

Baptism is an important step in a Christian's Life.

November 12, 2017 Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins

Today I want to talk about the commandment that Jesus gave to his disciples just before he ascended into heaven. It is found in Matthew 28. At the beginning of this chapter, we are taken to the tomb where Jesus had been buried. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There had been a violent earthquake as an angel of the Lord had come down from heaven and after going to the tomb, had rolled away the stone that had been placed and secured in place by guards. Pilate had commanded the chief priests to do this after they had told him that the "deceiver" had declared that after three days, he would rise again from the dead. They asked Pilate to order the tight security until after the third day to prove that he was an imposter. They feared that the disciples might come and steal the body and then tell people that he had risen from the dead and the last deception would be far worse than the first.

All the guards that stood by the tomb were unbelievers until the earthquake shook the earth and the angel appeared as lightening and his clothes were white as snow. They were so afraid that they shook and fell down as dead men. The angel spoke to the women and told them not to be afraid for he realized that they were there to visit the tomb of Jesus who had been crucified. He told them that he had risen so he wasn't there but he invited them to come in and see the place where Jesus had laid. Then they were told to go quickly and tell his disciples that he had risen and he would be going ahead of them into Galilee. There they would see him. He ended the conversation by saying, "Now I have told you." The women hurried away from the tomb, still afraid but full of joy and they hurried to tell the disciples the wonderful news. Suddenly Jesus met them and greeted them. They went to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus told them not to be afraid but to go tell his brothers to go to Galilee for there they would see him.

Satan always has a counterfeit for truth and this was no exception. While the women ran to tell the good news to the Lord's disciples, the guards went into the city to report the account of the resurrection to the chief priests. The chief priests met with the elders and devised a plan giving the guards large sums of money in exchange for their cooperation in spreading a lie so people would not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. They were paid to report that while they were sleeping; his disciples came during the night and stole the body from the tomb. "If this report gets back to the governor, we will satisfy him and protect you from any repercussions". So the soldiers did as they were told after taking the money and the story was widely circulated among the Jews even to the time that the book of Matthew was written.

The eleven disciples went to Galilee as they had been instructed and went to the mountain where Jesus was waiting for them. They worshiped him, but some doubted. Then Jesus told them that all authority in heaven and in earth had been given to him by his Father. Therefore they were to go throughout the whole world and make disciples baptizing them

in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. They were to teach them to obey everything Jesus had commanded them to and he assured them that he would be with them always, to the very end of the age.

What is the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not names; they are titles. Look at John 5:41. Here Jesus declares that he doesn't testify concerning himself, but his Father's testimony is true and valid. He declared that his Father sent him to do a work and he was going to finish what he had been sent to accomplish. He told the Jews that they didn't believe in him because they didn't know the Father and they studied the Scriptures because they believed that they would have eternal life. However the Scriptures testified of the authenticity of Jesus as the Messiah and they refused to believe and hardened their hearts to the point that even the Scriptures were not enough to convince them, the miracles didn't convince them and the words that Jesus spoke were tuned out from the unbeliever's ears so they could not receive the truth. In verse 43, Jesus said that he came in his Father's name and they would not accept him. If someone came in his own name, they would receive and accept him. He asked them this question, "How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God." In Isaiah 43:3, The LORD God of Israel declares that he alone is the Savior for he is the LORD, their God, The Holy One of Israel. In Hosea 13:4, it reads like this, "But I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Savior except me." Compare this with Deuteronomy 18:15-18. Moses prophesied that God would raise up a prophet from among their brothers and they were to listen to him for his words would be from the Heavenly Father and everything that he spoke, that he did, that he would accomplish would be in obedience to his Father.

Matthew 1:22 says that the virgin Mary heard the words from the angel, Gabriel telling her that she would give birth to a son and she was to call his name "Jesus" for he would save his people from their sins. His name would be called "Immanuel" meaning "God with us".

Colossians 3:17 tells us that whatever we do in word or in deed, we are to do it in the name of Jesus.

Jesus said his Father would send the comforter in his name. Look at John 14:26. "But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will bring all things to your remembrance."

In Acts 2:38, the Jews heard the sermon that frightened them because they realized that they were responsible for killing the Son of God. Peter went through their history relating how time after time through the ages, God's servants had been persecuted, imprisoned, and put to death for the sake of the gospel. Now they had killed the Son of God. When they asked what they should do, this is what he said, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you shall receive

the gift of the Holy Ghost. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom our Lord God will call."

Those who believed were baptized and 3000 souls were added to the church.

In Acts 19:5, upon hearing Paul's sermon concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ, 12 people were baptized in the name of the Lord and they received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In 1 Corinthians 1:12, Paul is teaching the people that men are all equal and the one that is to be honored and followed is Jesus Christ. He told them that it wasn't right to have quarrels among themselves concerning the one who testified to them and led them to believe. Some said they followed Paul; others said they followed Apollos; another said they followed Cephas; and still another said they followed Christ. Paul asked them "Who died for you?" That is who you need to follow into baptism with!

The ceremony of baptism can be described with one word, "Identification". In Romans 6:3-4 it reads like this, "Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism unto death in order that, just as Jesus Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may have new life."

How important is baptism? It is extremely important for it means that you have been baptized into Christ; baptized into his death, and buried with him in baptism. Baptism is your personal identification that you have accepted Christ as your Savior, and that you identify with him with the greatest act of human history, the death, burial, and resurrection of the Son of God. Baptism doesn't save you for we are saved by faith alone and not by works. See Ephesians 2:8,9. We were created to do good works and salvation comes through God's grace to us and by faith and is not something that we do, but God extends it to us. When we hear the word, believe the word and obey the word, we are a testimony to the world that there is power in the name of Jesus to bring us into a place of holiness with God. We didn't choose him; he chose us. John 15:16. If after you have heard the word, you desire to accept Christ and become his follower, God has extended his mercy to you. A true believer sees people as God's miracle, his handiwork and they treat people differently than those who don't know Christ.

See John 6:44. You cannot come to God without his spirit drawing you.

John the Baptist refused to baptize some of the people who came to him. See Luke 3:7. He called them a generation of vipers and asked them who had warned them of the wrath to come. He told them that just because they were proud of being children of Abraham's lineage, that wasn't enough for unless they produced fruit of righteousness, they were not going to enter the kingdom of God. There were several groups who asked, "What should we do?" Each group was given instructions on what they needed to do to show that they sincerely wanted to follow Christ and was willing to take up their cross to follow him. As you follow the Lord's commandment and example that he set as he also was baptized of John the Baptist, let us remember that when we identify with Jesus Christ, our lives,

our hearts, our thoughts will be changed by the power of the Holy Spirit. We must give our will over to the Lord Jesus Christ and say as Jesus said in his prayer, "Not my will but thine be done: Luke 23:42

How Great Thou Art!

O STORE GUD

HYMNS OF WORSHIP: THE FATHER

CARL BOBERG, 1859-1940
Trans. by Stuart K. Hine, 1899.

Swedish melody
Arr. by Manna Music, Inc.

1. O Lord my God, when I in awe-some won-der Con-sid-er
 2. When thru the woods and for-est glades I wan-der And hear the
 3. And when I think that God, His Son not spar-ing, Sent Him to
 4. When Christ shall come with shout of ac-cla-ma-tion And take me

all the worlds Thy hands have made, I see the stars, I hear the toll-ing
 birds sing sweet-ly in the trees, When I look down from lofty moun-tain
 die, I scarce can take it in- That on the cross, my bur-den glad-ly
 home, what joy shall fill my heart! Then I shall bow in hum-ble ad-o-

thun-der, Thy pow'r thru-out the un-i-verse dis-played!
 gran-deur And hear the brook and feel the gen-tle breeze,
 bear-ing, He bled and died to take a-way my sin!
 ra-tion And there pro-claim, my God, how great Thou art!

soul, my Sav-ior God, to Thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art! Then sings my

soul, my Sav-ior God, to Thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

* Translator's original words are "worts" and "mighty".
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Peace in the Valley

Oh well, I'm tired and so weary
 But I must go alone
 Till the lord comes and calls, calls me away, oh yes
 Well the morning's so bright
 And the lamp is alight
 And the night, night is as black as the sea, oh yes
 There will be peace in the valley for me, some day
 There will be peace in the valley for me, oh Lord I pray
 There'll be no sadness, no sorrow
 No trouble, trouble I see
 There will be peace in the valley for me, for me
 Well the bear will be gentle
 And the wolves will be tame
 And the lion shall lay down by the lamb, oh yes
 And the beasts from the wild
 Shall be lit by a child
 And I'll be changed, changed from this creature that I am, oh yes
 There will be peace in the valley for me, some day
 There will be peace in the valley for me, oh Lord I pray
 There'll be no sadness, no sorrow
 No trouble, trouble I see
 There will be peace in the valley for me, for me