TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Daniel Balch / Opening Prayer by: Bobby Rader
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#851 I'll Fly Away
#867 To Canaan's Land

Scripture Reading by: Braylen Butler
#387 Tell Me the Story

Communion Devotional by: Daniel Balch
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#869 We're Marching to Zion
Sermon: "The Chosen: Judas/Judas
John 13:21-27

#852 When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder
#870 Beyond This Land of Parting
Closing Prayer by: James Scott

Daniel Balch's group will meet at the building
today at 5:00 p.m.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

June 1, 2025

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

What Do I Need to Know Before Baptism?

Over the past several weeks, we have looked in detail at what Scripture has to say about baptism in this space. We have seen that joining with Christ is at the center of baptism. We have noted the blessings that accompany baptism: forgiveness of sins, the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit, entrance into the Kingdom of God, and eternal life. We have also answered some of the common objections to placing this significance on baptism: baptism does not subvert salvation by faith, but is an expression of faith; baptism does not subvert salvation by grace, but is the submissive acceptance of God's grace; baptism is not an attempt at salvation by works, because it is not inherently meritorious nor is it a work we perform—it is a work done on us.

Baptism is, indeed, a tremendously significant act. In baptism, God promises to extend his grace to the penitent believer, and we appropriate all the blessings associated with the saving work of Jesus Christ.

With that foundation laid, let's turn for a couple of lessons to some of the practical consequences of this teaching. Certainly, it is relevant for our ongoing Christian walk; for those of us who have participated in baptism, it shapes and forms us.

But what about those who have yet to experience it—how do we make sure that someone is ready to be baptized? Baptism is always presented in the NT as a response made by those who believe in Jesus. Read through the conversion accounts in the book of Acts, for example, and you will find that baptism results from the preaching of the good news and the decision of hearers to accept it. As **Acts 2:41** sums up, *those who received his word were baptized.*

But what is included in that word they received? You may have a child or grandchild considering it and want to make sure they are ready. You may be studying with a friend and want to be sure what you tell him is right. You may even be reading this and thinking about baptism yourself but aren't sure you're ready.

This is vitally important because sometimes people question the validity of their own baptism later in life, wondering if they knew enough (something we will consider here next week). And sometimes, I personally worry that we have placed requirements on candidates for baptism that go beyond Scripture. We said already that baptism is in response to the good news that is preached. Maybe the clearest example comes from **Acts 2**, where 3,000 were baptized after a single sermon. That must have included the necessary prerequisites for baptism. What are they?

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Steve Lunceford has cancer and not doing well.

Willo Dean Ellis fell last week and broke her hip. She has had surgery and is recovering.

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, June 2nd at 6:30 p.m..

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, June 3rd at 8:00 a.m.

VBS is Saturday, June 28th from 9-2 p.m.

Camp Red Oak Springs

Calling all of our youth: make your plans to attend Session 5 of Camp Red Oak Springs in Newton, June 29-July 5.
Parents, if you're worried about sending your younger kids off, it's only about an hour away, and they can go for just part of the week. Plus, our own Brooks McKelroy IV will be working this session and will be happy to keep in touch with you. Brooks is also willing to answer any questions/concerns you may have if you have never been involved in this before--he has for many years.

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

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1. **You must believe in Jesus**. Most of Peter's sermon is about him: he performed great signs and wonders; those in the crowd put him on the cross, but God raised him from the dead and exalted him to his right hand; he poured out the Holy Spirit. This led to the inescapable conclusion *that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified* **(Acts 2:36).** Peter's message is that Jesus is Lord; that is the fundamental thing people must know and believe before baptism.

2. You must be ready to commit. Peter's audience was convinced—*they were cut to the heart*—and so they cried out, *Brothers, what shall we do?* **(Acts 2:37)** Peter's first word was for them to *Repent.* Repentance involves sorrow over sin, it results in a reformation of life, but in between is its heart: to change the mind, the heart, the will, and turn to God, committing to follow him. Crucially, this does NOT mean they had to stop sinning and begin living perfect lives before baptism. If we had to wait for that, no one would ever be baptized! Rather, it is a commitment to turn to God and begin living by his ways as best we can. We must count the cost of discipleship before baptism, realizing how serious a commitment it is (cf. **Luke 14:25-33).**

3. You must understand what baptism means. After telling them to repent, Peter told them to be baptized, specifically *in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* The crowd understood that their baptism would be in the name of Jesus—that is, by his authority, with a view to him—so they would become his followers and be united with him, his teachings, and his blessings. Similarly, Paul was told his baptism was calling on the name of the Lord (**Acts 22:16).** He writes at different points that baptism is *into Christ* **(Gal 3:27; Rom 6:3).** People knew before baptism took place that was a means of uniting with Jesus.

But that does not mean you must understand every blessing associated with baptism for it to be valid. We all learn more as we progress in our Christian walk. Peter said nothing about how baptism adds you to the church, but it does that (**Acts 2:41).** He did not mention that it makes us children of God in a special way, but it does that (**Gal 3:26-27).** Here, we must note again that the forgiveness of sins is one blessing associated with baptism—but it is not the only one. Scripture does not attach ultimate significance to it compared to the other blessings of baptism; in fact, it is not even the only one mentioned in **Acts 2:38**! Forgiveness is a promise, not a command; you cannot obey a promise. The command is to be baptized in the name of Jesus; the promise is that God will grant forgiveness of sins to those who do.

In the words of James Harding, when evaluating whether someone had been baptized properly, he would simply ask them "Did you believe with your whole heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and did you confess him as Lord?" That sums up well these 3 things we must know before baptism. If you have those set, you are ready to give your life to Christ. If you knew those things when you were immersed, your baptism is in accordance with Scripture. But remember: baptism is the beginning, not the end. A relationship with Jesus Christ is a lifelong journey. We must continue to grow from there.

Bryant Perkins