

Our Profession of Faith Through Baptism, Part 2

Mark 8:38; 16:15-16

Let me ask you something this morning. What is our duty to God? What is our duty to God? Well, certainly to love God with all of our heart is the sum duty that we owe God. To love Him with all of our heart. You see, love for God produces obedience, and it must flow in that order. God works in our hearts or we would not love Him. We certainly wouldn't. And then after He does that work, it produces obedience. And you see, you can't truly love God, who is the One of supreme authority, not think about it. You don't just love God because, the way you love your dog or even the way you love your friend or even the way you love your spouse or children. You love Him in a different way. He's One of supreme authority. And you cannot love Him and not desire to please Him and obey Him. Those have to flow together.

Remember Saul's testimony before his conversion, rather really at his conversion. Saul, when he first was thrown from that horse, knocked down by the bright light from heaven, when the first throbbing love of God entered his heart, he said, "Lord, what will You have me to do?" It's the first thing that came to his mind. "Lord, what do I do? I'm ready. Sign me up for service."

And obedience in all areas should be, must be our goal. He's changed my heart. Because of that change there's a love for Him. I'm not just loving someone or something. He's the supreme authority of the universe, of all eternity. So the only natural response or next step is obedience in all things. The Bible says in Matthew 23:23 as Jesus is reproofing, or you might stronger than that, rebuking the scribes and the Pharisees, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Notice what He says. "For you tithe mint and dill and cumin and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law, justice and mercy and faithfulness. But these are things you should have done without neglecting the others.

Now here we have these Pharisees who are so meticulous to dot every I and cross every t, and sometimes when we criticize the Pharisees, we forget that it is pleasing to God to dot every I and cross every t. With this false sense of grace, this unbiblical view of grace that's permeating the evangelical church, we think somehow it gives us a permissions slip to just sort of lightly look at God's commandments. NO, that's not true. HE told the Pharisees, "You guys go out to your very garden and you take the finest little herbs, the tiniest little herbs, rather, that are worth a fraction of a cent and you'll bring a tenth of that, a tithe of that to the temple. But you're ignoring," what did He say, "the weightier truths of

justice and mercy and faithfulness." But notice what He said, "These are things you should have done without neglecting the others." His point being, whatever you do, don't forget about the weightiest and most important truths. IN this case, justice, mercy, and faithfulness. But do the others also. Keep tithing down to the mint and dill and cumin."

Loving God is striving after obedience to Him in all areas. Now we're talking about the ordinance of baptism. This is will part two. And here's my thought for you. Yes, we do agree with our Methodist brothers and sisters who sprinkle if they've truly been saved, with our Presbyterian brothers and sisters who sprinkle babies. Yes, we agree with them that salvation and the new birth and the changed heart is the primary thing. That's why we can fellowship with these brothers and sisters in a lot of projects and efforts. Maybe if we were having an area wide evangelistic crusade we could work with our brothers and sisters on those things. So we agree it's the changed heart that is the weightier provision. But loving God and obeying Him in everything means we must not dismiss the other things either. We must not take lightly the other things that God's very, very clear about. You see, loving God with all of our mind, and all of our heart, and all of our soul, and all of our strength means we will search the scriptures to be obedient as we possibly can be in all areas. We have our doctrine right. We're not trying

to do all these things to achieve or earn salvation. That's not what we're saying, but because we love our Lord.

So on the one hand, yes, with those who practice what we are convinced is an unbiblical ordinance by sprinkling for baptism or sprinkling infants who cannot be disciples, we agree with them that's not the most important thing. But if we love God we should be diligent to obey Him in everything. And if you need some understanding on those things, matter of fact, we'll review for just a moment the major points of last time's message. Tommy, if you would go ahead and put those up for me, 'cause I don't have them in my notes.

Biblical baptism is by immersion in water. That was our major point. We spent a lot of time on that. We exhaustively looked at that is the only true baptism is immersion in water. And then Roman numeral two of last week, biblical baptism is the immersion of disciples only. A person who has not shown good evidence that the work of the Spirit has occurred in their hearts, they have not become repentant toward sin and have faith in Christ including a new love and treasuring of Christ then they're not a candidate for baptism. And certainly an unknowing infant cannot repent and trust Christ. So true baptism is baptism by immersion. And true baptism is a baptism of believers only.

Now we come to part two, and that's today's message, and we pick up with Roman numeral number three. And that is the purpose of salvation. And then in just a few moments we'll have Roman numeral four, which is the importance of salvation. And I want to say to you, these very much overlap, but I've separated them out because I wanted to. All right? That's all I can tell you. All right.

The purpose of baptism, A, it proclaims the gospel that saves us. It proclaims the gospel that saves us. Now I want to say this to you up front. We're gonna have a lot of points and go quite fast. You might not want to be concerned with writing everything down and I'll get you the outline next week. Would that be easier? Then you can just kind of soak things in. You might want to jot down something every now and then. But if you're a real fast writer and you can write and listen and act excited at the same time, go ahead. All right?

It proclaims the gospel that saves us. Colossians chapter 2 verse 12: *Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God who raised Him from the dead.* So here we have that baptism chiefly commemorates the burial, the death of Christ, and the burial specifically, and the resurrection. And here's the beautiful thing. Take the two ordinances that God's given the church. The Lord's Supper the Lord Himself said is chiefly to

commemorate His death. And then baptism chiefly commemorates His burial and His resurrection. And isn't that a beautiful picture, that immersion baptism pictures that. And by the way, sprinkling couldn't ever picture that. IT never could symbolize that. Burial in the water and resurrection. That's what Paul told the church in Colossae in Colossians 2:12 happens through baptism. You're symbolizing His burial and His resurrection. You're proclaiming the gospel when you are baptized. So baptism is a symbolic proclamation, chiefly of the last two facts or components of the gospel. He died, that's the first one, that's chiefly commemorated through the Lord's Supper, and then burial and resurrection was just chiefly memorialized or commemorated through baptism.

All right. **B, under the purpose of baptism, it proclaims the believers death to sin, self, Satan, and the world and resurrection to new life.** Now before I go further here, this is why some years ago we began spending a lot more time with a person before we baptize them not to in any way intimidate them or to give them sort of the second degree, but always lovingly, always compassionately opening the scriptures and looking for "Has God changed your heart? Because you're about to proclaim something that if God hasn't done a work in your heart you can't keep what you're about to claim. You can't achieve what you're about to proclaim." And it's our job as particularly pastors,

but also all of us in the body, to help new believers understand this or help them continue their journey as seekers until they know they have experienced the new birth and the change is there to desire and strive after a life of death to sin, death to self, death to Satan and the world, and that I'm resurrected to a new life.

Now Romans chapter 6 verses 3 through 5 and then verse 11. *OR do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, he says, "Here's what you've said in all of that. Here's what you proclaimed in all of that." That's why he has the phrase "in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father so we too might walk in newness of life."* You showed your death. You showed your burial to an old life in order that the same power that raised our Lord from the dead is the new power that resides in us and enables us to walk in newness of life. Truly, brothers and sisters, the effectiveness of the gospel I preach and we share is contingent upon the new lives we live in the community. I want to say something. It's one of those things that I'm sure will get misquoted and will get back to me. Some churches would do the gospel a great favor if they'd stop sharing it because so few of their members actually show a new life that validates power of

the gospel. Now have any of us arrived there? No, but we can be striving after the new walk and the new life.

Our teenagers should not look like the teenagers of the world. Our young married couples should not have marriages and raise their children like the average young married couples of the world. Our senior adult folks shouldn't approach their senior years just like the average senior adults of the world because we went to the waters of baptism and we proclaimed through the waters of baptism that "I've died to sin. I've died to self. I've died to Satan and to the world. I proclaim to all, a new life is in me." "Pastor, y'all don't baptize as many as you used to." We baptize all of them that have good evidence that God's put new life in them because I'm not gonna set them up for something they're gonna answer for at the judgment seat of Christ if they don't have the power to do what they claim has happened within them. Are you with me, church? Never mean-spirited, never demeaning, always lovingly, always compassionately guiding people to see has the biblical evidence of salvation occurred in the life.

And by the way, I've said this so many times. This is nothing new. This is nothing new. I love the phrase the old timers used to have, praying it through. Sometimes they'd let a brother just pray and pray and pray and pray and seek God until he got through. They may not could've explained it, no one can

perfectly explain it, but what they meant was he finally broke through. He finally came to true repentance. He felt the weight of his sin. He's come to the joy and peace that Christ has really forgiven him, and he has a new heart desire to want to please God. He prayed it through. We ought to do some of that nowadays. I like it when we have services that don't just end. The Spirit's moving and God's working and people in the counseling rooms and people in the pews and they're opening their Bibles and tears are flowing and they're seeking God. I'm convinced we close too many services. We should realize God's Holy Spirit doesn't just work in the midst of three little songs at the end of the service. He's bigger than that, greater than that.

Well, I'm leaving my point. I better get back to it. What we're saying is we've died to sin and self and Satan and the world, and we have new life in us. That's why he continues in Romans 6:11 and says, "*Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*" You see, listen to me. Until God does the work in your heart you can't know Him, desire Him, love Him, or want to please Him or want to be like Him or with Him. Now you'll take His hell ticket. His hell, you'll take the "do not go to hell" ticket as a lost flesh man. But that new desire to honor Him, face some persecution, face some ridicule, face being misunderstood in this world and try to

strive after Him in newness of life, He has to put that in there. I'm telling you, you are a rank heretic if you tell me man in his natural nature has the capacity on his own to begin to love God. He does not. He'd dragged God off the throne of heaven and throw God into hell if he could. Every one of us would until God... You know why? We want to be king. We want to be lord. We want to be boss. We want to be God until He works. And all the sudden He starts looking better as Lord. He starts looking better as King. He starts looking better as Master. Doesn't all come at once, but there's a growing realization of love and honor and desirability of Christ in His Son, the Lord, or God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, C, under Roman numeral three, not only is the purpose of baptism to proclaim the gospel that saves us. Not only is the purpose of baptism is that it proclaims the believer's death to sin, self, and Satan, and to the world and a resurrection to a new life. **C, it proclaims our purification from sin.** The Bible teaches that, that in salvation there is a washing away of sin, a purification from sin. In the Old Testament dispensation the Jews would all have numerous ceremonial acts of cleansing and purification they had to go through. If you walk close to a leper, or God forbid, you touched hog meat. Now aren't you glad in the new covenant we don't have to do, honor that one? Boy, I love hog meat.

Y'all remember Lester Rolloff? Ole Lester Rolloff. I told you about Lester Rolloff the other day, Dr. Law. Get some ole Lester Rolloff's sermons. I loved Lester Rolloff. I remember I went to hear him preach in Huntsville when I was a college kid because I used to go to sleep every night listening to Lester Rolloff. A lot of people hated Lester Rolloff. He was just, you talk about tough. You talk about firm. You talk about hard. Lester Rolloff, forgot what I was gonna say. We'll go to the next point. I'm serious. I totally forgot.

What? Hog meat. OH, I'm testing you out, what I'm doing to see if you really are listening to me. And I went to that service there in Huntsville, and Lester Rolloff was preaching. And he called the pastor up, and he was a young pastor. He said, "Look at this guy right here," and we all looked at him. He said, "He looks good, doesn't he?" "Yeah." "You like him, don't you?" "Yeah, we like our pastor." "But he eats hog meat. You just wait. It's gonna kill him one day. You just look at him right there." That's the way Lester was. HE was just, he would get on something, but I loved him. He just loved God and he was so committed.

But I'm saying all that to say the Jews had all these ceremonies to cleanse yourself and purify yourself. And the priests more than anyone. They had to wash and dip and cleanse and purify everything. But all of those washings and all of

those cleansing and all those purifyings are fulfilled in Christ, because all of that was external. You go to the baptismal waters and the Spirit hasn't washed your heart you're still lost and you're not cleansed. You take the supper, the memorial of the Lord, but the Spirit hasn't yet washed your heart, you're still unclean. You can morally renovate your life and put on new ethics and new good works. But if the heart hasn't been cleansed, you're still unclean. Only Christ can cleanse the heart. Oh, and He has. And when HE does put me in those waters. Matter of fact, preacher, plunge me three or four times. Not that any of that cleanses me. No, that would be wrong. You know why? Because Jesus it only takes one time. Amen? One time! You're clean forever as far as the wrath of God's concerned. Is that not good news? One time, one time and all of it is cleaned up. Baptism proclaims... Are you seeing how important and what the purpose of baptism is? You see the awesomeness? Brothers and sisters, listen to your pastor. That is why I spend hours with my own children before I would baptize them. Months and years with them, some, doesn't have to be that way. Because what they're saying in baptism is very important. Very important.

Now let me say something in balance, choir. Somebody may come to me today, in thirty minutes time may have truly come to know Christ, be ready for baptism. That can happen. And we'll

know by looking at the Word with them, the best we can know. But others, it may take weeks and months of seeking the Lord before they can say, "I know I'm His and He's saved me." I don't understand all that. I just know He gave pastors this book to lovingly counsel people by. So when they go in the waters of baptism they're saying what God wanted them to say, inwardly and outwardly.

Well, I've got some verses here. Let me give you the verses. First John chapter 1 verse 7: *But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.* Did my sound go away? Did it come back? We're buying new sound equipment. Did you know that? And God uses it to build patience in me and longsuffering and self control. But on the positive side of things, I want to tell you, Brother Tom Clay and mother, Mother Theresa, no Brother Tom Clay and Brother Mark Grace have just worked hours and hours and hours and slowly to be wise with our money. We're adding a new piece at a time making sure we need it. So every week it's gonna be different for the next month or so. So we'll see how we do. All right? Can you hear me on the back? You guys okay on the back? All right. You're shaking your head. All right. Thank you very much. All right. There's a purification. The blood of Jesus, His Son cleanses from all sin so we show it through baptism.

Uh, Titus 3:5: *He saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercies by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.* The Spirit does a washing, and it happens at the time when you repent and put your faith in Christ. And we show that through baptism. Let me ask you something. I've had some people come to me in the last three weeks and say, "Pastor, I was baptized when I was twelve or sixteen, but you know what? The real biblically defined conversion happened in my life seven years ago or nine years ago or two years ago. I need to proclaim the washing through baptism because I just now gotten it."

Some of you may be there, and you need to say, "Pastor, I need to honor my precious and glorious Lord because my real conversion didn't happen back then. Biblically speaking my real conversion has happened since then. I need baptism." I want to tell you, folks, it's a powerfully important thing to do.

Matter of fact, Acts 22:16 says, "*And why, and now, rather, why do you delay? Arise and be baptized, washing away your sins and calling on the name of the Lord.*" Now let me give you a side note here. WE have a lot of trouble with some verses like this because we don't understand what salvation is. We like to think that salvation is just missing hell, missing hell, missing hell. Now that's wonderful. But in God's eyes salvation includes missing hell, which is the justice of God has been

satisfied through Jesus so I don't get the justice in hell that I deserve. That's a part. But almost, most of the time in the scriptures, included with that, is salvation from the power of sin in daily life. So there's a point, there's a sense in which you're saved so that you begin a lifestyle of being washed from the power of sin in daily life. That's salvation too. Matter of fact, when somebody says, "Are you saved," talks about being saved, say, "Well, let me ask you something, what are you saved from?" "Well, I'm not going to hell." "Well, that's wonderful, but it's only a little part of it. Are you saved from that foul mouth you had? Are you saved from going to those beer joints and those teenage honky tonks called dances? Are you saved from treating your wife like she's your dog? Are you saved from using your money for things, uh, gambling? Are you saved from being rude and mean-spirited? Are you saved from..." We can go on and on. "Well, not completely yet, but I am progressively being saved from those things." You see, that's equally a part of salvation. So when you understand that and you see a verse like this, you understand, yes, baptism, I'm gonna get on this heavy in just a moment, is the first step of me washing my new life. All right? Doesn't, it doesn't actually cleanse your heart, but it shows you're a new guy going in a new direction with a new purpose, with a new Lord, with a new holiness. So that's part of the washing. It's a very essential key first

part of it all.

Well, let's go to sub-point D. Could you go there with me?

Another important purpose of baptism is baptism anticipates our resurrection from the dead. It anticipates it. We're saying, "We're one of those. Our Lord may not come before we pass this life, but if He does not, watch me come out of this water because one day I'm coming up out of the grave." This is, this is picturing the anticipation of when the dead in Christ shall rise first. And those who are alive and remain will meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.

First Corinthians chapter 15 verse 29 says, *"Otherwise..."* Let me go to Romans 6:5 because I'll never be able to explain that one. Romans 6:5, go to that one. There we go. *For we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death. Certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.* That's why you're baptized. You've been united with Christ. His life now lives in you. And He is the One who honors His Father, obeys His Father, submits to His Father, lives in holiness and purity and righteousness. And now His life lives in you. But also, not only do you have new life and live for Him. You'll also have His power that overcame the grave. Did Jesus rise on the third day? Yes, therefore I will rise on the third day. The same power that raised Christ will raise me. And my baptism pictures, anticipates that coming resurrection.

Well, only immersion, by the way, immersing in water properly symbolizes these purposes we've told you so far. Only immersion proclaims the gospel. Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. Only immersion pictures that. Only immersion pictures, "Look at me. I've, I've got new life in me, and therefore I desire, not in perfection yet, but I desire to die to sin, to self, to Satan, and the world and walk in newness of life." Only immersion pictures that. Only immersion pictures the total purification of sin. Only immersion pictures the anticipation of rising from the literal grave to be glorified and be with our Lord forever.

All right. **Let's go to sub-point E. Our fifth purpose of baptism is that it establishes our membership into Christ's visible local church and our commitment to all the duties of membership.** Wow. Another reason why years ago we said we've got to look closely and counsel closely with one before they want to be baptized and become a member because we are misleading them if we don't tell them, "This establishes your membership," not into the mystical bride of Christ we can't see yet. When you're saved, you're baptized into Christ's body. But He wants you to serve Him until you get glorified. And that means He wants you to officially establish your membership in a local, visible congregation. There are folks who say, "Well, you know, the Spirit baptized me in the body of Christ. I'm a

member of the invisible universal body of Christ." Well, how you gonna serve with those guys? That's true, but that's not all you're supposed to do. See, you can't be taught by a universal invisible church. You can't exercise your spiritual gift with the universal invisible church. You can't receive the disciplines and directions and edifications of a universal invisible church. And that's why some people love being a part of it because there are no duties whatsoever, nobody, no check up, no accountability. I want to say something to you, choir. I need the accountability of my body, a local visible body. I need to know on Saturday when I'm turkey hunting, you better get home and get in the Word of God because you preach on Sunday and they'll be there waiting. Now I'd preach whether you heard me or not. God's called me to preach. But I'm trying to establish a principle. We need the duties of membership.

WE live in a peculiar day. I was reading in one of the old Baptist policy manuals the other day that if you had an association of churches and one of the churches received a member that was disciplined by another church without seeking his repentance the association of churches would kick that church out if they received a disciplined member. It's exactly the opposite today. If you try to do biblical discipline today, they in effect kick you out. It's exactly the opposite. We know nothing of the duties of membership in the body of Christ.

Let me say that. Generally speaking the evangelical world knows little about it. I thank God by His grace has matured us some here. WE haven't arrived, but He's matured us some here. Well, we no longer fuss and fight and shirk and jerk. I mean, by the way, go join the Rotary club and see if there's not duties of membership. Go join the Kiwanis club and see if there are not duties and responsibilities to your membership. Amen? Join the Alabama Crimson Tide football team and tell Coach Shula, "Hey, Coach, I'll be here when it's convenient. You understand that? I've got things to do." Yeah, you're history is what you are 'cause that football team's important.

Well, so when one is baptized he's saying, "This formally makes me a member of a local visible body of believers. I can see them. I can touch them. I can hear them. I can fellowship with them. And I need the kind of accountability that being a part of a body gives me. By the way, you shouldn't join a church that doesn't hold you accountable. You shouldn't join a church that doesn't exercise church discipline because it's in effect not even functioning like a church. That's what it's for. So next time you run into somebody and said, "Well, I had to leave there. They got all these rules, and they got all this accountability. Their standards are too high." Say, "That's why I go. YOU don't know my own sinful, lazy, fleshly heart. If I didn't have that I'd just sin all the time. Matter of

fact, I'd go worse than that. I'd start defining church as a place for sin and fleshliness and everybody getting blessed and what they feel and what they're pleased with." No, we need that. And that's what baptism proclaims and establishes.

Well, Acts 2:41 says, "*So then those who had received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*" Then Acts 2:47: "*Praising God and having favor with all the people, and the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*" So they received his word. They were being converted, and God was making them a member, a part of that local, visible body of believers there in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

Here's a couple of phrases from old John Dagg's systematic theology, the first Baptist systematic theology that was written in America. He said this. "Profession is the substance. Baptism is the form." We profess Christ, that He's changed us. The form of professing that is baptism, and you cannot be a part of the body if you haven't come to Christ. So that's why you can't join a church without baptism. It's God's ordained means of professing the substance of your conversion. He could've picked a lot of things, but that's His way, baptism.

Baptism is the appointed ceremony of our profession. So, yes, in a sense we profess Christ every day, and every week and all the time as we witness and share with others the new life

that Christ has given us, the cleansing and forgiveness of sin. But God has ordained that there is an official point, the beginning of your Christian life when you must become a part of a local, visible body of believers in order to serve Christ, to honor Christ and obey Christ. And God has ordained the ceremony of that initial profession is believer's baptism. Brothers and sisters, God has no plan B. We're to do it His way for His glory.

All right. Let's go to, uh, well, I'm gonna do it. Acts chapter 5. Let's go there real quick. Now the reason I go to Acts 5 is because Acts 5 chronologically speaking is very close in time to Acts 2. In Acts 2, the Lord was saving them, becoming members. The Lord was adding them, becoming members. They're receiving the Word about the Lord, which means they were converted. They were added to the membership. Acts chapter 5 verse 1: *But a man named Ananias with his wife, Sapphira, sold a piece of property and kept back some of the price for himself with his wife's full knowledge; and bringing a portion of it he laid it at the apostles' feet. And Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you've conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."* And as he

heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last, and great fear came over all who heard it.

Now stop right there. Ananias has said that he sold all the he had to give the money to the need at the church. HE didn't have to sell it all, but he's saying he did. It's rank hypocrisy. Using the church to glorify himself. Peter asked him, said, "Why did you say you sold it for such and such a price, etc.?" Ananias went along with the scheme and God killed him right there in church.

Verse 6: *The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. Now there lapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in not knowing what had happened, and Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price." And she said, "Yes, that was the price." She lies with her husband. Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door and they will carry you out as well." And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.*

Actually you have a whole chapter of God purifying His church in Acts chapter 5. Now why am I saying that? Because in Acts 2 it tells us they were baptized and added. And Acts 5 it

tells us they're responsible for the duties of membership.

Amen? There were some duties and responsibilities. And Ananias and Sapphira, not that they've failed, but they willfully lied and deceived to exalt themselves in the church. And God said, "I'm gonna have to purge that out right quick and very thoroughly."

Just my point is, the first duty of all believers is baptism, and when you're baptized it establishes your membership and establishes your responsibility for all the blessings, true, and all the duties of membership.

And then F, the purpose of baptism is because it is your pledge of allegiance to the Triune God. Jesus said in Matthew 28:18 through 20, you're to go and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Not in the name of Jesus. IN the Father, in the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Here's the point. Our God is a Triune God. That's how He's shown himself to us. He's God the Father, at the same time He's God the Son, at the same time He's God the Holy Spirit and He's done a work in our hearts whereby we want to go to the waters of baptism and proclaim to all the world we pledge allegiance to the Triune God revealed in the Holy scriptures. That's a powerful thing, and that is a precious thing, certainly an important thing to do.

Now think about that for just a moment. You could talk endlessly about the Father. You could talk endlessly about the Son. You could talk endlessly about the Holy Spirit. But concerning conversion, which makes you a member of God's universal church and then baptism which places you in the local, visible body of believers. How does, what does the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit have to do with salvation or conversion? YOU can view it this way. The Father planned salvation. From eternity, God ordained that He would save us through His Son Jesus Christ. Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, the Bible says. Secondly, the Son accomplished salvation. I'm here to tell you that when our dear Lord gave His life on Calvary, the wrath of God fell on Him. God judged Him and punished Him in our place, and the cross was not some ambulance sent to the scene of an accident. It was God's Son, who with His Father helped plan the whole plan from eternity past and came at the appointed time, established from the foundation of the world and went to the cross. And there, when He hung on the cross, the exact, perfect amount of wrath that you deserve fell on Christ. He was laid in the grave because the wages of sin is death. And then God raised HIM up on the third day, raising HIM to say, "It is finished! My child, come out of that grave. You've done the redemption's work. You've accomplished the salvation of our children. It's finished. It's finished."

Salvation planned by the Father. Salvation accomplished by the Son. Salvation applied by the Holy Spirit of God. You can't get saved if the Holy Spirit doesn't work in your life. You can't do it. You can't get saved when you want to get saved. You can't turn to God when you want to turn to God. Listen, you're not sovereign. He is! Be done with this notion that God sits on the corner of heaven wringing His hands somehow depressed and upset because you, this wonderful person won't accept Him. I want to tell you He's holy and mighty God, and He's sovereign over the angels. He's sovereign over the stars. He's sovereign over the universe. He's sovereign over the horses and the pigs and goats and the cows and the rivers and everything else, and He is sovereign over man! Unless the Spirit of God comes and works, you're not gonna get saved. But I want to tell you, I'm convinced the Spirit of God in a general sense woos all men, but all men won't come. But then there's an effectual calling the Spirit of God brings into your life whereby the Spirit comes in and brings about that work that Ephesians chapter 2 verse 5 says you were dead in Christ but quickened by the Spirit of God. The washing of regeneration occurs. God births life in you. You, you repent of your sins. You turn to place faith in Jesus Christ. Justification is yours. Progressive sanctification begins. And one day in heaven glorification will be yours! So you're baptized in the

name of the Father who planned it, in the name of the Son who accomplished it, in the name of the Spirit who applied it! That's important. This ain't just some little thing that we do to six year old little kids that don't know what they're doing. Amen? We need to know what we're saying in Christian baptism. You're saying, "Look at me, folks. All of you, look at me. I'm a wretch. There's nothing good in me. Just this afternoon I'd try to leave Him if I could. But I know He's saved me. I know He's cleansed me. I know He's changed my heart. With some fear and trembling? Yes. Some doubt? Maybe, yes. But something's happened in me, and I'm going into these baptistery waters proclaiming allegiance to the triune God, the Father who's planned my salvation, the Son who's accomplished it, and the Spirit who's come and applied it to my life under the preaching of the gospel."