

Our Profession of Faith Through Baptism, Part 3

Mark 8:38; 16:15-16

The importance of baptism. This overlaps greatly with the purpose, but I felt it important to outline it in a different way. Of course it, baptism is important for the reasons we just listed. It proclaims the gospel. It proclaims our death to self, sin, Satan, and the world and our resurrection to a new life. It proclaims our purification. It anticipates our resurrection. It establishes that formal membership in the visible local body of believers and our commitment to the duties of membership. It declares our pledge of allegiance to the triune God. Yes, that makes it important, but let me give you some other things.

First of all, baptism is important because we saw that our Lord sent John the Baptist, His forerunner, to baptize. Have you ever thought about that? The last, if you will, prophet of the Old Testament, which is the prophet that, in effect, ended the old, I use the word dispensation in a light and general way here, and began the new church age, that one who came proclaiming Christ, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," our Lord sent him baptizing. The Lord thinks that's important. Matthew, chapter 3 verses 5 and 6. *Then Jerusalem was going out to him and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan, and they*

were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. So here we have the forerunner of Christ in his ministry. And by the way, could he not have done an equally good job, at least in our limited understanding, just saying, "Get ready! He's coming! The promised Messiah is soon here." No, he's got to baptize. It's not necessary church or Christian baptism. It was a baptism of repentance to prepare themselves for Christ. But nevertheless he is Christ's forerunner, and he was sent baptizing.

And then secondly, Christ Himself submitted to baptism.

Now a lot of people speculate about what He was doing and why was He doing it. Well, we know one thing is for absolute certainty, and that is that He did not need to repent of sin, and He did not need to show forth that He had died to sin, and self, and Satan, and the world. Among other things, I think at least He was proclaiming His gospel. He was beginning His ministry proclaiming how He was going to end His ministry. And so He went to John the Baptist, who was baptizing in the Jordan River, and He submitted to immersion baptism, and He came back up out of the water. The Bible says in Matthew 3:13, "*Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan, coming to John to be baptized by him.*" So our Lord made a high priority. He illustrated the importance of baptism by submitting to it as an example for all of His church. And I believe pointing to the

way He would redeem His bride and end His ministry, that is by His death, burial, and resurrection.

And then thirdly, we see the importance of baptism because Christ and His disciples baptized during His earthly ministry.

Now see, that makes it very, very significant to me that our Lord, during His earthly ministry, and His disciples, carried out a ministry of preaching the gospel and baptizing those who believed, or you could say who became disciples. John chapter 4 verse 1: *When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John.* So here our Lord is in His earthly ministry. He's preaching His gospel, the best gospel preacher, the greatest gospel preacher who ever lived. And He's baptizing those who believe in Him, immersing them in water. So I would say to those who have this light view of baptism, and I would say to those who say, "Well, it's not essential for salvation, so you know you don't have to be all that urgent about it or serious about it or committed to it." Our Lord said that it was so important that during the limited earthly ministry He had, He took time to baptize those He knew who were believing in Him for salvation. It's important to our Lord.

And then fourthly, the verse we've looked at several times, Christ commanded His disciples to baptize after His ascension.

He instructed His followers. He's been crucified on the cross.

He's paid the sin penalty for His church. He's cleansed and redeemed for Himself a bride. Then He's raised from the dead and He meets His disciples where He told them He would meet them, and He gives them their marching orders to go out into all the world. *And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, "All authority has been giving to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations."* And of all the specific things He could have told these disciples to make sure they teach converts, He gives them one specific thing all true believers must do. Be baptized.

You know what happens to us, and I know this is true in my own heart and you know it's true in your heart probably. We've seen so many baptisms where we're quite certain it didn't mean all that much to the person being baptized. And this happens over and over year after year, even generation after generation till it becomes not that big a deal at all. Thousands upon thousands upon millions upon millions of church members who have been baptized to profess that they are pledging their allegiance to the triune God to declare that they've died to sin, self, Satan, and the world to declare that they gladly and joyously have a new heart that Christ has put within them and they want the accountability and the responsibility and the duties of church membership. And overwhelmingly, the millions live as if

there's nothing different in their lives. And so we think,
"Well, it must not mean anything."

And then some well-intending, perhaps immature or perhaps with a pride problem, some well-intending Christians who are not real connected to churches because they see this going on, begin to decide, "Well, we've seen them all go to church, and we've seen them all go through their motions, and we've seen them go through the baptistery waters, we've seen them watch the Lord's supper, and their lives are no different from the world, so let's get down to what matters. And all these rituals and ceremonies that the dead and irreverent and worldly and shallow church members go through, we don't want to have anything to do with it." I can understand why they would think that. But it's wrong to deemphasize what our Lord so emphasized. We don't have that right. Our response should be this: "Yes, you're right. It seems that most in evangelical churches today are baptized just going through the motions or with the most shallow and narrow view of Christianity as if baptism only means I've got my ticket punched. I'm not going to hell, and that's all that matters." They have no understanding of the sanctification part of salvation, the separation from the world, the fleeing the perverted generation that we're in, and that's part of what we're doing through baptism is proclaiming all of that. We agree with you, that is true. But why shouldn't we take what

our Lord said and we strive as a body to purify it and be a model and be an example of real baptism instead of throwing the thing out? We cannot deemphasize what our Lord so emphasized. We don't have that right and we don't have that freedom. Every mom and dad should labor in prayer asking God, "Save my little boy. Save my little girl. Save my children so that one day they can make a true and credible professing of You in baptism." That's the pinnacles of the journey to Christ. Doesn't save you. It doesn't wash away your sin. It doesn't make you a Christian. But, brothers and sisters, we need to put it back up there where God put it. We need to emphasized what our Lord so emphasized. And once again, the reason it's become such a weak thing in so many people's thinking is because our understanding of conversion and the meaning of true salvation and the teaching of progressive sanctification and the necessary fruit that should attend conversion. Our teaching on that has become so weak and so shallow and so toothless that we've just said, "Well, baptism is just not all that big a deal." You know what, it ought to be real special.

I was talking to some of the staff, and I got to thinking about, "What would it be like to put a baptistery right down here in the front? I mean right front and center and close enough to where we could hear the water and we could think on these great truths and we would think, 'Now wait a minute, that

person's just like me, yet God's done such a work they're willing to say all those things about their Lord and about their new heart through baptism.'" I think we've put it way too far up there.

Well, the early church baptized all believers. Look at this chronological flow. Christ sends His forerunner. He's baptizing everyone getting ready for Jesus to come. Christ begins His earthly ministry as the perfect One, the only holy and perfect One who did not need salvation or redemption or forgiveness of sins. Yet He submitted to baptism, I believe chiefly being an example of the rest of His brothers and sisters or an example to them or for them. And typifying the way He was going to end His ministry, saving them through His death, burial, and resurrection. And then Jesus begins preaching, and souls are being converted, and He's baptizing them by immersion. He commands His disciples after He's raised from the dead right before He ascends into glory, "Whatever you guys do, when they become believers, when they become disciples, baptize them."

The early church does exactly what their Lord said. You would expect the church, right after the Lord left the earth, to get it right wouldn't you? They're the closest. They're the ones that heard Him the most. They're the ones that were disciplined by Him personally. So what do they do? Acts chapter 2 verse 41. Here's the early church. Here's the day of

Pentecost. Here's God sending revival. *So them those who received His word were baptized.* Baptized. It didn't say, "Those who received His word were taught to tithe." That's good, but that's not up there with baptism. He didn't say, "Those who received His word were taught about faithfulness to membership." That's good, but that's not up there with baptism. There's a hundred and one things you could say are important for a child of God to be taught upon becoming a Christian. But the Lord said the priority is to begin with baptism. *And there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

Don't take a phrase and leave off the rest. Get all of it. Push yourself beyond the milk of the understanding you may have had as a sixth grade boy in Sunday School and try to go a little further in grasping all that God wants us to know and understand about salvation and about baptism.

Baptism is necessary for salvation. Now some of you, and I say this affectionately, old moss back Baptists are just uncomfortable right now. What else does it say? **From the power of sin in daily life or sanctification.** And this is something, I confess right here, I never grasped this until I studied for this message. I did not understand that baptism is necessary for salvation. That is if I'm going to best live a sanctified and a sanctifying life, as a progression overcoming the power of sin, I need the ordinance of baptism to help me get started

right on sanctification or overcoming the power of sin. It's necessary for that. And that's why we have to work bringing real, deep meaning back to this ordinance. I confess guilt here. We used to get people to come down the aisle. We'd counsel with them five minutes and we'd baptize them the next night during revival. I'm not saying that every time would be wrong. But I've had twenty-five years experience in the same church watching my fruit. And I see that about 98% of the time it's wrong. It's not healthy even for the truly converted. We owe to them to know the glories and the dimensions and the wonders and the meaning of baptism.

And you know, in this day and time when the scripture was being written, when somebody was baptized, many of them knew they were putting their life on the line. The next thing they could possibly hear after being publicly baptized, placing their faith in Jesus Christ because the state church, you know there was a time in all the known world church and state were one. And if you were not baptized into the state church, you not only were dishonoring to the church, you were a traitor to the state. And our forefathers, now Baptists have a varied background. It's almost impossible to say, "Here's the Baptist lineage." It's very, very hard to say, "Well, here's our heritage going right down this line." There's a lot of influences on Baptists through the years. But one of the groups that we can trace our

heritage to is the Anabaptists, who would reject the baptism of the state church. And as they studied the gospel and preached the gospel, those who would be saved they would baptize them. And immediately, whether it was a protestant reformed state church or the Roman Catholic state church, the Anabaptists by the tens of thousands, according to Oxford's dictionary of the Christian church, were martyred for it, put to death for it. Now if baptism's just a symbol and it's not important, why would these people die for that? Because their Lord said, "Be baptized." They were not gonna deemphasize what their Lord had so emphasized. And at this day and in church history throughout the ages there were times when baptism meant something. It meant you were over here with one group going in one way. Now you've radically changed. You're identifying with another group going another way. You know what's encouraging to me? I'm feeling we're getting some of that. And that blesses me.

Philippians 2:12 *So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.* Now you don't work out your justification part of salvation, but you must work out your sanctification part of salvation. You do not work for salvation, as someone has said, but you do work out your salvation that God's given you. In a sense, it's all in there, the whole person of Christ, the whole person and power of

the Holy Spirit is in there but you've got to work at working Him out through you, through your tongue and through your eyes and through your feet, where you go, and through your hands, what you touch, and through your checkbooks, what you pay for, and through all the aspects of your being and doing and thinking and moving and behaving in this world. There's a work in that.

Baptism is a public vow of obedience that, "I will be one of those, and I am beginning a new journey and I want y'all to see it. And please be gracious to me because I'll fail, but my heart is genuine that I want to purpose to work out my salvation with fear and trembling just like the rest of my brothers and sisters in the body of Christ I'm gonna be baptized before and who are gonna witness it on this day." It's a public vow of obedience. It's a public and solemn consecration to the service of the Lord, which is necessary for growth and sanctification.

God is so smart, and we're so dumb. You ever feel like that when you study the Bible? Well, maybe I shouldn't incriminate you. God is so smart and I am so dumb that when baptism really means what it's supposed to mean, the church grasps what it means, we begin to see what it really means, then when they're baptized, that's a powerful, God anointed, God blessed ceremony that enables that person to better walk in victory over sin than if they had not been properly baptized. Do you get that? And I am not in the business of trying to

rebaptize people that are already saved and have their baptism in order. But according to what some of us understood when we were baptized, it might be good to do it again

When I was baptized, oh, I thank God for those who influenced me. And I so thank God for the things they taught me. And it was true baptism. But I wish I had understood more of this. I wish someone had taken the time to have taught me a little bit better. The church that I was baptized in before was so cram packed full of hypocrites and rebels and adulterers and immoral people and people who say they're Christians and never come that you couldn't help but think that baptism didn't mean anything. Brothers and sisters, do you see how it's one package? And what we are as a body of believers, in the totality of our polity and our procedures, including baptism all fits together. Live right so that that next twelve year old boy that's baptized can look at you and say, "This means something." Moms, be godly women. Older ladies, teach the younger ladies the things of God so the next sixteen year old lady that's baptized can say, "This means something." It's a vow of consecration. It's a ceremony that's necessary if that person is going to be effective in their further sanctification, that growth, that progression of holiness and obedience to God the rest of their life.

When you've been truly converted, you've sat down with the elders of the church, they're counseled you from the Word, which is the God ordained method, and we all feel like, yes, we believe this is the new birth. We believe you have truly come to repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It may take five minutes. It may take five hours, it may take five months. But when you know and you can bear enough witness of that, that it's clear that you've been truly converted, then you need to be baptized. And when you're baptized, you need to feel the force of the obligation that is acknowledged in baptism. Do you get that? And I need to feel the force of the obligation that is acknowledged in baptism. I want you to know something. I will never baptize the same again. I'm learning so much; it's going to mean so much more to me to perform this ordinance.

You know, I think another thing that has happened through the years is that we have, and rightfully so, found the sacramentalists, that is those who teach that saving grace is actually administered through getting baptized, saving grace actually comes into you through the Lord's supper. Chiefly the Roman Catholic church, but other groups teach that. And we're so repulsed by that, and we ought to be, that we went too far, and we forgot about the great glory and wonder and necessity and power and meaning of the ordinances. And so let's keep trying to make them more and more and more of what God wants them to

be, where baptism Sunday is a Praise God kind of day. Man, look what God's done. These people, like us, weak and trembling and faulting and halting and know the falleness of their flesh, but have come to know Christ with a new heart and a changed affections and so love Him and are so dedicated to Him and are so changed by Him they want to acknowledge all of these things I've been preaching about in this series through baptism.

Baptism is God's tool to press on the heart and minds of the subject and the church that we must all walk in newness of life and be separate from the world. Now that's it right there. It should be that when word gets out in the community that you've been baptized in a Christian congregation the world says, "Oh, you joined the weirdoes. You joined that, that separate group." 'Cause that's one of the general names they gave to Baptists and others, the Puritans pretty much had it. Separatists. "Oh, you've identified with that fringe bunch." Say, "Brother Jeff, it's kind of that way if you go to Grace Life Church." Good. That's more biblical. That must mean we might be getting on track. Immersion burial in water, and then the resurrection out of the water, is the proper message that the sanctifying work of God has happened in the heart and is going to continue to happen until the day of Christ Jesus.

Now here's some thoughts to have in your mind scripturally. Second Corinthians 6:17 says, "*Therefore, come out from their*

midst and be separate," says the Lord, "and do not touch what is unclean." Here we have Paul writing to the worldly and cultured Corinthian church. And all these people had saved out of this worldly Corinthian culture. And Paul says, "When you get saved and you show it in baptism, you're coming out away from the others. You're joining a new group and a new family with new priorities and new principles and new values and new affections and new loves and new fellowship. It's all different now. And you show the world it's all different. You show the world you're separating. You show the world you're coming out by going through the waters of baptism, unashamedly, boldly, bodily, powerfully saying, "Yep! I'm one of them now. God has changed me." You see the neat thing about this is nobody in their right mind, in this culture, the day the Bible was written would have dared by baptism be identified with a group where most of the leaders are martyred and many of the members are martyred for their faith unless God changes them.

In the typical evangelical church in Alabama, what does it mean to be baptized? I mean as far as your treatment in the culture? Not a whole lot. But you know what? I'm confident before my girls if they live a normal lifespan and go to heaven, that many of them will pay dearly just for biblically honoring Christ. I really believe that. You just can't keep going down the toilet the way our culture's going down the toilet and that

not happen. And that's one reason why I would be offended if somebody spent five or eight or ten minutes with one of my girls and said, "Pray a little prayer." And said, "That's it!" I'd say, "What do you mean that's it? This may cost them." Make sure, biblically speaking sure, not Jeff Noblit's idea of sure, but biblically speaking sure God's done that regenerating, convicting, converting new birth work because they have to stand in some tough, tough, tough situations. And if this isn't real, they won't make it. Moms and dads, are you with me?

So this separation that is proclaimed through baptism is formally proclaimed and officially and initially obeyed when we publicly devote ourselves to the service of Christ through baptism. So we officially and initially obey God's command to be separate from the world when we hit those baptismal waters. I don't care how many times you stand before a church and some preacher says, "He's coming to make a profession of faith," I'm not saying that's wrong, but I'm just saying that's not it because our Lord said that's not it. You may be in a camp meeting or an evangelistic crusade, and thank God for the work God does in those settings, but the point where God says you are formally and officially said, "I am separate from the world," is baptism! We are simply not going to deemphasize what our Lord so emphasized.

Now Acts chapter 2, verses 40 and 41. Now here's Pentecost. Peter's preaching the gospel. *And with many other words, he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, "Be saved from this perverse generation."* Whoa! Time out! Wait a minute! Don't you know, Peter, being saved from the perverse generation that means living out from under the power of sin. That means living a sanctified life. That's not the part of salvation you emphasize. Who would want to get in on that? You're supposed to emphasize miss hell, miss hell, miss hell, miss hell, and then bring this in five or ten years down the road when they're stuck and already in church. No, I mean Pentecost. First sermon. First evangelistic outreach of the church. His main point is not justification, that moment, the immediate thing that happens the moment you believe. That's not what he's saying. His main point is sanctification. Start a brand new life with brand new values with a brand new family, even leaving your own family if they reject you for it. Even being martyred if the Roman government or the Jewish authorities somehow can get the Roman government to kill you for it. Be saved from this perverse generation. Become a Christian and come out, be separate. *So then those who had received his word,* wow! Three thousand it says received that message. You know what that means? God was working. You don't get three thousand anybody's saying, "I want to sign up publicly to abandon my

present culture to live with this fringe group following this Nazarene carpenter boy named Jesus." I'm talking to you in the vernacular of the day, the way they might have viewed it unless God's doing something. And that's what it should be when we have baptistery, baptisms in this baptistery that the people are so changed that they're saying, "I'm signing up to serve the Lord. I'm not counting the cost because it doesn't matter what the cost is. I'm with Jesus. And whatever that means, I'm going by God's grace and by God's strength, sign me up. I'm willing to go. I'm willing to be counted as one of His. I'm ready for the ridicule. I'm ready for the persecution. I'm ready for the laughs and the scoffing and all the stuff." Those who received this word, this gospel that saves you from the perverse generation, the gospel that takes you out of the world, the gospel that gives you new values, new principles, new perspectives, new convictions, new friends, and causes many old ones to ridicule you, that gospel they said, "We want it."

When's the last time you heard an evangelist give that kind of invitation? That said, "Come and be saved from your wicked lifestyle," not just, "Come and miss hell and go to heaven." And again, that's not a bad message. But it's not the only part of the gospel we must emphasize. So the public ceremony of baptism is an essential first step to saving yourself from the perverse generation because it's just hard to argue with who you

signed up with when you let them dunk you in water in front of everybody. The Lord gave you just such a ceremony that it just means what it means. And as it trickles out, young people through the school, the word should be, "Uh-oh, they're not like the rest of us anymore. They've aligned themselves with a new group." Businessmen, should be the same for you. Ladies in the neighborhood, same for you. College student, same for you. I'll give you the choice. Come to the front of this church and say to this church, "I renounce my baptism. I wanted justification. I wanted to go to heaven. But I don't want sanctification. I renounce it. I push aside Christ." Anybody want to do that tonight? Sometimes I feel like I should because I feel like I fail Him so bad. But He's the God of grace. His grace convicts me. His grace breaks me. His grace humbles me. His grace lets me repent. His grace takes me back, and I go again in sanctification. Isn't that good news?

Now churches of various denominations and churches within denominations may under the silence of scripture, and here's what I mean like that. Scripture don't tell us exactly how to get a person from preaching the gospel in the waters. The Bible's real, real, real clear about the gospel. Real clear what the gospel is. There's a lot to it, and there's a lot to preach there. We got to do that, the way the Bible says it. Then it's silent all through here. And then it's real clear

that you start with baptism. Those two are clear. How you get from here to there, scripture is silent. I mean Peter didn't end at Pentecost and the Bible say, "And Peter said, 'Here's the mourner's bench. All of you who are mourning over your sin and seeking Christ for salvation and want counseling, come to the bench.'" Peter did not say, "All right. Come down to the front of Solomon's portico," as Voddie Baucham said, to the magic spot. The scripture's silent there. That's why we support any way a church wants to do this middle part, as long as they don't violate scripture in how they do the middle part, because the scripture's silent. We don't die over what the Bible's not clear on. We don't fight over it. We don't leave churches over it. We don't condemn others over it unless they're saying things in that middle part dogmatically and the Bible's silent there.

One church may say, "Call the pastor on Tuesday." One church may say, "See the pastor after the service." One church may say, "I'll stand down front while we're singing and come." One church may say, "We have an inquiry room. Go to this room as soon as the service is over." One church may say, "We have a mourner's bench." Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, "If you're gonna use," he didn't use any of them, but he said, "If you're gonna use any of them, you ought to change them every week or people will make an idol out of the method and start missing Jesus."

Do you realize there are Baptists by the millions who if you didn't end the service the way we've been ending it, they would really tell you, you hadn't preached the gospel. There's not one shred of scripture to support a method. The gospel's clear. But how you get them after they receive Christ to the other one, we're free there. There's a multitude of methods to identify, counsel, and guide new believers to baptism. I personally believe we make it too easy because if this change, if this conversion, this power of God so changes someone they will be willing to profess what this Bible says Baptism professes and be willing to go into a culture that may take their life for doing it, for heaven's sake, you shouldn't have to coax them to walk down an aisle. They ought to be able to come on Tuesday or Thursday or Friday night at midnight or whatever it is, if God's changed them. We coaxed and manipulated and coaxed and coaxed and begged and manipulated to get people to the front as if that movement is gonna somehow save them, and it's not. It's a work. It's actually a detriment to the all-powerful Christ, whose gospel needs no help. It just needs to be preached.

I want you to get so saved when you're saved that no matter what the difficulty is you're gonna be baptized for Christ's honor and glory. Now we're not gonna make it hard. I haven't turned down an appointment in a long time that I remember where somebody said, "God's dealing with my heart. I need to talk to

you." Whether it was after a service, during the invitation, I just do them all. I'm serious. If you want to go to a mourner's bench, we can get a mourner's bench. If you want to go to an inquiry room, we do an inquire. Matter of fact, we've got them back here. That's just an inquiry room. If you want to come while we sing at the end, come while we sing at the end. As long as it's really God, we're thrilled. A dear man came this morning in a spirit of repentance over sin in his life while we were singing. That's wonderful. But for God's sake, don't say that that's the only method. Scripture just doesn't tell us anything there. Go through the New Testament. Later on, Peter goes and preaches at Cornelius's house. He doesn't say, "John, would you get over there and on the ukulele play Just As I Am softly? Cornelius, would you get your people on the other side of the room. All of you that want to be saved, walk across." I mean, if you think it through, you realize, though that's not evil and we shouldn't mock others, I don't mean that, we shouldn't make it a line of division or one guy's evangelistic, another guy's not because he doesn't do this silent part the way we do it. Brothers and sisters, I say this lovingly and benevolently, that's idolatry.

But anyway, however a church does the middle part, that's fine. We try to do all of them. Every week all of those are available for anybody that feels like God has changed their

heart. Why did I get off on all of that? But anyway, churches may under the silence of scripture use a multitude of methods to identify, counsel, and guide new believers to baptism. But the one true God ordained, initial, public act of professing Christ is baptism. If you tell my flesh, "If you'll just walk down here and spend five minutes, they'll say you professed faith in Jesus Christ," my flesh will go, "Whew, got it done. Going to heaven." But if you teach me from the Word all that baptism means, I'm gonna say, "Lord, have You done that in my heart?" I'm gonna be diligent, these are Bible words, diligent to make my calling and election sure.

You know what? With failings, yes, imperfectly, yes, but if we'll, to the best of our effort, be loving and compassionate and biblical when I chiefly stand before the judgment seat of Christ I'll be able to bring more of you home to heaven than if I didn't try to be thorough and careful. And I want you to know that's very, very important. What do I have to gain by challenging the traditional methods personally? Nothing. I'm blasted and ridiculed for it. I mean ugly things are said about me for it. I don't gain anything humanly or personally by challenging these notions at all. Humanly speaking, I'm a huge loser.

I had three or four young pastors come talk to me this week, and all of them basically said, "If y'all do any type of

training or equipping, I want to get in on it," He said, "Somebody came to me the other day and said, 'If you don't stop, you're gonna become like Jeff Noblit.'" Stop preaching truth? I don't know? I said, "What's that mean?" He said, "I'm not sure. I just had to come and talk to you and find out what all this means."

Let me give you a couple of thoughts from The Rock from which We Are Hewn. These were such godly and rich men. One of our old Baptist forefathers, John Dagg says, "This ceremony was manifestly designed to be the initiation into the prescribed service." You know through baptism you're signing up for service. "And every disciple of Christ who wishes to walk in the ways of the Lord meets this duty at the entrance of his course." That's the first thing he does when he knows he's truly converted.

And then page 73, Dr. Dagg again says, "He who has been baptized in infancy is not thereby released from the obligation to make a baptismal profession of faith in Christ. If it be granted that his parents did their duty in dedicating him to God, he has nevertheless a personal duty to perform. The parental act of which he has no consciousness cannot be to him the answer of a good conscience toward God." that is his infant sprinkling, "Had it left an abiding mark in the flesh," now he's reflecting back on circumcision. It leaves a mark in the flesh,

"an argument of some plausibility might be urged against the repetition of the ceremony." His point is, if in the New Testament God had given us an ordinance like He gave the Old Testament Jews of circumcising the male child on the eighth day after birth, leaving a mark in the flesh, if God had given us something like cut off his little finger or something and we had a mark that said, "We're of the elect covenant, there's my finger cut off," he said, "then there might be some plausible argument against not being baptized after you believe. But the supposed seal of God's covenant is neither in his flesh nor in his memory, that is when he's sprinkled as a baby, and his conscience has no scriptural release from the personal obligation of a baptismal profession."

So whatever else our friends do by sprinkling their children, it's just not Christian baptism. It just can't make the glorious statements the scripture says baptism is making because the child's not conscience or aware of what's happening.

Maikin Wynns was from Antwerp, Holland during the sixteenth century. She was a godly Christian. She attached herself to the Dutch Anabaptists. You could say, generally our forefathers guided by Mennow Sims. You've heard the name Mennow Simmons, he's sort of the starter of the Mennonites. I'm not talking about the Amish now. The Amish and the Mennonites are two different groups. But if you study the Mennonites you'll find

that they believe and practice exactly like we do, I mean for all practical purposes. And she was a bold, courageous Christian lady. She dared to read the Bible for herself, which was against the state church's law. "You can't read the Bible for yourself," the Catholic Church would say. She dared to study the Bible with other believers, not being guided by any official magistrate or any creedal interpretation or any authoritative priest. And to make matters even worse, she openly proclaimed the gospel to any who would listen. And they said, "She's an unlicensed, unordained, unregulated, Spirit-filled, Spirit guided woman evangelist." And she was arrested for it because she was preaching a gospel and teaching a baptism that violated the creed of Roman Catholicism.

They put Maikin Wynns in prison for six months, and they tortured her there. And she could have been released, but she refused to promise that she would recant her heretical views. And she refused to say that she would cease spreading the gospel of grace. She remained a steadfast witness. So they sentenced Maikin Wynns to burning at the stake. Now Catholics used burning at the stake, the protestant reform churches persecuted Anabaptists by drowning them in water usually, mocking, "Oh, you like going under water. You don't like the sprinkling of the state church. Good, we'll just put you in the water and see if you like that for an hour or two." The Catholics burned at the

stake, though. Maikin was such an effective evangelist, that the Catholic authorities were afraid that on her way to the stake she might convert others by preaching the gospel. So to prevent this from happening, they used a tongue screw. And with the wooden screw they screwed her tongue up through the bottom into the roof of her mouth. And then in order to teach a lesson to the next generation the authorities forced Maikin's children to witness her horrible execution. Her teenage son Adrian fainted when his mother was perishing in the flames. And after the ashes had cooled, he sifted through the debris of the wood and her old robe and her bones, and he found the tongue screw. He unscrewed it from his mother's skull, and he kept it in his pocket to be a reminder to him of his mother's faith.

Those folks understood baptism. May we regain some of that great boldness for our Lord.