

Series: Sermons on Baptism
Title: The Confession in Baptism
Text: Romans 10: 8-11
Date: July 30, 2017
Place: SGBC, New Jersey (Baptism of Kimberly Thacker)

Romans 10: 8: But what saith [the word of faith we preach]? The word is nigh thee, *even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

Today, we will be baptizing Kimberly Thacker. Lord willing, next weekend will baptize John Keller. At the end of August, we will baptize Ben Moyer. Each of these confessed to me with their mouth that they believe in their heart that the Lord Jesus Christ is all their salvation. When they are baptized they will publicly confess their faith in Christ before God and before the Church of God.

Proposition: In everything we look at today, we will see that baptism is the outward, public expression of inward faith in Christ.

Water-baptism is not an option. It is commanded by Christ but only to those who believe on him. He who believes on Christ with his heart is commanded by Christ to confess his faith in Christ in believer's baptism.

Mark 16: 15: And [Christ] said unto [his church], Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Why is public confession of faith in Christ by baptism connected with heart faith? There are many reasons but for one the existence of the Church of God depends upon it. If believers never publicly confessed faith in Christ, there would be no preachers, no preaching, no ordinances, nothing—because there would be no assembled body of believers to preach unto. Therefore, God's way of our openly confessing faith in Christ is baptism.

Another reason is because it glorifies the triune God in Christ for what he has done in a believer, "*For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*" Christ takes a sinner who was before a God-hating enemy and makes him no longer ashamed to confess Christ publicly. God gets all the praise and honor for doing so.

So baptism is not an option but a command of Christ but only to believers because it is a public confession of faith in Christ—"*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*"

WE JUSTIFY GOD CONFESSING WE ARE SINNERS

By baptism the believer publicly justifies God who declares him a sinner in need of Christ doing all the saving. When Christ described John the Baptist and showed the two reactions of his hearers, he said,

Luke 7: 27: This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 28: For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there

is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. 29: [Christ is still speaking] And all the [common] people that heard *him*, and the publicans [chief sinners], justified God, [how so?] being baptized with the baptism of John. 30: But the Pharisees and lawyers [the outwardly whitewashed, freewill, works religionist] rejected the counsel of God against themselves, [how so?] being not baptized of him.

The outwardly moral, white-washed religionists who trusted in their wisdom, their will, and their “*rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.*” Christ said they accused John of having a devil and called Christ a winebibber and a gluttonous man. Christ said in verse 35, “*But wisdom is justified of all her children.*” God is justified by those who publicly confess their sins in believer’s baptism. The sinful publicans, ‘*justified God and his wisdom*’—they received his messenger and his message and by baptism they publicly confessed God was righteous in declaring them helpless sinners in need of repentance.

We must acknowledge God’s perfect justice in condemning us for our sins, before we can appreciate and partake of God being Just and our Justifier.

Jeremiah 3: 12:...I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger forever. 13: Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God

In baptism, we publicly take sides with God against ourselves; we publicly declare God is just; we have indeed transgressed against the LORD our God; we are indeed sinners in need of Christ to save us by the free grace of God. So we read of all those who were baptized of John...

Matthew 3:6:...were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. [not vocally, but by the act of baptism]

WE CONFESS GOD REGENERATED US TO FAITH IN CHRIST

By baptism we confess God has already regenerated us to faith in Christ by whom we are saved.

Ephesians 1: 23...Christ filleth all in all. 2:1: And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Sinners are not regenerated by baptism, BUT, by the Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the gospel, by Christ speaking the incorruptible word effectually into our hearts. He said,

John 6:63: It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Peter said, baptism is “*(not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.)*” (1 Pet 3: 21)

So by baptism we are declaring we have already been regenerated by the Holy Spirit so that our conscious is already purged from dead works to faith in Christ by the blood of Christ.

Neither does baptism wash away our sins, we are confessing that Christ has put away our sins in his blood. When Ananias told Paul, “*be baptized and wash away thy sins*”, he spoke of what baptism pictures. By Christ’s death, burial and resurrection the sins of God’s elect were washed away.

We are confessing our salvation is Christ alone. When Christ died and was buried, our old man of sin died and was buried in him so that justice is satisfied and we are justified by God. When Christ arose from the grave to God's right hand and by the new birth, we are resurrected to newness of life through the blood of Christ.

So by baptism we are confessing Christ has saved us by what he has done for us and in us, saying, "*Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*" (Ps 32:2)

WE NOW WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE

By baptism the believer confesses he is now walking in newness of life.

Romans 6: 1: What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2: God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?...6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7: For he that is dead is freed from sin. [here the word "free" means justified, made righteous by what Christ did for us on the cross.] 8: Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him....11: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord...14: For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace...17: But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18: Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness....22: But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Before, "free" meant justified from our sin, made righteous by Christ's death on the cross. Here, the word "free" means "set at liberty" from the dominion of sin by Christ's work of sanctifying our heart through the Holy Spirit in regeneration. In baptism we not only confess that by Christ's death and resurrection he justified us from our sin and made us the righteousness of God before the law but also Christ our Resurrection has sanctified us in the new birth by the word and freed us from the dominion of sin. It is by this work of freeing us from the slavery of sin that Christ made us obey the gospel and made us now the servants of righteousness.

Therefore, in baptism, we are confessing that we were the servants of sin but from here on we are the servants of righteousness. We are confessing that from now on we, "*yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but now we yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*" (Rom 6: 13)

We were under the law. Our chief sin was self-righteousness. Our chief sin was trying to please God by our doing by the letter of the law. But in baptism we are confessing that from today on we are serving God in newness of spirit which is walking by faith in Christ knowing we are complete in him, constrained and motivated, not by legal motives, but by the love of Christ for us.

Romans 7: 5: For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6: But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Through baptism you publicly confess that you commit yourself to Christ as your Lord, who has dominion over you in heart and spirit, who leads you, and whom you delight to follow and obey.

COMMITTED TO CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE

In believer's baptism, we confess that we are now committed to Christ and his people and his gospel.

Acts 2: 42: And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers...44: And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45: And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need. 46: And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47: Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

In baptism you are publicly committing yourself *to continue stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine*—the gospel of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, by Christ alone; you are confessing that you are committing yourself *to continue stedfastly in fellowship assembling together with the saints in one accord* and in breaking of bread at the Lord's table and in prayers worshipping, singing praises unto and interceding for one another before God. The believer is confessing that both himself, his talents and all his goods are committed to furthering the gospel here and throughout all the world.

Christ gave the church our commission, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel. Those that believe and are baptized shall be saved. Those that believe not shall be damned.*" Therefore, the means by which God saved you three new believers is the church—believers he has already saved—who preached the gospel to you. They gave sacrificially of themselves, their time, their sweat, their money, their talents so you could hear the gospel of Christ proclaimed. By baptism we are confessing that we owe a great debt of gratitude to the whole church of God because God used them to preach the truth to me. So the sinner saved through the gospel is made to see the tremendous value of the preaching of the gospel of Christ.

1 Corinthians 1: 18: For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Now, Christ gives you three the same charge he gave to them—to join with his church and give yourselves and all you have to make sure this gospel goes into all the world. So new believers unite with Christ's church, giving sacrificially of themselves to send forth the gospel in this place and throughout the world. Believer, declare the gospel to someone tomorrow. Christ said, "go tell them what great things God has done for you."

Have you ever noticed how sinners are defensive when you talk about the gospel to them? Those defenses are the gates of hell, satans strongholds keeping them from believing the gospel. But we are to attack the gates of hell. We have the gospel which pulls down satan's strongholds. We have the power and wisdom of God, Christ Jesus our Head with whom nothing is impossible! He broke down all satan's gates around you with his gospel, so don't be hesitant to declare it to someone else for he can do the same in them!

Believer, in closing let me give you a few things to remember.

First, remember that you are still sinners. So there will come seasons when you will wonder if you really knew Christ when you were baptized. Usually, it is because we are looking at ourselves, our sin, our knowledge now compared to then, etc. Look only to Christ in the present! Baptism is to be done only one time when it is done with faith in Christ, no matter how weak the faith.

Secondly, I say this to all. If when you were baptized you were under a false gospel so that you did not hear and know and believe on Christ and God has now given you faith in Christ then you should confess Christ in baptism because you have never truly done so.

Thirdly, I say this to all. If you do not believe on Christ, wait on the Lord. We cannot confess who we do not believe and trust. Do not be baptized simply because you understand some doctrine. Salvation is in WHO we believe not WHAT. The apostle Paul said, "*I know WHOM I have believed and am persuaded that HE is able to keep that which I have committed UNTO HIM!*" Do not be baptized simply because you never have or because someone else is doing it or to please someone—faith in Christ is personal, because YOU believe on Christ—"*whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*" Avoid a false profession of faith all costs. He that believeth shall not be ashamed! So if the thought of being baptized grieves you, then you have not yet been saved. To those in whom the Spirit dwells, the Lord's commands are not grievous. The Lord said, *Matthew 11: 30: ...my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

Lastly, if God has given you faith to believe that all your salvation is the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ then confess him in believers baptism. The Lord Jesus commands it. Ananias said to Paul, "Why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized,..."

Amen!