

Our Profession of Faith Through Baptism

Mark 8:38

Our profession of faith through baptism. It's been a great joy of mine counseling with folks who believe that God has saved them and want to be baptized to make their profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. As I joyously hear their testimony, one lady said, "Pastor, for two years God's been convicting me of my sin and my lostness. But today I know I'm saved and I know He's forgiven me, and the burden's been lifted." And I thought, "What a joy." But as I shared with them it became clear to me that it's been a long, long time since we as a church thoroughly looked at what is the biblical teaching on baptism? I think it's one of those things that we just kind of come to be complacent about, perhaps, maybe even have a contemptible spirit about it sometimes, like, "Oh, it's just a symbol and it's not essential for salvation. And other people have different ideas about it." But it is an important part of who we are and what we do. Through the years we Baptists and evangelicals in general have begun to call a lot of things a profession of faith. Someone comes before the church at the end of the service, they'll say, "Well, they're making a profession of faith." That's not necessarily evil or sinful to say that or even wrong to say that. But I think it would be best if we

would reserve that phrase "profession of faith" for the ordinance of baptism. That is what God has ordained that we do to publicly initiate our statement that our faith is in Christ Jesus as our Savior and as our Lord.

First of all, in Mark chapter 8 verse 38, notice what the Bible says here. It's a powerful little statement. The Lord says, "*For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when HE comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.*" Now there's a thousand and one ways we profess that we are followers of Jesus Christ. But one specific, valuable, essential way is through believers' baptism. If you know Christ and know He has saved you, then it is God's will, it glorifies God, it's essential to acknowledging Him and not being ashamed of Him, to profess that through biblical baptism.

Mark 16, beginning in verse 15: *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. And he who has believed and has been baptize shall be saved, but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."* The ordinance of baptism is so important to our Lord that He combines it with the total Great Commission to go out and win converts, if you will, to Him. He says, "Go out there, preach the gospel to all creation, and as you preach the gospel, those who believe, they're to be baptized. But those who don't believe will be

condemned." Now our Lord is in no way teaching that baptism is a part of what justifies you before a holy God. It's not a part of your work that gets you into heaven. But it is a very important part of our Christian faith. Believers' baptism.

But first of all, we need to establish in our hearts and minds that the church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, and He institutes the ordinances of the church. That is those rituals that we are to do regularly, He alone ordains and establishes those. Matthew 28:18 through 20, before the Lord ascended back up into heaven, here's what He said. *Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, "All authority has been given to me on heaven," or rather, "in heaven and on earth, go therefore, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

Now in this final instruction before He ascends into heaven, He tells His followers there, "One of the main things you must do is preach My gospel, make disciples. After they become disciples, you must baptize them." He also established another ordinance, and that is the Lord's Supper, or the Lord's table. And those are the only two ordinances of the church. Because Christ is the head of the church, He has all authority, and those are the only two He gave to the church. Now our Roman

Catholic friends, their theological heads have established seven sacraments in their churches. What they're doing is, they're honoring church authority, not Christ's authority. They're looking to church edict, not God's edict clearly revealed through scripture. The church has no right on her own to establish or institute certain rituals or ordinances not ordained by our Lord Himself. So the Lord ordained two ordinances for His glory and for the good of His church. And one of the special things about this is that He ordained them for His church and not for the world. It is very important who participates in these ordinances. This is something that got all mixed up and muddied up during the reformation when there was state churches everywhere. You were in England, you were an Englishman, but you were also automatically, upon birth, a part of the church of England, or in Scotland a part of the church of Scotland or wherever it may have been. And they would sprinkle babies and call it baptism. And you were a part of the church and a part of the state. But a lot of those people were not part of God's bride. A lot of those people were never converted. They were never born again, and certainly an unknowing infant can never be converted. So that was a false practice that prevailed during that time.

We hold that baptism should be administered by Christ's ministers who are dually ordained through the agency of Christ's

local church. In other words, we would disagree with a fellow, maybe at college saying, "You know, I love the Lord and I want to share with people about the things of the Lord, and my roommate down the hall here has come to know Christ, so we're gonna baptize him at the swimming pool at my buddy's house on Saturday night." Well, while you greatly appreciate the spirit and the heart of someone wanting to do that, we would say that that's not proper, that the ordinance is given to the church. God's ordained local churches, and through the agency of the local churches, God sets aside ordained ministers of the gospel. And those ordained ministers should carry out the ordinance of baptism within and under the blessing of God's established local church. It's a church ordinance, not just a Christian ordinance.

It's important that the baptism takes place so the family of God can hear and see you professing that you are now one of His, and you're professing that He is your Lord and He is your Savior and you've given your all to Him for time and eternity through the ordinance of believer's baptism.

Biblical baptism is by immersion in water. You might ask the question, "Well, where did sprinkling come from?" If you look for the Greek word for sprinkling in the original Greek New Testament, guess what. It doesn't even occur there. It's not even in the Greek New Testament. But you do have this word, the

Greek word transliterated into English baptism, or baptizo, or baptisma, two different forms of the same word.

How did they get sprinkling out of this word? First of all, there was the confusion created over the non-translation of those two words. Now what do I mean, the non-translation? The word baptizo or baptisma was not translated into English; it was transliterated into English. What I mean by that, a transliteration means you take the Greek word, and just put a corresponding English Word. You just letter for letter transliterate it. And in effect, you create a new word. It's not translated into English. It was transliterated into English.

Let me give you some examples. The Greek word kuon, k-u-o-n, if you translate that word you know what you get? Dog. So if a Greek was there and his dog ran up, in Greek he said, "That's my kuon." "What's that mean in English?" He'd say, "Dog." But what would've happened if the translators came to that word kuon and they said, "Okay, that's the Greek word for hound or dog. Now what should we put it in English? I tell you what, let's don't put dog down. Let's just make a new word kuon." So all the sudden you have to relearn that kuon now in English means dog. You just transliterate each Greek letter over into English. So instead of translating it dog, you transliterate it and just make an English word kuon. That's

what they did to baptizo, and baptisma. Transliterated it over, they didn't translate it.

So here's the point. Baptizo or baptisma, the Greek transliterations were never translated, and here's why. Some of you have King James Bibles, it's a good translation. Has some weaknesses. All translations do. But the King James was not a Baptist. He wasn't an immersing person. He was an Anglican. And Anglicans sprinkle babies. So King James authorized some of his scholars to translate the Greek into English. And he had some rules. And he said, "I tell you what I want you to do. I want you to keep the old ecclesiastical words the way they are." In effect, "Don't translate them." So instead of translating baptizo or baptisma, they just took each letter and made it a corresponding English letter and created new English words.

Well, when you do that, you can kind of make it mean whatever you want it to mean because nobody in English has ever used baptism or baptismal before. Before the English translations came along and they failed to translate but transliterate those two words, you would use the word immerse if you were translating. Matter of fact, it's one hundred percent fully biblically proper for you to find the word baptism or baptismal in your Bible and just put the word immerse among it because that's the translation of the Greek word. That's what it means.

Dr. Pendleton, in his church manual of 1856 points out that King James instructed his translators, quote, "That the old ecclesiastical words are to be kept," end of quote. That is, they're to not be translated. The translators, even, in their preference to the King James Bible stated that they, quote, "Avoided the scrupulosity of the Puritans," who wanted to translate the word baptizo into washing. So they kind of wrote in their preference, "We weren't so narrow minded like the Puritans." Now the Puritans were sort of a separatist group connected to the Anglican church but insisted on biblical purity. The Puritans would insist, "You've got to translate that word, not just make a new word out of it," and they're particular translation was washing. The better translation of immersion. So that's what happened in some of our earliest English Bibles and the reason why sprinkling is so understood is because they never translated the word. They just transliterated it and made a new English word. And then you can subjectively say, "Well, I can make that anything I want to be." I mean somebody comes up to you and looks out in the woods and said, "That's a kuon." What are you gonna call it? Well, I might call it a coon. You might call it a squirrel. Somebody might call it a dog because it's a brand new word. But if you really translate kuon from Greek into English you'd look out in the woods and say, "There's a dog." And we all know what a dog

is. It looks like a dog and acts like a dog and barks like a dog and walks like a dog. It's a dog.

Not only is there confusion because baptizo was never translated into English. It was just put into English characters and transliterated over into our English versions. Scholars of all denominations agree that baptizo means to immerse or to dip. Scholars of all denominations, the Presbyterians, the Episcopalians, and others, even though they practice sprinkling, they will tell you that the Greek word if it were translated means to dip or immerse. John Calvin, who was a great forefather in the ministry, who baptized or sprinkled babies, that I greatly disagree with, John Calvin says the very word baptizo signifies to immerse. And it is certain, Calvin says, that immersion was the practice of the ancient church. That's the way you baptize according to the ancient church and according to the biblical instruction with the word baptizo.

Dr. George Campbell, a distinguished Presbyterian of Scotland, one of the great fathers of the Presbyterian church who sprinkle babies, wrote in his commentary on Matthew that baptizo both in classical, that means outside of biblical writings of the day, and sacred writings, means to dip, to plunge or to immerse.

Dr. Thayer, we use Thayer's lexicons, it's another word for dictionary, in our Greek classes in seminary. Dr. Thayer is an Episcopalian, but Dr. Thayer says the word baptizo can only mean to dip or to immerse. Tertuleon, the oldest of the Latin fathers, about 200 A.D. he was translating the Bible into Latin for his people. And when he translated that word baptizo, he pulled the Latin word out that meant to dye a fabric or to dye a cloth in dye. Or to immerse a fabric into dye in order to color it. How do you put fabric in dye? You immerse it. So when you look at the church fathers and you look at even those groups who teach sprinkling, they agree that baptizo means immersion.

Popular Greek writers of the day, that means the day the Bible was written, used baptizo as dipping or immersion. That's the way the secular writers of the day used it. I told you earlier that the Bible is not some mystical angelic form of Greek. It was just everyday Greek. And if you walked up to somebody on the street in this day and said, "I'm gonna baptizo," or some form of the word, they'd know you're going under water. They didn't have anything to do with the church, anything. It was just a common word used in the Greek language.

For example, Dr. Stewart, a scholar of the Presbyterian church points out that the points and the writers of the day, Hindor, Heraclades, Pontichus, Platrich, Lucian, Hypocrites, Straba and Josephus, the very trustworthy historian of the first

century, all used the word baptizo meaning to immerse or go under water.

Josephus, for example, writes about a ship that was baptizo, went under the water. It sunk. Lucian, for example, talks about baptizo him headlong so he would not be able to lift up his head above the water. That means to put him all the way under the water and keep him there headlong. Well, this being the case, some began to argue, and they say, "Well, you know, that's true. The Greek word means to dip or immerse. The people of the day always used the word to mean dip or immerse. But in the Bible it means something different." Well, prove that. How can you just pick out a phrase and say, "Of course, they mean," if they did they would've explained that. They would have told the readers, "Now you understand we don't mean this the way it's commonly used." But they don't do that at all. It's just not there.

When the Bible uses baptizo for things other than baptism it always means to dip or immerse. In other words, the word is used in other places in the Bible. And it doesn't have anything to do with Christian baptism. But they're just talking about dipping. For example, in Mark 14:20, the Bible says, "*And He said to them, 'It is one of the twelve who dips with me in the bowl.'*" The word dips there is the word baptizo. He didn't mean he sprinkled in the bowl. He meant they took the bread and

they immersed it down in the sop. Luke 16:24: *And He cried out and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip,"* baptizo, *"the tip of his finger in water."*

What's he gonna do? He's gonna put it down in the water.

Immerse it. It didn't mean he's gonna sprinkle it. Baptizo's the word here.

John 13:26: *Jesus therefore answered, "This is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him."* Dip again is the word baptizo. It means to go under the water.

The biblical examples of the early church were clearly by immersion. So in other words, the church closest to the age of the writing of scripture, you would expect they would've understood more clearly than us folks two thousand years later might understand. So what did they do? Well, the biblical examples are John the Baptist, first of all, used the Jordan River, or the Bible says a region where there was, quote, "much water." Now why would John the Baptist when he's baptizing people for repentance, getting them ready for the coming of the Messiah, why would John the Baptist go to the Jordan if he's just going to sprinkle? Because one clay pitcher of water would baptize hundreds if not thousands if you're just sprinkling. You got to understand. There wasn't a lot of water, so these guys went to a lot of effort to get to a body of significant

water so that you can immerse people in it. It points out God says the way you baptize is important.

A couple of verses to back this up, Matthew 3:6: *And when they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River...* Didn't say beside the Jordan River by the way. It said "in the Jordan River." And then John 3:23: *And John also was baptizing in Enon, near Salieum because there was much water there.* It didn't take much water to sprinkle somebody, but he was in a region where he could find much water because baptism is by immersion.

Look at Acts chapter 8, verse 34. Now here's Philip who has been led by the Lord to go to this region. He gets in this chariot with a eunuch from Ethiopia, and the eunuch happens to be studying the book of Isaiah. I would say God's drawing and working on this guy. He's by himself in his chariot and he's been reading the book of Isaiah. And notice what he says, verse 34, *The eunuch answered Philip and said "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or someone else?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from the scriptures he preached Jesus to him. And as they went along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look, water, what prevents me from being baptized?"* Now here's an important point. It was very common in those days if you were going on a trip in that arid climate you carried a jar of water or a

pitcher of water. If the eunuch wanted to be sprinkled as baptism, he had the water right there in the chariot to do it with. But he waited until he saw adequate water for immersion baptism. That's the point.

Verse 37: *Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."* Verse 38: *And he ordered the chariot to stop and they both went down into the water. You don't have to do that if you're sprinkling. Philip, as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him.* Verse 39: *And when they came down up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away, and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.* So here we have the eunuch who probably had a container of water in his chariot, but that was not baptism. They found some water, went down in it, immersion baptism, and then rose back up.

Now that's the biblical mode or action of baptism is full immersion in water. It's not a sideline thing, it's not really a negotiable thing. We don't hold that that baptism saves you in any way, shape, or fashion, and we're not saying that in your heart you were not genuine. We're not saying you were not sincere in your confession of Christ when your pastor or your priest sprinkled you and called it baptism. But biblically, that is not Christian baptism.

Biblical baptism is the immersion of disciples only. If you are not a disciple you can't be baptized. Now by a disciple, I mean a true believer, I mean a true convert. I don't mean some mature person that's been a Christian for twenty years or something. But the word disciple means you've begun the new life of following Christ, being a learner after Him. And we see all kinds of evidence of this. First of all, John the Baptist, when he was preaching, he required repentance before he would baptize anyone. In other words, you couldn't just be baptized. There had to be evidence that God had done a work in your heart. In Mark chapter 1 verse 4, it said, "*John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin.*" Then verse 8, "*I baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.*" So John didn't just say, "Line up your family. Bring your children. Let's sprinkle everybody." He said, "No, there's got to be repentance. There's got to be a work in the heart first."

Jesus baptized only disciples. Did you know Jesus baptized during His earthly ministry? John chapter 4 verse 1 says, "*When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John.*" Jesus did not go through communities, line up children, and sprinkle them with water, claiming that they were a part of the covenant or

part of God's elect. No, the biblical text says when He made them disciples, He baptized them. As their hearts were changed, they became believers. Then they were ready for baptism.

Jesus commanded the baptism of disciples. In Matthew 28:18 through 20 says, *"And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth, go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them.'"* If you've been converted, if the faith is in your heart, if you've come to repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, then you can have Christian baptism, but not before that.

Mark 16:15 and 16: *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all nations. He who has believed and has been baptized."* The belief has to be there first. So what does this do? Brothers and sisters, this excludes unknowing babies and all unbelievers. People say, "Well, I was baptized when I was a child." Again, I do respect and I understand the viewpoint and the theological views of those who hold to that approach. I respect many of those brothers and sisters because I love their grasp of scripture in the essential areas of the doctrines of grace, the definition of conversion, salvation is by grace through faith alone, and their passion for souls. Matter of fact, some of the greatest evangelists of all time, sprinkled children. But that still doesn't make it biblical. Biblical baptism, Christian baptism is the immersion

of disciples only. Unknowing children and unbelievers cannot be biblically baptized.

You see, Christ is the supreme authority for the church. And He is the only authority who knows who should be baptized. It's not up to the church. It's up to Christ to tell to the church who should be baptized. He came from glory down to earth to save His bride. He gave Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of His children. He went to the cross and there on the cross He exhausted the cup of suffering and sorrow. He lain in the dark chambers of the grave. And then when He had risen triumphantly from the dead, He was about to ascend back up into heaven and take His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on High, it is then that He gave the clear order to His church. And that's when He said, "Now go, make disciples, baptize them." That is Christian baptism.

Well, then sometimes others will argue and say, "Well, you can baptize an unbeliever." Now I say unbelievers because there was a time when just about all the churches were state churches. And so they baptized every baby that was born in that country and as you were born in that country you were baptized into the church of England, the Anglican church or the church of Scotland or the church of wherever, church of Geneva, Switzerland. Whatever it was. And so you were sprinkled as a baby, and you're not a believer. A baby can't believe. You can't in any

way understand what's going on. And they'll say, "Well, that's allowable," and here's what they'll say, "because the Bible doesn't prohibit the baptism of babies." Well, brothers and sisters, it's well understood in the scriptures when God gives us a specific detail of how to do that, that excludes all contradictory details.

For example, God told Noah, "Noah, I want you to make an ark, and you must make the ark of gopher wood." I don't know why. Do you? Not oak. Not ash. Not poplar. Gopher wood. That's what Noah was to do even though God didn't say, "I exclude other woods." But He said, "This is the detail. You follow it."

God told Abraham, "Go and sacrifice your son, Isaac." No plan B. Very difficult, hard thing to grasp. And until God gave the instruction for the ram to be caught in the thicket and until God stopped Abraham before he plunged the knife into the chest of his son, God's detailed instruction was Isaac is to be sacrificed. No one else. Abraham would've taken a nephew up there like earlier he took his nephew Lot with him from Ur of the Chaldeans. God would've said, "NO! I said Isaac." When God gives details, it excludes contradictory details."

God said, "ON the Passover, I want you to sacrifice a lamb." That means you can't sacrifice a heifer or a bullock or a turtledove or a pigeon. God says, "I want you to sacrifice a

lamb that's one year old, not a two year old lamb. I want you to sacrifice a male." He didn't say, "Not a female," but it meant not a female lamb. "It's got to be a lamb without blemish, so that means you can't bring a lamb with blemish. It has to be the fourteenth day of the month, not the fifteenth day, not the thirteenth day. You're to put the blood on the lintel and on the doorpost, not on your oxcart or on your kitchen table. I've given you the instruction. That excludes all others."

The early church of Acts baptized only disciples. Now you would have to believe Acts of course is the record of the very first church after our Lord has died, He's buried, He's raised, He's ascended back up into heaven. He gave these folks instruction so you would expect if anybody got it right they would have gotten it right. They were the men who heard what He said. So what did they do? They baptized disciples by immersion. That's what they did.

In Jerusalem, for example, on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:38 and 41 says, "*And Peter said to them, 'Repent,'*" that means you become a disciple, your heart's changed, a work's been done, and then, "*let each of you be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'*" Verse 41: "*So then those who had,*" what? "*Receive his word.*" Have to be

believers. Then what does it say? *"These were baptized, and they were added that day about three thousand souls."*

All right, we go from Jerusalem, geographically, the gospel spread down to Samaria, south of Jerusalem there. Now Samaria is the land of the half-breed, the half-Jew, half-Gentile bunch. And the Bible says Philip went down there to Samaria in Acts 8 verses 5 and 12. Notice what it says. *"And Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them, but when they believed Philip,"* there's faith, *"preaching the good news about the kingdom of God, in the name of Jesus Christ they were being baptized."* God makes it very clear. Faith is first. You have to be a disciple. Then you're truly baptized as a Christian.

Well, then the gospel spread from Jerusalem, down through Samaria, then out to the Gentile world. Acts 18:8 talks about the Gentile world and *"Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians, when they heard, were believing and being baptized."* What does this exclude? It excludes unknowing children. Unknowing children can't repent, cannot believe, and cannot receive His Word. And those were not baptized in the scriptures.

They'll say, "Well, what about the household baptisms in the Bible?" There are five household baptisms in the Bible.

Well, wait a minute. Five households that either it says they're saved or they were all baptized. I don't think in all five it says they're both saved and baptized. But five households the Bible says either the household was all saved or saved and baptized. Well, what does the Bible say about these households. First of all, Cornelius, the Gentile God fearer the Bible says his household was baptized. But the Bible also says in Acts chapter 10, verse 2 that they all feared God. And Acts 10:44 they listened to Peter's preaching. An infant can't listen to preaching, at least not with any understanding. Acts 10:47 said they all exalted God. Acts 10:47 said they all received the Holy Spirit. It means God did a work in their heart. An infant can't do those things. And then they were all baptized.

Lydia, in Acts chapter 16:15, the Bible says down in Acts 16:14 that the Lord opened her heart. Then she and her household were baptized. It shows there was a work of the Lord first before the baptism happened. Again excluding infants. Crispus, in Acts chapter 18 verse 8, the Bible says there was believing, in chapter, Acts 18:8, and then he was baptized. Stephanos, the household of Stephanos. First Corinthians chapter 1 verse 16, Paul says, "*I baptized the household of Stephanos.*" Then he adds in First Corinthians 16:15, "*They were all,*" look at the last part of that, "*they were all devoted to ministry.*"

That can't include infants, but the ones who had a life change and their life was to honor the Lord and serve the Lord and be faithful to the Lord.

First Peter chapter 3 verse 21. *And corresponding that, baptism now saves you, not the removal of dirt from the flesh.* In other words, the water you were immersed in that came from the Muscle Shoals water department could not, did not wash away your sin. But, what does it say? *An appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* What he means is, something had to have happened in your heart where you said, "God, I'm unclean. God, I'm guilty. My conscience is not clear. But through Jesus I've placed my faith in Him. I trust in Him. And because His blood has cleansed me, now I'm appealing through Jesus to have a clean conscience before you." It means belief has happened. Conversion has happened. It means you're a disciple, and then you're baptized. And what's the point here? An unknowing infant cannot appeal to God for a good conscience. It's absolutely impossible. I mean, brothers and sisters, again with respect and love for so many who, you want me to be honest, some that sprinkle children have a lot more in common with us on the major doctrines of conversion and salvation, which are the most essential, than a lot of folks who immerse believers. So I want these brothers and sisters to know we're not attacking them, but just appealing to them to try to

find sprinkling of babies in the Bible. It's not in there.

Baptism is the immersion of disciples in water.

How do you feel about baptism? Have you professed your Lord through baptism? Have you been biblically baptized? Have you sought immersion in water by the gospel pastor of your church, since you've truly been converted and really become a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ because the Bible says in Mark 8:38, "*Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of Him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the Holy angels.*" And I believe God's speaking to some of your hearts. One brother shared with me as I was counseling him just recently, "Pastor, I've been saved for nine or so years, but I was baptized back when I was a boy. And I know that wasn't biblical conversion. I really became a disciple nine years ago, and I need to come for baptism." You know what I said? "Amen. That's exactly right. You're pleasing and honoring your Lord in doing so.

Mark chapter 16 verses 15 and 16: *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved, but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."* "Brother Jeff, are you trying to imply that those who are not baptized biblically are going to hell?" Absolutely not. But I'm telling you what. Our

Lord said something strong here. I think what He's saying is, if a person rightfully understands and has truly been converted, to blatantly, openly, habitually say, "I will not honor Christ through biblical baptism," not an absolute, but possibly a good sign their conversion's not genuine at all. I would never say those who have been sprinkled or sprinkled as infants aren't going to heaven. Not at all. But I would appeal to them to leave the false practice behind and come to the practice of the Christian church. Christian baptism is the immersion of disciples only by God's called gospel ministry through the agency and the authority of God through a local church.

You know it's been interesting as I fellowship with brothers, and you have to understand something. If you go to seminary and you study the biblical languages, you'll study a lot of Presbyterians because they were great Bible scholars. And they, on the things that are essential for conversion, they're honestly better than our Baptist fathers, even though there are many good Baptist scholars in our past too. But when it comes to this, it's interesting. You can talk to some of these brothers who sprinkle babies and they'll tell you, "Well, if somebody is converted and wants baptism by immersion, we'll do that."

..Ephesians 4:5, *One Lord, one faith, one baptism.* God gave us in His Word one baptism. Not sprinkling when you're a child,

immersion later. One baptism. And that's what we ought to teach and hold to.

I read in Oxford's dictionary of the Christian church that four hundred or so years ago, that tens of thousands of what they called "Anabaptists". Now they called them Anabaptist because they were rejecting their sprinkling into the state church. And they were preaching the gospel and getting saved. And as they were getting saved, they started immersing each other, which in effect was, "Thhhhhhh, on your state baptism." That's what they were doing. "We reject it. Whatever you did to me when I was a baby in Scotland or England or Geneva or wherever, it wasn't biblical baptism. And now that we have the biblical evidence that we're truly converted, we're not unknowing children. We're teenagers or young adults. We now will submit to immersion baptism, which means we turn our back on the Church of England and the state of Great Britain." And the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church says they were martyred by the tens of thousands by the Catholics and the protestant reformers. I'm proud of our forefathers who said, "We're gonna do what the scripture says, and you can take our lives."

Dear friend, why wouldn't you if you've come to really know you're converted, why wouldn't you say, "Pastor, I don't want to be ashamed of my Lord. I want to profess Him through baptism.

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For His glory, to edify the church, and for the good of my own
soul."