. It is an outward expression of our faith just as telling others about Jesus is. As Paul said in **Romans 10:9-10**, "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Being baptized is a symbol of dying with Christ, our old self dies with Him on the cross, we are buried with Him in baptism as we are plunged into the water and as we come up from under the water we are resurrected in Christ. Like I said it is only symbolic as a testimony of our faith. It is saying, when we are baptized that we no longer want the lust of the flesh but the things of the Spirit, the things of God, including eternal life in Jesus. As **Romans 10:9-10** says to confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, that is why at baptisms the person being baptized is asked questions such as "do you believe that Jesus died for your sins", etc.

**Galatians 5:19-25** says, "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

The fruit of the Spirit is real brothers and sisters. You can love others as yourself, you can even begin to love your enemy. Many times out here in the real world we see contentions among others. Shouting matches that sometimes lead to shoving matches, which leads to fist fights, which can even lead to death. There are five Scriptures in **Proverbs** that are close together that speak of contentions:

1. "The beginning of strife is like releasing water; Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts." (17:14)
2. "He who loves transgression loves strife, and he who exalts his gate seeks destruction." (17:19)
3. "A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calls for blows. A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul." (18:6-7)
4. "A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle." (18:19)
5. "It is honorable for a man to stop striving, since any fool can start a quarrel."

We, brothers and sisters have to be the honorable ones, the wise ones, showing that we are in Christ by loving others and forgiving others and overlooking a slight or an insult. Sometimes that means to let someone disrespect us. Because really, as we are in Christ, as Paul said in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me", that means that if someone contends with us, they are contending with God. If they are disrespecting us, they are disrespecting God. If they are hating us they are hating God. Our place in contentions and arguments and dissensions is to pursue humility and peace. The bottom line then is that no one wins in contention with one another. If God is not honored through humility and love and forgiveness, then no one benefits. Amen.

We are crucified with Christ, buried with Him in baptism, and raised to eternal life in Him as He was raised from the dead. If anyone here has accepted Christ as their Savior so they may have the newness of life in Christ, if you haven't yet been baptized, we are going to be

having a baptism ceremony. So if you are interested in being baptized come talk to Susie, myself, or Frank after the service and we'll talk about how and when we're going to do it. If you haven't accepted Jesus yet as your Savior from your sin so that you can have fellowship with God and be born again and begin your new life, all you have to do is believe on Jesus for dying on the cross for your sins, that He rose from the grave, conquering death so that you can have life eternal in Him and that you then become a child of God to live a new life starting now. Just ask for Jesus to save you from your sins and tell Him that You do believe. Today is your day of salvation! Praise the Lord! The next step for you then is, if you believe you are ready, is to become baptized as an expression of your faith, that you are crucified with Christ, that is the sinful you, and will then be buried with Him in baptism, and that you will then begin your new life in Christ, that will be life eternal.

If you had been baptized before and you had then fallen back into sin but you want to recommit your life to God through Christ you are very much encouraged to begin your new journey by being baptized again. Once again, it is an outward expression of faith, to say, it will no longer be I who lives, but Christ who lives in me. While I cannot condone any sin, as Jesus tells us to pursue perfection, to be perfect as He is perfect, we are still human and may stumble into sin. His Word says in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God especially does not want us practicing sin as was mentioned earlier. Sin separates us from fellowship with the Father. And His Word clearly states that if we practice those sins, we will not be saved. But praise be to God, by His grace through our Lord Jesus Christ that if we confess our sins He will forgive us and sets us in His Righteousness, perfect and holy. If we are in Christ, we are righteous and holy as He is holy since it is He Who works in us. His call is upon us to Repent and Believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to observe all that Jesus has commanded us. We can't do anything alone or on our own. Only Jesus can do in us what needs to be done, to save us, to sanctify us (that is, making us set apart in His holiness). We don't have to concern ourselves with how we are going to be able to do anything. We have to continue to look to Jesus, the author and Finisher of our faith, it is He Who works in us to will and to do according to His good purpose, and He will carry out to completion what He has started in us. Those are all God's Word and His promises. It is up to us to be obedient and to stop sinning. His process though is spelled out for us in His Word. First to be saved by believing on Christ, to be baptized as a confession of our faith, and then to allow Him to work in us His Righteousness. And we can be assured that, "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," when when are on the other side in His glory. Amen.