Romans 6:3-4 — Baptism

One baptism into one Lord: buried with him, raised with him, appealing to God through him

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, August 22, 2021
PASSAGES	Romans 6:3-11; Ephesians 4:4-6; Romans 5:12-15; 1 Peter 3:18-22; 2 Peter 3:4-7; Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; 1 John 1:8-9; John 3:6
MESSAGE	Begins at 0:59:11 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

The church has baptized at different times and in different ways, but always into Christ. Baptism is not about the right water, the right method, or whether you know enough or believe hard enough today. It is baptism into Jesus the person – into the death he generously shares with us and the life he lives to God – and an appeal to God for a good conscience on the basis of his resurrection alone.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The early church worshiped and baptized in many different ways. What was constant was that they met on the Lord's day, honored him, and baptized into Christ.
- Baptism is an initiation, not a retirement. You do not need to know enough Bible first; there is always room to grow.
- Our faith is not in how hard we are "faithing" but in Jesus himself, so a rough morning does not disqualify anyone.
- "One baptism" is not one approved water temperature or method. It is baptism into the one Lord.
- Salvation and baptism carry the backdrop of sin and judgment: all have sinned, the wages of sin is death, and in Adam we all inherited it.
- Baptized into Christ, we are baptized into his death – he died for us and, hidden in him, as us – and raised to walk in newness of life.

- Peter says baptism saves not by washing dirt off the body but as an appeal to God through the resurrection of Jesus. Like Noah, we are saved through the water from a world under judgment.

▶ 0:59:11

It was Baptism Sunday, and Matt – "your almost senior pastor; it's a good gig that I'm in the process of getting" – welcomed the families and friends who had come to support those being baptized. He walked everyone through the plan: a short sermon, the children back in for testimony videos, then a procession to the baptismal tank at the corner of Ruth and Arroyo, a "quick change" into swimsuits, and a party in the backyard. "It's a whole thing."

Many ways, one focus

▶ 1:03:43

Inviting people to start small groups for the fall, Matt noted that many look to early house churches for a pattern. But scholars "much smarter than I am" say there is no way to recover one way the early church worshiped on Sunday mornings, because it varied from place to place. Some met in small homes; some in large homes with courtyards – even before the crucifixion there were wealthy people among Jesus' followers. Some met outside by a river or in fields.

▶ 1:05:12

"The focus was that they met and that they worshiped – not what time, where, what kind of building." Baptism is the same. Some baptized after a year of preparation, some after forty days of fasting; some held an exorcism service first or gave milk and honey afterward; sometimes a bishop anointed with oil and sometimes not. "But the point was they baptized into Christ."

▶ 1:05:45

So, as he told the baptism class, the focus is not "do I know enough about the Bible right now?" "This isn't when you retire as a Christian. This is an initiation ceremony." Our appeal in baptism is "an appeal to God on the basis of Jesus Christ the person."

▶ 1:06:14

If you were rude to your mom or brother at breakfast, "that's not the focus." If you wonder, "am I faithy enough, am I faithing hard enough today to get baptized?" – "our faith isn't even in how hard we're faithing. Our faith is in him as a person."

▶ 1:06:46

Why baptize? Jesus, whom we follow, was baptized; Jesus told us to baptize; and the meaning of baptism matters. Matt promised not to go an hour, "because we're going to actually do baptisms, and that's going to be great."

One Lord, one baptism

▶ 1:07:17

> "There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."
>
> EPHESIANS 4:4–6 ↗

"The one baptism isn't one pre-approved temperature for the water. It's not one pre-approved way of doing it. The one baptism is into the one Lord."

Baptized into his death

▶ 1:07:47

> "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."
>
> ROMANS 6:3–4 ↗

▶ 1:08:27

We are baptized into Christ as a person, and one effect is that we are baptized into his death – "which is a generous thing he gave us."

▶ 1:08:57

So baptism, like salvation, carries other themes, including judgment. Say "Jesus saves," and someone will naturally ask, "From what?" There is a backdrop: sin is real and its effects are dramatic.

Sin, Adam, and the backdrop of judgment

▶ 1:09:40

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" – and that "all" means you and me.
If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, though John's emphasis is the next verse: if we confess, he is faithful and just to forgive.

▶ 1:10:51

Jesus told Nicodemus that flesh gives birth to flesh and Spirit gives birth to spirit. Trace your flesh back – parents, grandparents, Noah and his sons, "why stop there?" – to Adam. In a sense all humanity was in Adam; when he walked around, "there's humanity." And that flesh was put out of the garden, cut off from the tree of life.

▶ 1:12:32

Adam is "a type of the one to come." Born of flesh, we were in Adam; born of the Spirit, we are included in Christ, the fulfilment – Adam sinning and dying as humanity, Christ conquering death and living "as the figurehead of all the redeemed."

▶ 1:13:14

> "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned... Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many."
>
> ROMANS 5:12–15 ↗

▶ 1:13:55

If that feels unfair, Hebrews says Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham while still "in the loins of his ancestor" (Hebrews 7:9–10). By the same logic we were all in Adam. "It was a simple matter for just Adam to sin and fall, but much greater grace and power for Jesus to die and redeem many."

▶ 1:14:58

"The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." We deserve death; but baptized into Jesus, we are baptized into his death. "As he's dying, he's dying for us – and in a way, since we're hidden in him like we were hidden in Adam, he's dying as us. Our death, from his death; his death belonging to us, because he gave it."

Peter: an appeal to God

▶ 1:15:33

> "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit… when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him."
>
> 1 PETER 3:18–22 ↗

(The spirits in prison, Matt said, "we could talk about that offline.")

▶ 1:17:19

"When we baptize, we're not taking a bath." Peter, like Paul, puts the focus on the person: an appeal to God "not on the basis of how incredibly faithy we were that day or how well we prayed," but through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. "Our only appeal is on the basis of Jesus the person and what he's done for us." We do repent, "yet our focus is on him, the Lord of glory. He's the one who's sufficient for us."

▶ 1:18:32

The water separated Noah's family from the world around them; the ark preserved them from the water. But tighten the analogy: Noah and his family were saved *by* the water from the wickedness of their world – by God's own judgment. "Which is why we include themes of judgment in our proclamation of salvation. We too must flee from the wickedness and the death and destruction that sin brings."

▶ 1:19:02

Scoffers ask where the promise of his coming is, "but they deliberately overlook this fact": the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished, and "by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly" (2 Peter 3:4–7).

▶ 1:20:05

> *"We are fleeing to Christ, but that also means we're fleeing from judgment. Christ welcomes us with open arms – not just for fun, but because he's ransoming and redeeming us."*

Without that, "salvation kind of loses its meaning."

United with him in death and resurrection

▶ 1:20:34

As the children began filing back in – "I'm just going to keep preaching… preachers are just going to preach" – Matt returned to Romans 6:

> "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."
>
> ROMANS 6:5–11 ↗

▶ 1:21:49

We were not there at the cross, "but by the mystery of union with Jesus we actually were. By the grace of God we were co-crucified with him – him giving us the death he didn't deserve, so that we would escape the death we do."

▶ 1:22:30

And if we are "shielded by being in him, mystically united and included in him," we will not live under death's dominion either. Those baptized into Jesus share his death, share his life, and will be included in a resurrection like his – "beneficiaries of his very life."

▶ 1:23:07

Matt prayed with thanks that Christ "died once for sins, for all," conquered death and shares his life, asking for deeper trust and understanding, peace and great joy for the families celebrating, and strengthened faith for those being baptized – "and grow them up in the Lord." Then Mrs. Tompkins came forward with the testimony videos, and the church headed out to the water.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE

- Ephesians 4:4–6
- Romans 6:3–4
- Romans 3:23
- 1 John 1:8–9
- John 3:6
- Romans 5:12–15
- Hebrews 7:9–10
- Romans 6:23
- 1 Peter 3:18–22
- 2 Peter 3:4–7
- Romans 6:5–11

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Matt said the early church baptized in many different ways but always into Christ. What details about baptism have you seen people treat as the main thing?
2. When have you felt you didn't know enough, or weren't "faithy enough," to take a step with God? What does it change to put your faith in Jesus rather than in your own faith?
3. Why does the gospel need the backdrop of sin and judgment to make sense? How do Romans 5 and 6 connect our being "in Adam" with being "in Christ"?
4. What does it mean to you that Jesus died not only for you but, in a sense, as you – and that his death and life now belong to you?
5. How will you "consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" this week – and is there anyone you could encourage toward baptism?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6kQfywFAWw&t=3551s

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.