

050 - The Church's One Baptism for His Disciples - Ephesians 4:3-6 - 2015-07-05

Call to Worship: Matthew 16:24-25

Scripture Reading: Joshua 24:2-15

Sermon: "The Church's One Baptism Is the Baptism of Jesus' Disciples" Ephesians 4:3-6

Benediction: John 10:27-28

INTRODUCTION

The church, as established by our dear Lord Jesus Christ, has an essential unity to it. And so, part of walking worthy of the high calling we have received in Christ Jesus is to maintain that unity on a practical basis. Since that unity consists partly in the church having one baptism, we need to know what that baptism is, so we can practice it faithfully, and in that way keep the unity of the church.

So, we have studied so far and seen that the church's one baptism is immersion, the very meaning of the word baptism. Any sprinkling, pouring, or wiping is not baptism, and so keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace requires us to practice the church's one baptism as immersion.

We have also seen that the church's one baptism is the baptism instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ. Since baptism is by His institution, is an ordinance of His making, then to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace we must practice baptism as the Lord ordained it, and no other way.

Today as we further inquire into the church's "one baptism," we look at the proper subjects of baptism. That is, whom the church should baptize, or, who should be immersed. As we look into this aspect of baptism, we discover that

The church's one baptism is the baptism of Jesus Christ's disciples. So, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, we baptize disciples of Jesus Christ and no one else.

TEXT:

Ephesians 4:3-6

BODY:

The church's one baptism is the baptism of Jesus Christ's disciples. So, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, we baptize disciples of Jesus Christ and no one else.

- I. See What the Lord Jesus Commanded His Church to Do: Make Disciples and Baptize Them
 - A. Review with me the Lord's commission to baptize
 1. Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them
 - B. Recall what we have learned together last year, about what the Lord Jesus meant for the apostles to do in order to make sinners become His disciples
 1. Luke 24:45-47 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. (46) Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, (47) and that **repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name** to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
 - C. So, we see the Lord Jesus commissioning His church: "By preaching repentance and remission of sin in My name, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them." So, that's what our Lord Jesus commanded His church to do.

- II. See What the Lord's Church Actually Did
(They were full of the Holy Spirit; so let see if they did exactly what the Lord Jesus commanded them to do)
 - A. Acts 10:39-48 And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. (40) Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, (41) not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. (42) And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. (43) To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, **whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.**" (44) While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. (45) And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. (46) For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, (47) "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" (48) And **he commanded them to be baptized** in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

1. The Lord's church preached faith in Him and remission of sins (Acts 10:43)
 - a) note that in one case the preacher says, "repent," and in the other, "believe"; these are not exactly the same thing, but go together so closely that when you have said one you do not necessarily need to say the other
2. The Lord's church baptized those who believed (Acts 10:48)
3. APPLICATION: The equation of believing and being made a disciple is why we have the phrase, "believer's baptism."

III. See the Limitations of the Church's Ability and Responsibility in This Matter

- A. Acts 8 is the story of Philip preaching Christ in Samaria
- B. Acts 8:5-23 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. (6) And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. (7) For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. (8) And there was great joy in that city. (9) But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, (10) to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God." (11) And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. (12) But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. (13) Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done. (14) Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, (15) who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. (16) For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (17) Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (18) And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, (19) saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit." (20) But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! (21) You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. (22) Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. (23) For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."
- C. The bible says that many believed and were baptized, both men and women
- D. Among them was a man named Simon

- E. After he had been baptized, he offered to pay the apostles money for the power to bestow the Holy Spirit by laying on of hands (18-19)
- F. The bible says that Peter then was able to see that Simon had not true part in what was going on, and was still in need of repentance
- G. APPLICATION: The preacher preached, and then baptized those who said they had believed. When one was found not truly repentant, not truly a disciple of Jesus Christ, it showed that despite the church's intention to baptize only disciples, some false converts might be among those baptized.
 - 1. Here is where the phrase "credible profession of faith" comes in. Only believers in Christ, only His disciples are to be baptized. But we, the church, the ones who are to baptize, cannot see inside to the heart, to see if the person has true faith in Christ or not. So we must rely on the person professing faith in Christ; that is, he must say so.
 - a) He must say so in a way that seems believable, credible to us.
 - b) He also must not be living in such a way as to make what he says unbelievable.

- IV. See that nowhere in the bible is the baptism of babies commanded or recorded
 - A. At this point, let's turn to some of the bible verses that teach us to baptize babies. Okay, finished with that.
 - B. Let's next turn to some of the bible stories that mention baptism of babies. Ok, finished with that, too.
 - C. Read the bible cover to cover, and you will find no instruction that we baptize babies, and no historical record of baptism of babies!
 - D. Children are mentioned in association with baptism. Acts 2:36-41 [Peter speaking] "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." (37) Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (38) Then Peter said to them, **"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;** and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (39) For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." (40) And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." (41) Then **those who gladly [not in ESV or NIV] received his word were baptized;** and that day about three thousand souls were added to them
 - 1. you see that children are mentioned
 - 2. think about what is said of them
 - a) repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins
 - b) and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit
 - c) this is a promise to you
 - d) it is also a promise to your children
 - e) it is also a promise to all who are afar off

- f) yes, it is a promise to as many as the Lord our God will call
- 3. Think of how precious that promise sounds to those Jews standing there.
 - a) Here was our last dealing with Jesus of Nazareth Matthew 27:24-26 When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it." (25) And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children." (26) Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.
 - b) Now we find out that He is risen from the dead, and He knows what we did to Him
 - c) And these people are telling us that if we repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ we will be forgiven our sins, and this goes for their children, too! In our madness we called down a curse upon their heads; we asked for the responsibility of the blood of Jesus to be imputed to our children; now, even as the horror of what we have done is driven home to us, and we have cried out, "Brothers, what shall we do?!" it is told to us that our dear children can be forgiven their sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit!
- 4. No mention is made here of a baby being baptized. And to turn that precious promise of forgiveness to the repentant sinner into a license to sprinkle babies is not to keep the unity of the Spirit in the church!
- 5. APPLICATION: As parents, or anyone else who has beloved children, we are tempted to think that God promises salvation to our children. He does not. But He promises that anyone among our children who repents of sin, trusting Christ, will be saved from God's wrath and filled with His Holy Spirit.
- E. The bible does say that whole households were baptized.
 - 1. Acts 16:13-15 And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. (14) Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. (15) And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.
 - a) are babies, or even small children, mentioned?
 - b) are there babies in every household in this church?
 - 2. Acts 16:29-34 Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. (30) And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (31) So they said, "Believe on the Lord

Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." (32) Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. (33) And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. (34) Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

- a) here more detail is given, and we find out that the preachers preached to everyone in the house (32)
- b) we see that the whole household believed (34)

V. APPLICATION

- A. Note what the Lord Jesus did NOT command: that anyone who is not a disciple of His be baptized
 1. He did not command that babies be baptized
 2. He did not command that small children who agreed to what someone said be baptized
 3. He did not command that people wanting to become His disciples be baptized
 4. He did not command that people wanting to take the Lord's Supper be baptized
- B. APPLICATION: Consider that the disciple of Jesus Christ must identify Himself as such for the church to know he should be baptized (briefly because already mentioned above)
 1. We only know by the person saying so
 2. Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ consists in hearing the gospel, believing in the Lord, repenting of sin; if a person does not express in words that he believes in the Lord to save him, and is repentant, then he may well be a disciple of Jesus Christ, but we who are to baptize disciples can't know that until he is able to tell us
- C. APPLICATION: Understand that many people who are not disciples of Jesus Christ want to be baptized.
 1. some too young; grasping that it is the right thing to do, but not truly disciples of Jesus Christ
 2. some not changed on the inside, not really believing or penitent; just wanting to do what God requires so they can be blessed by Him instead of being cursed by Him
 3. so care is needed in hearing what such people have to say, and observing how they are living
- D. APPLICATION: Understand that people who consider themselves to have been baptized want their children and grandchildren to be baptized
 1. of course for many that means they want their babies to be sprinkled
 2. for many others, including us ourselves, it means we want our children to hear and understand the preaching of forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ,

to be convicted that they are sinners, to turn from that sin to Jesus Christ, trusting Him to save them, and then submitting to baptism

3. this desire for our children to be baptized is a strong force, and we must deal with it
 - a) let us help each other resist going to infant sprinkling
 - b) let us help each other resist baptizing children not yet able to profess faith in Christ

E. APPLICATION: If baptism is for disciples of Jesus Christ and no one else, then let us understand it to be a profession by ceremony of our being His disciples.

1. This is a very big deal to Christians living where Christians persecuted.
2. This will be more meaningful if recent events are signalling the approach of persecution here in the land of the free.

CONCLUSION

-What did the Lord Jesus command His church to do? Make disciples and baptize them

-What did the early church actually do? They preached Jesus Christ, commanded repentance and faith, and baptized those who had become disciples

-Are there limitations to the church's ability to know who is a disciple? Yes! We can only know who says so in a believable way, and we must act on that.

-Doesn't the bible teach that babies of Christian parents should be baptized? No, babies being baptized is not so much as mentioned anywhere in the bible.

The church's one baptism is the baptism of Jesus Christ's disciples. So, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, we baptize disciples of Jesus Christ and no one else.

Carroll:

A man must be a disciple, a penitent believer in Jesus Christ

Acts 2:36-44 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." (37) Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (38) Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (39) For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." (40) And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." (41) Then **those who gladly [not in ESV or NIV] received his word were baptized**; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. (42) And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. (43) Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. (44) Now **all who believed** were together, and had all things in common,

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.

Acts 10:43-48 To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, **whoever believes** in Him will receive remission of sins." (44) While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. (45) And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. (46) For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, (47) "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be **baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?**" (48) **And he commanded them to be baptized** in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

Acts 16:30-34 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (31) So they said, "**Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." (32) Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. (33) And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. (34) Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, **having believed in God with all his household.**

Acts 18:8 Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, **believed and were baptized.**

JRY: Let us have this study in two parts:

1. the places in the bible where baptism of babies is taught
2. the places in the bible where the baptism of Jesus Christ's disciples is taught

I pulled this little joke here to emphasize to you that the baptism of babies is nowhere taught in the bible, or even mentioned. There's no instruction to do it, and no historical record of its having been done.

- I. See that the Church's One Baptism Is the Baptism of Jesus' Disciples by Instruction
- II. See that the Church's One Baptism Is the Baptism of Jesus' Disciples by Example

Carroll:

"let every one of you be baptized," that is, every one of you who has repented.

"Go make disciples, baptizing them." Make disciples first, then baptize the disciples.

JRY:

Possibly this sermon would be a good opportunity to talk through the people's concerns about persecution possibly just over the horizon.

Pendleton:

We must, therefore, look else where than to the meaning of the word to ascertain who are scriptural subjects of baptism. And where shall we look? To the commission given by Christ to his apostles; for this commission is the supreme authority for the administration of baptism.

Surely the language of this commission is plain. Matthew informs us that teaching, or making disciples (for the verb *matheteuo* which he uses means *make disciples*) is to precede baptism; Mark establishes the priority of faith to baptism; and Luke connects repentance and remission of sins with the execution of the commission. No man can, in obedience to this commission,

baptize an unbeliever or an unconscious infant. The unbeliever is not a penitent disciple, and it is obviously impossible for the infant to repent and believe the gospel.

Without enlarging on these topics, what is the conclusion of the whole matter? Clearly this: The commission of Christ, as understood and exemplified in the apostolic age, requires the baptism of believers, disciples; and the baptism of all others, whether adult unbelievers or unconscious infants, is utterly unwarranted. There is, as Paul has said, ONE BAPTISM. It is *one* in the action involved, and *one* in the subject of the action.

Dagg:

publicly devote themselves to the service of Christ

The profession of renouncing the world, and devoting ourselves to Christ, might have been required to be made in mere words addressed to the ears of those who hear; but infinite wisdom has judged it better that it should be made in a formal and significant act, appointed for the specific purpose. That act is baptism.

The place which baptism holds in the commission, indicates its use. The apostles were sent to make disciples, and to teach them to observe all the Savior's commands; but an intermediate act is enjoined, the act of baptizing them. In order to make disciples, they were commanded, "Go, preach the gospel to every creature." When the proclamation of the good news attracted the attention of men, and by the divine blessing so affected their hearts, that they became desirous to follow Christ, they were taught to observe his commandments, and first to be baptized. This ceremony was manifestly designed to be the initiation into the prescribed service; and every disciple of Christ who wishes to walk in the ways of the Lord, meets this duty at the entrance of his course.

it is the appointed ceremony of profession

The believing subject can feel the force of the obligation acknowledged in the act, and Paul appeals to this sense of obligation: "Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"

If infant baptism be obligatory, the duty is parental; and if it be a ceremony in which children are dedicated by their parents to the Lord, it is a different institution from that in which faith is professed.

Hiscox

The baptism of unconverted children and unconscious infants has become common through the Christian world. The Romish Church, the Greek Church, and most of the Protestant churches practise it. Yet Baptists condemn it as unscriptural, unreasonable and pernicious. They believe that repentance and faith should always precede baptism. Without these baptism has no significancy, and serves no religious purpose.

Prop. 4 --- That the practice is unauthorized, presumptuous and censurable on the part of the parents, sponsors and administrators, and productive of evil both to the child that receives it and the Church that allows and practises it.

William Wall *The History of Infant Baptism*

<https://archive.org/details/historyofinfantb>