TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Daniel Balch / Opening Prayer by: Walden David
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#535 The Glory-Land Way
#450 Give Me the Bible

Scripture Reading by: Pierce Balch
#324 Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed

Communion Devotional by: Bobby Rader
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#432 How Shall the Young Secure Their Hearts?
Sermon by Daniel Balch: "Graduating From What Life Throws at Us"
Deuteronomy 31:6

#643 Sowing the Seed of the Kingdom
#523 I Know the Lord Will Find a Way
Closing Prayer by: Don Lynn

No small groups meet today

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

May 4, 2025

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

What Must I Do to be Saved?

For the past several weeks, we have been studying baptism in this space. In focusing on what Scripture has to say about it, we have seen that joining with Christ is at the very heart of baptism. And we have seen all the blessings that accompany it: forgiveness of sins, the indwelling Holy Spirit, entrance into the Kingdom of God, and eternal life.

With these in mind, we might wonder why every religious group doesn't emphasize baptism. Now we need to be a bit cautious here; nearly all professing Christians view baptism as important. But most do not attach the same significance to it we have; this takes us back to the conversation that prompted this entire series, where my friend asked me about the theological differences that precluded us from participating in the recent crusade here, and I pointed to disagreement on the response a person makes to the gospel and the place of baptism in particular. You see, baptism leads into the broader issue of salvation.

If we want to understand what the Bible has to say about baptism—and this goes for any topic we might study, by the way—we need to go further than just examine the passages that talk about it specifically; we need to then place it within the broader context of Scripture. Many people have their own ideas of how a person responds to the gospel. Often these ideas are based on passages that do not mention baptism. So to clarify what we have found thus far, we need to see how baptism relates to these other passages.

How Do We Receive Salvation?
We have seen already that Scripture presents baptism as a way to receive salvation. Baptism is *into Christ* **(Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27).** And salvation is *in Christ Jesus* **(2 Tim 2:10)** Jesus said that no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is baptized **(Jn 3:5).** Perhaps the clearest statement is from **1 Peter 3:21**: *Baptism now saves you.* But with all that said, baptism is not the only action that Scripture says is necessary for salvation.

Faith is necessary for salvation. *I told you you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins* **(Jn 8:24).** Jesus says unless we believe he is the Messiah, we will die in our sins. Without faith, we cannot be saved. Or consider the most famous statement in the Bible, *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life* **(Jn 3:16).** Those who believe in Jesus will have eternal life. The Bible is clear: faith brings salvation; a lack of faith brings eternal death. Can I just ignore the baptism verses and be saved by faith?

Repentance is necessary for salvation. *Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish* **(Lk 13:3, 5).** Or we can look at Peter's words in **Acts 2:38:** *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* Or what the Christians in Jerusalem said t when they heard about the conversion of Cornelius, *Well then God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life* **(Acts 11:18).** Repentance leads to life; if we refuse to repent, we will perish. Can I repent and be saved and ignore what the Bible says about baptism?

Scripture also connects salvation to confessing Jesus. *So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven* **(Mt 10:32-33).** *For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one*

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Steve Lunceford has cancer and not doing well.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Steve Ward, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Donna Wilson, Jo Ella McKewen, Oscar Cantu, Jennifer Stelly, Steve Ward, Geri Cryer, Gloria McKelroy, Scott Overton, Rickey Lucas, Debbie Lynn, Kim Berka

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific, Mani Pagidopali in India

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Deacons, Minister meeting Monday, May 5th at 6:30 p.m.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, May 6th at 8:00 a.m.

Senior Sunday

Sunday, May 4th will be Senior Sunday. We will have a potluck dinner after morning service. Our 2 graduating seniors are Parker Balch and Rock Cary.

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Bobby Rader	Daniel Balch	Bryant Perkins
Don Taylor	Danny Balch	
Robert Ward	Walden David	
	Gus Tristan	

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

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confesses and is saved **(Rom 10:10).** If we do not confess our faith in Christ, he will deny us; if we will confess him, it will result in salvation. So is confession all that matters?

Putting These Together

Clearly, baptism is not the only human response that the Bible says brings salvation. Faith, repentance, and confession are also mentioned. Does this mean baptism is not as important as we thought? Does this mean that there are four different ways to be saved? Just because all four responses lead to salvation doesn't mean there are four different, exclusive paths. Recall, for instance, that many of these verses also state if we lack any of the four, we are lost. You see, all of these go together. And when they are joined, God grants his gift of salvation, as promised.

So how, then, do we fit them together? One thing we should avoid is thinking of this as four separate "steps" we take, as if this is a checklist to fulfill for God to give us salvation. Rather, in Scripture, all of these fit quite naturally together, culminating in baptism. We might even say that baptism involves the presence of the other three acts.

How are we raised up with Christ in baptism? Through faith. *Buried with him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead* **(Col 2:13).** Unless I am baptized with a sincere faith in God, I'm just getting wet. Faith and baptism are not different paths: baptism expresses faith. The same can be said of repentance. Look again at **Acts 2:38** above. Both are necessary. Without repentance, a change of will in regard to sin, baptism has no value. Confession of faith accompanies baptism as well. Consider the action of the eunuch, confessing Jesus before going down into the water with Philip **Acts 8:37-38.** Paul was probably talking about a baptismal confession when he reminds Timothy he had *confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses* **(1 Tim 6:12).** And baptism itself is a visible, enacted confession that Jesus is Lord.

All of these are necessary as part of a total response to the gospel. We do not obey one command and ignore the rest. "What must I do to be saved?" Our answer begins with a confessed belief. We must be convinced of a few fundamental truths. Our sins have placed us under the wrath of an infinitely holy God. Our destiny, as sinners, is eternal separation from him. Despite our sins, God loves us; he does not want to see us condemned. He alone can change our lost condition; we are powerless to save ourselves. God can save us because of Jesus' death in our place. He took our sins upon himself, paying the penalty we deserve at the cross. After his death, he was buried, but God raised him from the dead.

It is not enough merely to be convinced in our mind these things are true, though. We must be willing to verbally profess our faith in Jesus. Further, we must stop living in sin and surrender ourselves to God. Scripture calls this repentance, a change of mind and of will in regard to sin, turning and going in the other direction. Additionally, God has mandated baptism as a condition for receiving salvation and membership in his family. With faith in Jesus and a commitment to turn to God, God forgives us of sins, gives us his Holy Spirit, and adds us to the church when we are baptized into the death of Christ and are raised as he was. Baptism, in other words, completes our response of saving faith.

Our salvation answer begins with confessed belief, continues with repentance, and is completed in baptism. That means, too, that immersion in water does not save us by itself. There is nothing magical about the water. It must be done with a heart of faith and a commitment to turn to God in repentance. Note, though: baptism is the point at which God grants salvation. It is the culminating event in which all of God requirements are met. Conversion is an event, where faith, repentance, confession, and baptism are all united in harmony.

Bryant Perkins