

“The Other Side”
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The title of this lesson is “The Other Side.”

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This morning, I want to look at baptism from a different perspective.

Baptism is a vital part of Christianity. The Bible makes that clear.

It is essential. It is essential for salvation.

It provides forgiveness of sins ... past sins and any future sins. It makes entry into Heaven possible.

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But mankind ... false religions ... denominations ... they all complicate baptism. Unnecessarily so.

Today I want us to look back at baptism from the other side.

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Jesus looked back at His crucifixion, burial, and resurrection from the other side.

To get to the other side ... He had to suffer and die.

In His prayers in the Garden, Jesus acknowledged what He must suffer. He understood what it would take ... to get to the other side.

After His resurrection, He walked, talked, and shared meals with His disciples.

The battle with Satan was over. He had won. Soon He would ascend to Heaven and be crowned Lord and King.

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On the other side, Satan and death had been conquered. The price to redeem the world had been paid. Forgiveness of sins was available to anyone willing to be clothed in Him.

Knowing this ... does it make any sense at all to you? ... that a person would approach baptism and say ... “I don’t need to get to the other side to be saved. I don’t need to get to the other side of baptism to be clothed in Christ and have my sins forgiven.” “I don’t need a water burial that mirrors Christ’s burial in the tomb.

Many who remain lost ... too many ... say, “I believe Christ is the Son of God ... and that He died and was raised for me. Perhaps I must die to sin ... but I don’t think I must be buried with Him ... and be raised from the water to walk in newness of life.”

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How can one look forward at baptism ... consider it optional or unnecessary ... and reject the commandment to be baptized? How can one ignore the many examples of baptism presented in the scriptures?

So, let's look at a few passages of scripture that describe both sides of baptism ... the before and after ... and see what we can learn. Let's see what we can learn from the "after" ... "from the other side."

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As the children of Israel fled Pharaoh's army ... during the Exodus ... they came to the shore of the Red Sea. And stopped cold in their tracks.

If God had not led the way ... with His fiery pillar of cloud and fire ... there would have been confusion. "What do we do now?" "I'm not going down into that sea!"

If God had not parted the waters ... there would have been no escape.

If God had not led the Israelites through the sea, they would not have reached the other side.

They would NOT have been saved. They would not have been rescued from death.

On the other side ... they sang a song of deliverance ... a song of praise unto God.

What did the Israelites see looking back? They saw the death they avoided ... they saw the enslavement left behind.

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Let's turn together to 1 Corinthians 10:1-2. I want you to see for yourself. This is the NASB translation.

"For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren ... that our fathers were all under the cloud ... and all passed through the sea ...

... and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea..."

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What is the Apostle Paul saying to us?

I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago.

All of them were guided by a cloud that moved ahead of them ... and all of them walked through the sea on dry ground.

Under the cloud and in the sea ... all of them were baptized into Moses.

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The Apostle Paul makes the parallel very clear.

God used the Red Sea to rescue the Israelites from Pharaoh. By going through the water ... buried beneath the cloud ... they were freed from slavery and death.

God uses baptism to rescue us from Satan. We are freed from sin ... by going through the water ... by being buried and raised up.

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What did the Israelites see ... looking back from the other side? They saw that the Red Sea had saved them.

What do Christians see ... looking back from the other side? We see that baptism has saved us.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:6, that these examples serve as instructions and warnings to us.

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Let now turn to Galatians 3 ...

In Galatians 3:27 Paul writes, "For all of you who were baptized into Jesus Christ have clothed yourselves in Christ."

All who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ. It's like putting on new clean clothes.

Before baptism ... we were not 'in Christ.'

On the other side of baptism ... we have been united with Christ.

Looking back ... it was baptism that united us with Christ. It was baptism that put new clothes on us.

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Let's turn to Colossians 2.

Before we read verses 12 and 13, Let me summarize verses 9-11.

The Apostle Paul says that our sins have been put away "in Christ." In Christ, "we have been made complete."

Who did this? Christ did. Where did it take place? In Him.

For our sins to be taken away ... to be forgiven ... we need to be in Christ.

Now, let's look from the other side.

Let's read Verses 12-13 ... Colossians 2:12-13 ... leading in from the previous verses ...

Our sins were put away ... in Him ... "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.

And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh ... He made you alive together with Him ... having forgiven us all our transgressions..."

On the other side of His sacrifice, Christ was alive again. On the other side of baptism ... Christ has made us alive WITH Him.

Before being buried in baptism, we were dead in our transgressions ... dead in our sins. On the other side we have been forgiven of our transgressions.

When we look back ... across baptism ... we see our old self ... in sin.

It's puzzling how false teachers can say that belief, repentance and confession is all that is necessary to forgive sins, and that baptism is optional. Yes ... belief, repentance and confession bring you to the water's edge ... yet only on the other side of baptism can one find salvation.

Our faith leads us through the water. And in the water, we trust that the same God who raised His Son from the dead ... will raise us up to be new creatures ... our sins forgiven.

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Let's turn to the 6th chapter of Romans.

The entire chapter tells of two separate pathways.

One path leads through Christ and ends in eternal life. The other path is a path of sin that leads to eternal death.

The first is a life of service to Christ. The other is a life of slavery to Satan.

The two paths have nothing in common. They share nothing. They never coincide.

The big story in this chapter, is that faith in Christ makes it possible to jump from the sinful path, over onto the path of Christ. It makes it possible to stop being a slave to sin and become a servant of Christ.

It's like this ... if you'll excuse the expression ... it's like faith has brought you to the ticket window... and if you want to walk on Christ's path, you've got to buy a ticket. It's like the tollbooth on the Turnpike. The ticket price is baptism.

In His Great Commission, Jesus commanded the Apostles to make Disciples of all nations by baptizing them into the family of God. We refer to baptism as obeying the Gospel command.

Let's read Romans 6:17.

It reads, "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you have obeyed from the heart that form of teaching to which you were committed."

After obeying the teaching, to which the brethren at Corinth had committed ... the Gospel of Christ ... they were no longer slaves to sin.

In the verse before, verse 16, Paul says that a person becomes a slave to whomever they choose to obey. If you choose to obey Satan, you become a slave to sin. If you choose to obey Christ, you become a servant of righteousness.

Verse 17 says that the brethren no longer were slaves to sin. There's only one thing this can mean. It means that they became servants of Christ by obeying the Gospel.

Obedience to the Gospel was the ticket to walk the path of salvation.

Verse 18 says, "having been freed from sin, you became servants of righteousness."

Looking back from the other side ... from the path of Christ ... the Christian sees that they were in sin before obedience.

So next, I want us to be very clear on what is meant when the scriptures say that the Corinthian brethren "obeyed the Gospel teaching."

Romans 6:3-7 clearly spells it out.

Romans 6:3-4 reads ...

"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."

They were buried with Christ in baptism. They were baptized into His death.

And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father ... they too were raised. They were raised up from baptism to walk in newness life.

Romans 6:5 reads ...

“For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.”

They were united with Christ in His death. They were united with Him in resurrection.

And Romans 6:6-7 reads ...

“Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died to sin is freed from sin.”

Their old man or woman was crucified. The sinful person was done away with. Forgiveness had freed them from sin.

This is the path the brethren chose through baptism. The path to eternal life. They were on the other side of baptism ... looking back at their unforgiven condition.

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Acts 2:38 is a verse we've all committed to memory.

“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

Peter was preaching the first ever Gospel sermon ... on the feast day of Pentecost ... 50 days after Jesus rose from the dead.

He was preaching to a large assembly of Jews. His message made them realize that they had been complicit in the crucifixion of the promised Messiah.

The crowd asked the Apostles what they needed to do in order to be saved from that sinful generation.

Responding, Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ ... in order to have their sins forgiven.

In verse 41, we see that 3000 people received Peter's preaching and were baptized. They took the Gospel of Christ to heart and obeyed it.

This alone ought to be enough to demonstrate just how essential baptism is for salvation.

But let's continue on and look at this from the other side.

Acts 2:40 says that ... “With many other words Peter solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation!’”

Acts 2:41 says that ... “Those who were baptized ... the 3000 souls who were saved ... were added to the number of Disciples that day.”

And Acts 2:47 says that ... “The Lord was adding to their number ... day by day ... those who were being saved.” (That's those who were being baptized.)

From the other side ... we see the new Disciples ... as members of the Lord's body ... we see the new Christians ... looking back across baptism to the time they first heard Peter preach.

They looked back as ones who had been forgiven of their sins. They looked back to the point in time ... when they were convicted in their hearts ... and came to believe in Jesus as Lord and Christ. They looked back to the time ... before they were baptized ... to when they were still in their sins.

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Let's recap.

In 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 ... Christians looked back from the saved side of baptism ... to a time when they were in danger.

In Galatians 3:27 ... Christians looked back from the saved side of baptism ... to a time when they were not sons and daughter of God ... and had not been clothed in Christ.

In Colossians 2:12-13 ... Christians looked back from the forgiven side of baptism, alive in Christ ... to a time when they were dead in their trespasses.

In Romans 6:17 ... Christians looked back from the saved side of baptism ... from the pathway of Christ ... to a time when they had not been buried with Christ in baptism and were still servants of Satan.

And in Acts 2:47 ... Christians looked back from the saved side of baptism ... to a time when they were not members of the Lord's body and were still members of a perverse generation.

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Remember these passages and use them to teach others just how essential baptism is to their salvation.

We could go on ... asking questions such as ... "On which side of salvation would Noah's family have found themselves ... had they not entered the ark that bore them up through the flood waters?

Or which side of salvation would Saul/Paul have found himself ... had he not obeyed Ananias' admonition to "get up and wash away his sins in baptism?"

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This concludes our lesson for this morning.

Your kind attention is appreciated.

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The invitation of Christ.

On which side of baptism do you find yourself his morning? On the safe side? ... or the dangerous side? On the forgiven side? ... or the lost side?

Your faith must bring you to the water's edge. AND ... it must also carry you through the water ... and on throughout your life.

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