

Pt 6 Why We Are Baptist, Concerning the Church

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney 10-10-2018

Tonight, marks the 6th and final message in our series of “**Why We Are Baptist.**” We have examined many great truths from the Scripture concerning the church and how it applies to our Baptist faith.

In Part 1 we looked at what separates Baptists from false religions, cults, and other denominations. We also examined why we need to earnestly contend for the faith. We also mentioned the 5 fundamentals of the Christian faith:

1. The Inerrancy and Infallibility of the Scriptures.
2. The Deity of Christ
3. The Virgin Birth of Christ.
4. The Blood Atonement of Christ.
5. The Bodily Resurrection of Christ.

In Part 2 we looked at where the Church started and saw that it was with Jesus and his disciples. We saw where Jesus declared that he was the rock the Church was built upon and that Peter was the one he entrusted with the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven which meant that Peter would be the one he would use to usher in the New Testament Church and empower it on the Day of Pentecost.

We also began examining Dr. Carroll’s “Trail of Blood” booklet and discussed many things that he had documented concerning the history of Baptist throughout the ages.

In Part 3 we examined the **Baptist Distinctives** by using each letter from the word **B-A-P-T-I-S-T-S** and we said those were:

- 1) **B**iblical Authority
- 2) **A**utonomy of the local Church
- 3) **P**riesthood of the Believer
- 4) **T**wo Ordinances – Baptism and Lord’s Supper
- 5) **I**ndividual Soul Liberty
- 6) **S**aved and Baptized Church Membership
- 7) **T**wo Officers – Pastor and Deacons
- 8) **S**eparation of Church and State, Personal, and Ecclesiastical

In Part 4 we began looking at our Baptist Forefathers. We talked about the **AnaBaptist** and also the Roman Emperor **Constantine**, and how in AD 313 he lifted the ban on Christianity in Rome and began turning Rome into a Christian empire. We mentioned the Roman Catholic Church making it a compulsory law that every child born must be baptized.

We also discussed why **John Smyth** should not be considered the founder of the Baptist faith as stated by numerous sources. Although he founded the first General Baptist Church in Amsterdam, Smyth an Anglican pastor out of the Church of England, which made him a Protestant, so he was not what we would consider a true Baptist.

In Part 5 we closely examined how Baptists began in America. We talked about two men that were instrumental in founding the Baptist faith here in the U.S.

1. **Roger Williams** – a Puritan Separatist out of the Church of England who came to America to escape persecution.
2. **John Clarke** – a Baptist out of London who also came to America to escape persecution of the English Government.

These two men were co-founders of the State of Rhode Island and both also started Baptist Churches there; Roger Williams in Providence, RI in **1639** and John Clarke in New Port, Rhode Island in **1638**, making him the founder of the very first Baptist Church in America.

Tonight, in **Part 6** of our final message from this series, I want us to look at things concerning a New Testament Baptist Church.

Ephesians 5:22-33

- 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.
23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.
24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.
25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.
29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:
30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.
31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.
32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband.

Here in Ephesians 5 we have the Apostle Paul outlining the importance of the Church. He uses the comparison of a husband and a wife with that of Jesus and His Church. So, he is teaching two great truths in one – the proper relationship between a husband and wife and the proper relationship between Christ and the Church. He even says in verse 32 **This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**

In these 12-verses of Scripture we find several great truths concerning Christ and the Church:

1. Christ is the head of the Church.
2. He’s the Savior of the Body of the Church.
3. The Church is subject unto Christ.
4. He sanctifies and cleanses the Church.
5. He nourishes and cherisheth the Church.
6. He is preparing the Church to be presented to himself as His Bride.
7. He gave his life for the Church.

One thing you always need to be aware of, is the fact that the Church belongs to Jesus. You may think that goes without saying but in the day and age we live in, I’m not so sure everyone is aware of that. And, just like any good husband, he is very jealous where his bride is concerned.

Just as our text says in verses **26 and 27**, the Church is being prepared to be presented to Christ as His Bride. The Bride of Christ must be perfect for this presentation, and she will be.

Over in the Book of Revelation we find John writing down the vision of what he saw that will happen one day when the Heavenly City, New Jerusalem comes down: **Revelation 21:9** *And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.*

John then goes on to describe the most beautiful thing that he has ever seen. He talks of the light radiating from the bride like precious crystal-clear stones of jasper. This is the Church in all her magnificent glory, completely prepared and adorned for her wedding day.

In my opinion there is nothing more beautiful than a bride on her wedding day. When they come walking down the isle to meet their groom it nearly takes your breath away. That is the same way the Church is being prepared.

This is why it is so important that we see the Church the way Christ sees the Church and treat it as such.

Right now, the Church is in the preparation process. It says in verses 26-27: **26** *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,* **27** *That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

Let's look at each part of our preparation:

1. **Sanctify** – That word comes from a Greek word which means: “to make holy, to purify or consecrate.”
 - a. Of course, each individual Christian goes through their own personal sanctification process and we are all individual members of the Church, however, we are talking about the sanctification of the collective Church body.
 - b. As a Church, Christ expects us to conduct ourselves in a manner befitting for his Bride.
 - c. I shudder to think of the things that have went on in Churches and between members of the Body of Christ that were so unlike what His Bride should be. Very unbecoming of the Bride of Christ.
2. **Cleansing** - For the Hebrew bride there was a very long cleansing process that took place, sometimes over a 12-month period.
 - a. We find the cleansing process detailed in the **Book of Esther 2:12** *Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women:)*
 - b. Now, of course, we cannot physically pour oil of myrrh or sweet odours upon the Church – but these things are symbolic of what we as a Church body are to do in preparation for being united with Christ. How do we do that? Well, we are told how in the last part of **verse 26**: *“...with the washing of water by the word.”*

3. **Washing of water by the word.** For some reason there seems to be confusion over the meaning of this phrase by some people. Some believe it is referring to baptism – but that's not what it means. Baptism does not sanctify and cleanse us, it is simply an outward show of faith in Christ.
 - a. We can find the meaning of this phrase by rightly dividing the Word of Truth: In the Gospel of John, Jesus is praying what is referred to as his **“High Priestly Prayer.”** He is pouring out his heart to the Heavenly Father and he is praying for his followers, those that believed on him, and he says this: **John 17:17-19** *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*
 - b. So, how is the Church washed? By the truth that is found in God's Word.
 - c. You see, this is where all false religions become false – they no longer adhere to the truth of God's Word. You cannot be prepared for Christ if you are not being washed in the truth of His Word. Man's word has no truth. Man's word cannot sanctify, cleanse, or wash the church in preparation to meet Christ – no, man's word does the exact opposite. Man's word defiles the Church. So, we must be washed by the water of the word of God.

Perhaps you are wondering what in the world this has to do with why we are Baptist? Well, I will tell you why... because I believe, and I hope that you do to, that the Baptist faith most closely represents the true faith and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles as any faith in history.

Now, when I say that, some may think that I am what is referred to as a **“Baptist Brider.”** Is anyone familiar with that term? **“Baptist Brider”** is a term that someone came up with to describe extreme Baptist who believe that only the Baptist Church is the Bride of Christ being referred to in the Bible. That while other faiths or denominations may be in the family of God, they are not considered part of the Bride of Christ.

A Baptist Brider places water baptism as part of a requirement of being placed in the Body of Christ and being the Bride of Christ. They state that the **“one baptism”** referred to in **Ephesians 4:4-5** *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,* is referring to the Baptist performed by the Baptist church, as they consider the baptism conducted by the Baptist church to be the only legitimate baptism.

What Baptist Briders fail to do is rightly divide the Word of Truth, where you find the meaning of this “one baptism” described in **1 Corinthians 12:12-14** *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many.*

I think those passages make it pretty clear that it is not water baptism that places you in the body of Christ, but it is Spiritual baptism. That's what the text says in verse **13** *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...”*

And verses 13 and 14 both make it clear that it isn't just Baptist who are part of this body that makes up the Bride of Christ, it says in **verse 13**: "...Jews, Gentiles, bond, or free." I think that includes all believers in Christ and **verse 14** says: "For the body is not one member, but many."

Now, having said all that, while I believe there are many denominations that make up the Bride of Christ, I also firmly believe that the Baptist faith to be the one that most closely reflects the teaching of Christ. – But I am not a Baptist Brider by any stretch of the meaning.

We have already covered the **5-Fundamentals of the Christian Faith** and the **8-Baptist Distinctives**, now I want to end this series by talking about **6-Marks of the Church**. These are 6-things that the Lord Jesus prayed to the Heavenly Father concerning the Church. Once again, these are found in his High Priestly Prayer given in **John 17:13-26**

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

1. **Joy** – Vs 13 – The first thing he mentions. We should be a joyful people.
2. **Separation** – Vs 14-16 – Holiness demands separation from the world.
3. **Truthful** – Vs 17 – We are the pillar and ground of the truth.
4. **Mission-minded** – Vs 18 – The Lord Jesus had a passion for missions and so should His Church.
5. **Unified** – Vs 21-23 – We are all in this thing together.
6. **Loving** – Vs 26 – all things in Christ should be done in love.

These 6 things that Jesus prayed about should be 6 things that characterize or mark the Church. If someone were to come in to do a survey or an examination of our Church for the purpose of reporting on our characteristics, all 6 of these marks should be identified in our Church body.

And this wraps up our study of "Why We Are Baptist." I hope you have enjoyed it as much as I have.