

181212-4 Introduction, & The Outward Form of Baptism – Craig Thurman

First a word about the importance of Bible doctrine:

Brethren, I need to press upon each member of this congregation the seriousness of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. (He.6.1; 2Jn.9, doctrine of Christ; Ac.13.12, doctrine of the Lord; Tit.2.10, doctrine of God) Bible doctrines aren't optional. They aren't friendly suggestions. They are committed to the saints of the churches for keeping. (*Joh 17: 8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; 14 I have given them thy word ...; 1Ti 3:15 ... the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*) They are what forms convictions in Christians' lives. There is an ever-present danger in our lives that that we are warned against.

Heb 2:1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

*we should let them slip, παραρῥῶμεν, 1ppl. aor. subj. of παραρῥέω, παρά + ρέω, to speak, command, to say, to flow, to make **and but once is always an authoritative expression** (cf. Jn.7.38 and comp. to LXX @ Is.44.4; παραρῥέω, is found only this once in the N.T.*

LXX, παραρῥέω, Pv.3.21, let them [not] depart & Is.44.4, with reference to water, running.

Quoting here the KJV, beginning at verse 21 of Proverbs
*Pr 3:21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:
22 So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.
23 Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.
24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.
25 Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.
26 For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.*

The greatest manifestation of love for Christ is by keeping His commandments. Conversely, if we fail to hold the doctrines we fail in our love for Christ.

Joh 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Joh 15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

If we don't know the commandments we don't know the love of God as we ought. But if we know them and do not keep them then we do not love the Lord, His word, or His church as we ought. By that failure we are not abiding, continuing, dwelling, enduring, remaining, standing, tarrying in the love of God (all the ways that the Gr. μένω, menō is tss. in the N.T.).

1Jo 2:6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Love is not to be founded upon a feeling, but upon the word of God. All feelings must be subject to the word of God. We can be misled by our feelings. Love is a commitment to Christ. Every other commitment is subordinated to the love of Christ. Our commitments to our spouses, our children, our family, our friends, even our country is subordinated to Christ. Nothing and no one is allowed to take Christ's place as our first love. (cf. Re.2.4) Our commitment to Christ surpasses the realm of *feelings*. Let's be clear. We don't feel very loving when we might have to correct a brother or sister that errs from the way of Christ, do we? But the truth is, provided that we have acted in obedience to the word of God and for the love of Christ, it is probably among one of the most significant displays of ἀγαπάω and φιλέω loves there is. Again, punishment received for the witness of Christ doesn't feel like a love experience (He.12.1; Jam.5.11; 1Pe. 4.16). We cannot trust our feelings at all. We can feel good and justified yet be in sin. And we might feel bad and condemned for having done right. Feelings are not in themselves proof of whether we are necessarily right or wrong. Feelings are fallible. The word of God is infallible.

Tonight we will consider a small point on the doctrine of baptism. The doctrine of baptism in this church is not optional. This church confesses to hold to this

doctrine, and practices it the way we do because it is in the Bible. If we do not hold to this doctrine we need to ask ourselves why we are a part of this church. If I do not believe this doctrine, this church has the right to ask me why I am counted as a part of this membership. And if I continue to reject this doctrine as true, she has the right to reject me as a member. We might be ignorant, we are all growing, but continued rejection of the Bible doctrines is a warrant for rejecting anyone from the membership of this congregation. Why am I saying these things? Because it is important to understand the important role Bible doctrine plays in the life of a church. Our present confession of faith does not represent every doctrine we believe. It presents the major points of our *faith*. (Ac.6.7; 14.22; 1Co.16.13; 1Ti.3.9; 4.1; 1Pe.5.9; Jude 3) It sets before us certain parameters of doctrine. The membership is formed around this *faith*, this doctrine. When we joined this church, we covenanted together to carry out the commandments of Christ. (cf. Mt.28.19, 20) We would never knowingly receive anyone into this congregation that opposed, at least, these major doctrines found in our confession of faith. For example, while we receive members that *might be ignorant* of Bible doctrines, we should never receive anyone that holds as true the doctrines of infant baptism or baptismal regeneration. (We could say the same for those which hold to amillennialism; Arminianism, annihilationism, Pentecostalism, works for salvation, etc.) Such carelessness would harm the fellowship of the body because such error and heresies would erode the unity of the body in the faith of Christ. False doctrine would strangle the life out of the church. A Christian should always be growing in understanding in biblical and practical doctrine.

He.5.11 Of whom (referring to Melchisedec) we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God (or, the chief elements of the word of God); and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Doctrine Series

He.6.1 ¶ Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

3 And this will we do, if God permit.

It has been a wonder of wonders to me to have seen some former members of this church manifest so monumental an ignorance of the basic doctrines of the word of God; to manifest so great a spiritual stupidity. Who knows what was going on their hearts and minds during the times of our gatherings? Evidently, though present in body, their minds were far from Christ. (cf. Mt.15.8) It is as if they didn't hear a word that ever taught in this meeting-place. I hope that there is no one here like that today. But I fear that there are some. I like what Benjamin Keach said about zeal for the house of God.

Should not the example of holy men of old be observed by us, and imitated? they are left as a pattern for us. What saith holy David, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." I am afraid many among us may rather say, the zeal of our own house hath eaten up our thoughts, our talk, our time, our strength, and our treasure too, and but little of it hath been eat up with zeal for God's house. *Exposition of the Parables*, Benjamin Keach, p.28

Have we failed to put Christ first? It is alarming to see that some of us lack having Christ in first place in their lives, at work or at home. This isn't something that I observe once in a while, but it marks the general tenor of some of your lives. Some are predictably predictable not to support this church with even your presence. When it comes to any other thing, work and recreation we have the time, we will hardly spare no expense to dedicated ourselves to that. But when it comes to Christ, His work, and this house, Christ only gets what's left over. As your brother, as your pastor that is alarming to me. The sad truth is, it is very likely that this admonition has fallen on deaf ears. The good news is, I trust that some of you are listening and can hear the admonition. What does this have to do with doctrine? Doctrines aren't black ink on white paper. Doctrines dictate our lives. As we just read from Proverbs chapter 3, if we keep sound wisdom and discretion we shall walk safely and our foot shall not stumble. Doctrines are like

fences which a loving father put up to protect his little children from dangers that lay beyond. Whether we know it or not, doctrines play a vital role in the decision-making processes of our social, political, and religious lives. Here's how this *fence* works for me.

Because of the grace of God, I would never consider becoming a member of a church that didn't believe and practice biblical baptism, salvation by grace, Christ's second coming and the millennial kingdom, God's election of grace, just to name a few. I would never marry an unbeliever. I would never apply the wisdom of the world to my children, but rather, by the grace of God I would do my best to raise my children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. I would never want to be a liar and dishonest. I don't want to be hateful and angry. The doctrine of Christ has taught me these things. I want to be the best employee that I can be for my employer. It is the truths of God's word that constantly check my life. And if I will not be corrected by it, then I can depend on the love of my Lord to step in and touch me in my life, or in my health, or in my substance, my family, and my church. So, do not believe it when someone says that doctrine isn't important. The doctrine of Christ is our life! How we live is the doctrine we really believe – that doctrine we live by might not be Christ's.

*Tit.2.7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,
8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.*

Christians without doctrine are worldlings. Without the basic Bible doctrines Christians have no witness of Christ. ... *teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you ... (Mt.28.20)*

A brief discussion of the doctrine of baptism:

Because we only have a few minutes we're going to go through a cram session concerning baptism. You'll see lots of points raised, and if you get time to refer to these notes you should find the Bible references in support of or opposed to baptism. But my focus here will be upon the visible form of baptism. Why it looks like it does.

Baptism is a confused term in Christendom. Not only are there questions about *what* baptism is:

Is it literal or figurative; only typical or pictorial? Yes. (Ro.6.3-5; Col.2.12; 1Pe.3.21)

How many kinds of baptisms are there in the Bible? (He.6.2)

There is baptism by fire (meaning, trial). (Mt.20.22, 23; Lk.12.50))
There is water baptism. (Jn.3.23) And,
There is baptism by the Holy Spirit. (Mk.1.8,9; Ac.1.5; 11.16)

What does baptism do?

Does baptism save the soul? No. (1Pe.3.21)
Does baptism add to the kingdom? No. It only prepares people for the kingdom. (Lk.1.17)
Does baptism add to the Lord's church? No. It prepares people for the church. (Acts 2.41, all that this text says is that of those that were baptized, 3,000 of these joined themselves to the Jerusalem church.)

When is baptism is be applied?

Should baptism be applied when one is in unbelief? Or,
Should baptism be applied to babies?
Should baptism only be applied to those that confess faith in Jesus Christ?
Ans. Baptism is called *repenter's baptism* because it is for those who have repented of sin and turned in faith to Jesus Christ. (Ac.2.38; 19.4, the Bible *never* shows baptism being applied to children. It shows baptism being applied to all that repent and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ. This understanding of baptism makes it applicable to every age, young and old which can express personal faith in Christ.)

Where should baptism be applied?

Should baptisms only be indoors, outdoors, in baptismal pools, in open bodies of water, or in rivers?

But also, *How* is baptism is to be administered?

Should the candidate be standing, kneeling, or sitting?

Should the candidate be plunged face first or backwards into the water?
plunged once or three times? (called Dunkers)

Should the candidate be christened (χρίω), sprinkled (ῥαντίζω), poured upon (ἐπιχέω), washed in part (νίπτω), washed in whole (λούω) or plunged completely into the water (βαπτίζω)?

By whom should baptism be administered?

Can baptism be self-administered?

Can baptism be administered by an unbeliever?

Can baptism be administered by any believer?

Is baptism restricted to administrators like a pastor, overseer, bishop of a church?

Can deacons of a church baptize? Or,

Can any member of the church baptize?

What I am about to say is unpopular among most of my fellowship brethren. I believe it is a major reason most do not return their fellowship. This has created a division. I can and will continue to live with that. God being my helper I will never compromise anything that I understand taught in the word of God. For every honest inquisitor of Scripture, they will find that the Bible, on the point of who is administering baptism, gives very little information. The truth is, it cannot be proved that baptism was exclusively given to pastors and deacons. The fact is, the church, its disciples are those to whom the great commission was given. They may baptize. Cf. to either the 13 min. audio, or read the .pdf of the lesson entitled, *Baptism, Who Did It* - Craig Thurman - June 20, 2017, posted on Sermon Audio, under the Series *Word in a Hurry*, or *Bible Studies*

Our newly adopted confession of faith, as of Nov. 25, 2018 reads under articles 42-44, pp.14, 15 as follows:

42. Baptism: an Ordinance*

Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament church, given by Christ, to be dispensed upon persons professing faith in Him, or that are made disciples; who, upon profession of faith, ought to be baptized, and after joining with a church may partake of the Lord's Supper.

Mt.28:18, 19; Jn.4:1, 2; Mk.16:15, 16; Ac. 2:37, 38, 8:36-39.

**Formerly Article 39 of 1644 COF*

43. Baptism: the Mode*

The way and manner of applying baptism to a qualified candidate is dipping or plunging the body under water. Baptism, being a sign, must correspond to the things which it signifies: the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. As certainly as the body is buried under water and risen again, so shall the bodies of the saints be raised by the power of Christ in the day of the resurrection to reign with Christ.

Mt.3:16; Mk.1.9; Jn.3:23, Ac.8:38; Ro.6:3-6; 1Co.15:28, 29.

**Formerly Article 40 of 1644 COF15*

44. Baptism: the Administrator*

The Scripture holds forth the person designed by Christ to perform baptism to be a disciple. Nowhere does the Word of God restrict the application of baptism to any particular member of a church. A baptized disciple may go forth and apply baptism to any person who has shown the fruits of repentance and faith in Christ at the preaching of the gospel. Two or more of such baptized disciples may immediately organize themselves into a New Testament church.

Mt.28:19; Jn.4:1, 2; 1Co.11:2; Ac.8:4, 5, 12, 38; 9:17-19; 10:47, 48; 16:14, 15; 16:30-33; 18:8; 1Co.1:16, 17.

**Formerly Article 41 of 1644 COF*

I appreciate the term *Baptist baptism*. But lest we are misunderstood it should be stated that *baptism* is not a Baptist doctrine. It is a Bible doctrine that all Baptists used to practice properly. Being that is no longer the case I am compelled to say that baptism is a Bible doctrine that true churches of Jesus Christ keep.

To have a Biblical baptism there must be a proper administration of baptism to a proper candidate by a proper administrator. Otherwise, call it what we will it is not a Biblical baptism. And the administration of the baptism is a complete immersion into the water of the candidate. Being one of the most elemental doctrines of the N.T. church it becomes a church identifier. It helps Christians to identify a true church from a false one. The more closely a church's doctrine is in harmony with God's word the more assurance there is that it is a true church. So critical is the ordinance of baptism that without it, or if not practiced properly the church is bound to cease existing in just a short while. Without baptism there can be no church. It might go on in form or name only, but in reality it is no longer Christ's church.

Does the bible tell us how to apply baptism? This is a very basic consideration. First of all, when considering how baptism is to be applied we have to have what element? Hints: it is wet; perhaps clear, murky. *Water*.

Ac 8:36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? (A certain water does not define whether it was a river, lake, or pool. Whatever it was it was what they needed to perform a baptism.)

Another consideration is not only is there is water, but is there enough water. If we are going to baptize the way that John the Baptist and his disciples did, and way our Lord Jesus' disciples did, there must be *enough* water.

Joh 3:23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

The visible aspect of baptism is becoming defined. The consideration that there must be water, and enough water begins to cause questions to arise in our minds about other *baptisms* that are really no baptisms at all. Such things as christening, sprinkling, pouring, washing in part or in whole do not require *much* water. Why is much water required if all John did was take a bunch of hyssop and sprinkle the masses as he stood in the Jordan river? And then I begin to ask myself, 'Why even go into the river at all?' Why did John and the people come into the water together if all that needed to be done was to christen, pour,

sprinkle or wash? In the Acts account of Philip and the eunuch notice the clarity with which baptism is described.

Acts 8.37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Notice a Christian's confession. He came to understand that this Jesus, the Son of God died for his sins from Philip's explaining to him the wonderful text of Isaiah chapter 53. No clearer profession could be made of one of God's elect. At this Philip takes command of this event.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And when they were come up out of the water ...

So, here both the administrator and the candidate come into the water, Philip baptized the eunuch, and they both come back out of the water. Every reasonable, spiritually minded soul, from a child and upwards can understand much about what baptism looks like. Again, we read,

Mt.3.16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

Mk.1.9 ¶ And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him ...

So, when we read that Christ came up out of the water, we know that He first went down into the water where John the Baptist already was. (Mt.3.13) Turn to Romans chapter 6.

Ro.6.3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized (ἐβαπτίσθημεν, 1ppl. aor. ind. pass.) into Jesus Christ were baptized (ibid.) into his death?

4 *Therefore we are buried* (συνετάφημεν, 1ppl. aor. ind. pass. of συντάσσω) *with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised* (ἠγέρθη, 3ps. aor. pass.) *up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk* (περιπατήσωμεν, 1ppl. aor. subj. of περιπατέω) *in newness of life.*

5 *For if we have been* (γεγόναμεν, 1ppl. perf.) *planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be* (ἔσόμεθα, 1ppl. fut.) *also in the likeness of his resurrection ...*

planted, σύμφυτοι, nom. masc. pl. of σύμφυτος; only this once; in the LXX, in Am.9.13 (v.2, KJV) Zec.11.2, planted; the KJV at these places tss. to bring down and is come down, and both of the Hebrew, טָרַף, to bring down, go down, descend.

This text is full of passive verbs because this text tells what baptism is to the person baptized. The one receiving baptism is completely passive in it. There is another, the administrator that does the work. In this text there are two verbs, *to bury* and *to raise* in verse 4. These describe the motions of baptism: *backwards* to Christ's death, and *forwards* to Christ's resurrection. There are two nouns in verse 5 which tell of the direction involved in baptism, *planted* (a Greek noun and properly a verbal adjective) and *resurrection*; that is, downward and upward.

We have considered the visible form of baptism. It is a plunging or immersing into water one who has willingly repented of sin before God. Very appropriately it has been called a *watery grave*. All that will search the Scriptures should be able to conclude these same things for themselves: this is what a properly executed baptism looks like. Christening, sprinkling, pouring, partial washing or whole washings all fail just on the point of appearance. Therefore these are not baptisms at all no matter what others might say to the contrary.

History has clearly recorded the terrible sufferings of the true churches of Jesus Christ on account of this doctrine and the application of it. Those which repent of their sins are commanded to be completely immersed in water at the hands of God's authority, a disciple of a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (cf. Mt.28.19)