

THE THINGS JESUS SAID THE CHURCH MUST CONTINUE TO DO

Part two - Sunday, May 10th, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

Pastor Don Horban, Cedarview Community Church, Newmarket, ON

WHY WE PRACTICE *BELIEVER'S* BAPTISM - EXAMINING THE BIBLICAL TEXTS

IPAD TEXT - Acts 2:36-39 - "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified." {37} Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" {38} Peter said to them, "*Repent, and each of you be baptized* in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. {39} "*For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.*"

IPAD TEXT - Colossians 2:8-12 - "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. {9} For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, {10} and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; {11} and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; {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.*

IPAD TEXT - 1 Peter 3:18-22 - "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; {19} in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, {20} who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. {21} Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but *an appeal to God for a good conscience*--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, {22} who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him."

There is one thing we can say with absolute certainty. There is no specific instance of even one infant being baptized in the New Testament. In fact, there is no specifically recorded mention of infant baptism until we find it in the writings of Tertullian for the first time in any historical document in the year 200 A.D.

So unless we're going to argue from silence, every person baptized in the first two hundred years of the church's history was a believer. And, perhaps even more important for our purposes, **every** believer was quickly baptized in the New Testament. The only known convert who was unbaptized in the entire New Testament was the thief on the cross.

Some argue the case for infant baptism on the basis of references to "**households**" being baptized. And the assumption is made that, because whole households were baptized, those households must have included infants, and they must have been included in those baptisms:

IPAD TEXT - Acts 16:13-15 - "And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled. {14} A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. {15} And when *she and her household had been baptized*, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us."

IPAD TEXT - Acts 16:27-34 - "When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. {28} But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!" {29} And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, {30} and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" {31} They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." {32} And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. {33} And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, *and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household*. {34} And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household."

To argue the case for infant baptism from these texts one must **assume** these households included infants, when, in fact, that is never stated. Quite to the contrary, Luke seems to steer us **away** from that conclusion, especially in the case of the Philippian jailor's household, by stating that the baptism took place after Paul first "**spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all those who were in his house**"(16:32).

Luke seems to indicate that those in the house were capable of hearing and responding to the Word of God. It would seem to make little sense for Paul to teach and present the Scriptures to the whole household if they weren't all capable of understanding what he was saying.

It's significant to notice that when Luke says they baptized the household **after** they had presented the word of the Lord to them, he is following the pattern laid down earlier in the church - **Acts 2:41 - "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls."** - IPAD TEXT

Baptism, throughout the New Testament **followed** a response to the hearing of the Word with repentance and faith. Remember, the early church didn't just hatch this order on their own. They got their **pattern** from the ministry of John the Baptist and the **practice** of Jesus and, finally, from the clear **command** of Jesus in the great commission.

Now, let's quickly look at some of the significant texts pointing to the centrality and importance of believer's baptism in the New Testament:

1) **THE ORDER OF PETER'S COMMAND MAKES CLEAR THAT REPENTANCE IS TO PRECEDE BAPTISM**

IPAD TEXT - Acts 2:36-38 - "Peter said to them, '*Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins....*'"

Peter never reverses this order of events because Jesus ***told*** him not to reverse them. Notice the very specific wording - "***Repent, and each of you be baptized....***" The words remove baptism from the ***collective*** ministry of the institutional church and make both repentance and baptism strictly ***individualistic***. Each person must ***repent*** and each person must ***believe*** and each person must ***hear the Word*** and each person must then be ***baptized***.

The important point here is that baptism is the ***sign*** of repentance. It has no New Testament meaning apart from ***repentance***. That's why, in last week's teaching, John came on the scene preaching a "***baptism of repentance***"(Matt. 3:11). Baptism is ***the*** sign of entrance into the new covenant ***through*** repentance. There is no other way to get in. And baptism ***nails down*** the issue of faith and repentance right at the entry point of the conversion experience.

2) **BAPTISM IS AN EXPRESSION OF FAITH IN THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD**

IPAD TEXT - Colossians 2:8-12 - "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. {9} For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, {10} and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; {11} and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; {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."

These are powerful words that clearly source for us the power of New Testament baptism. Paul draws a comparison between circumcision and baptism. We're going to look at this subject in much more detail next Sunday morning, but it's important now to show that Paul sees both circumcision and baptism as important **entry points** into their respective covenants. I would never deny that such a comparison exists in the Scriptures. In fact, I think it is because this comparison isn't considered **deeply** enough that so much confusion remains regarding the nature and meaning of baptism.

Both covenants (old and new) have a sign to mark their entry point. In the Old covenant the sign (at least for males) was circumcision. Then Paul says that, in the New Covenant, there is also a sign that functions like circumcision did, but with a very important **difference**. And the difference is meant to be seen as an important **contrast**. The sign of baptism is meant to show that the entry into the new covenant **isn't like** the entry into the old.

That's why Paul says the New Covenant sign of baptism isn't a circumcision made with hands - **Colossians 2:11** - "**....and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands....**" This wasn't something done **to** you, or done **for** you. No, the nature of this new circumcision of your heart happened in a different way all together.

Well, then **how** did it happen? **Verse 12** is one of the most important verses in the New Testament to paint the power and nature of believer's baptism. It explains **how** baptism fits into the conversion process. It explains how it ignites the power of the death and resurrection of Jesus in the believer's heart - **Colossians 2:12** - "**....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.**" - IPAD TEXT

Baptism signifies - pictures - fleshes out - ***faith in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead***. Baptism unleashes confidence in the power of the risen Christ to conquer sins confessed in repentance. Baptism stamps a commitment to walk in newness of life in the ***power*** of the risen Christ.

This is why John and Jesus and Peter and Paul all mandate baptism at the very ***beginning*** of the Christian life. Baptism ***kick-starts*** the life of faith in Christ Jesus in His death and resurrection to overcome sin and walk in newness of life.

Baptism signifies a ***circumcision of the heart, not at the hands of men, but through personal faith in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead***. Paul means to clearly say that baptism is an expression of faith by the one being baptized.

3) **BAPTISM IS AN APPEAL OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE TO GOD**

IPAD TEXT - 1 Peter 3:18-21 - "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; {19} in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, {20} who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. {21} Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,"

Tricky verses, these. And I have taught from them in detail when we worked our way through 1 Peter. The point I want to focus in on this morning is Peter's powerful phrase in the last part of **verse 21 -**
"....baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but *an appeal to God for a good conscience*--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...." - IPAD TEXT

Peter says baptism is an **appeal** to God. The dictionary gives synonyms for the word "**appeal.**" Some of them are "**to cry out to,**" to "**offer supplication,**" to "**call upon,**" or to "**earnestly entreat.**" Peter so defines baptism. In words much like the apostle Paul's, he says baptism is the heart crying out to God in repentance and in **faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

When this is properly understood there is no reason to fear those words at the beginning of the verse - "**Baptism saves you....**" Peter makes it clear that baptism saves, or cleanses, **not** the way water washes dirt off the body. In other words, there is nothing automatic or ritualistic in the way baptism cleanses or saves. I've been plunged under the waters of countless swimming pools and bath tubs - all, as far as I can tell, with no saving benefit to my soul.

No, baptism saves only through the **faith expressed by the one being baptized.** Baptism has power only as it is the "**appeal to God for a good conscience,**" or the "**crying out of the heart**" in faith to God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This is much the way Paul talked when he said in **Romans 10:9** that **“...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord...you will be saved.”** - IPAD TEXT

Everyone knows that the mere movement of sound waves through the air doesn't save anyone. It is the faith in the heart - the faith that the words of the mouth are a living *expression* of - that makes confession meaningful. So it is with believer's baptism.

Many of us need to repent for minimizing baptism. As a church, we are set to *magnify* the meaning and power of believer's baptism. It sets the whole life in redemptive order before Father God. It honors the commission of Jesus Christ our Lord. It frees the soul of guilt and sets the conscience at rest.

It is not my intent to belittle or insult any who are in our church family who hold different views and come from different backgrounds theologically regarding baptism. I don't question your involvement in the body of Christ. We love you in our church. But none of that will excuse me before my Lord for not holding up what our church believes so strongly to be the will of Father God and the call of Jesus our Lord to this church. **“Repent and be baptized, every one of you!”**