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Baptism as a Naming Ceremony; Matthew 28:16-20

GPBC

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Introduction – We have had the privilege this morning to observe the ordinance of baptism. An ordinance is a special service only to be observed among believers in a local church. We have two; baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both of these ordinances are visible portrayals of the gospel. Baptism portrays how the gospel transforms you. You die with Christ, you are buried with Christ, and you are raised to a new life in Christ. The Lord's Supper portrays how the gospel saves us. The death of Christ on our behalf to pay for our sins, the broken bread, and to take our sins away, the shed blood. So both of the ordinances for the church portray an aspect of the gospel. Which is why only believers in the church celebrate these two ordinances.

They are symbolic in nature. They signify something. They point us to something. They point us to the gospel of Christ. They point us to Christ. We do not place our faith in these ordinances. Taking the Lord's Supper will not save you or remove your sins. Being baptized will not save you or remove your sins. But we do place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who stands behind these ordinances. They are a means to express and proclaim and affirm our faith.

However, we would be mistaken to only view these ordinances as merely symbolic in nature. For when we look to Christ through these ordinances, given to us by Christ, our faith is nourished and we do experience a measure of grace when we rightly approach these special services. In baptism we identify with Christ, and in the Lord's Supper we proclaim that we cling to Christ.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are much more than simply going through the motions of ceremonies that are unique to the Christian faith. They don't impart faith, but they do strengthen and nourish and sustain faith.

I want us to see baptism this morning as a naming ceremony, because according to Matthew 28:19 that is exactly what it is. A naming ceremony means a great deal. Think about it. When you were born, your parents gave you a name, and that name will stick with you for the rest of your life. Receiving a name is a big deal. It identifies you. It sets you apart from other people. If someone calls out

“Hey Scott,” I don’t respond. I’m not Scott. But when someone says, “Hey Wil,” I respond to that because that’s my name. It not only identifies you, it says something about you. It places you in a family. Think about how important your name is. Ill. Passport and visas. Taxes, ID, drivers license, social security, insurance, paycheck – think about it – much of your life depends on your name.

Well in baptism, we are baptized in a new name, and that means much, much more than merely going through a ceremony.

- I. A New Name for a New Identity
  - a. We are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. As believers, we take on a whole new identity when we take on a new name.
  - b. This new name sets us apart from every other religious or nonreligious ideology, philosophy, or religion. When we are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are identified as belonging to the family of the Triune God.
    - i. There are some religions with no god, there are some religions with many gods, and there are some religions with one god, but there is only one faith that holds to One God who exists in Three Persons.
    - ii. When we are baptized, we are identified with the God of the Bible, we are identified with the Christian faith, we are identified with the One true God of heaven and earth, who made the heavens and the earth.
    - iii. Ill. Persecuted believers
    - iv. But there’s more.
  - c. When we are renamed, when we are identified with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that means that we have been removed from our previous identity, our previous name, and have been placed in a new identity. Something massive and something wonderful and something transformational has occurred in our lives that requires a new name.
    - i. 1 Cor 15:20-22 – But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of

the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

- ii. Rom 5:19 – For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.
  - iii. In Adam – in Christ. Adam, our forefather, came into the perfect place, disobeyed God, and by his sin made a mess of paradise and passed his sin down to all his progeny. We are all born in Adam, in sin, in rebellion against God, in disobedience to God, and therefore physical death and eternal death is what we have in Adam.
  - iv. Christ, our Savior, came into our mess, obeyed God, and passes down His righteousness to all who trust Him by faith. Where Adam failed, Christ succeeded. Where Adam disobeyed, Christ obeyed. Where Adam sinned, Christ sacrificed. Where Adam broke fellowship with God, Christ restores fellowship with God. Adam entered paradise and made a mess. Christ entered our mess and is making for us a paradise. We are born in Adam; we are born again in Christ.
  - v. In Adam all die; in Christ will all be made alive.
- d. And when you are transformed by grace from being in Adam to being in Christ, that glorious, miraculous transformation requires a new name!
- e. III. Caterpillar - butterfly

## II. A New Name for a New Life

- a. Being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit also means we not only have a new identity, we have a new life.
- b. That new identity is described as from being in Adam to being in Christ. Our new life is described as putting off the old self and putting on the new self.
  - i. Eph 4:17-24
- c. Putting off the old self and putting on the new self. We have died with Christ. We have been raised to new life in Christ. That’s exactly what baptism signifies. We’ve been baptized in a new name. Our identity has changed. Our lives have changed.

- d. Every morning when we wake to a new day and we dress our bodies, we also will dress our lives. That old self remains in the closet of our hearts until the Lord comes. Don't reach for that worn out, hand-me-down from Adam. Don't put on that same old garment that everybody else wears. As Paul says in Romans 13 – put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh.
  - e. We won't know the abundant life in Christ until we live our life in Christ!
  - f. If we never put on the new self it's because we don't have a new self to put on. If we've never been born again to new life, we won't have a new life!
- III. A New Name for a New Inheritance
- a. Given my earthly name, I have an inheritance. My siblings and I will inherit what our parents leave behind.
  - b. But listen, I've been given a new name. By God's grace I cling to Jesus as my Savior, I've been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. A new name means a new inheritance.
    - i. Col 3:4 – When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.
    - ii. 1 John 3:1-3
    - iii. 1 Cor 2:9 – no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him!

Conclusion – ill. Christian history tells us that the disciple Thomas took the gospel all the way to India. To this day, you'll meet many believers in India with the last name Thomas. You know why? Because when they were baptized as believers, they were given a new name. And if you are in Christ, you've been given a new name too – a new identity, a new life, and a new inheritance.