Baptism

One Lord, one baptism, and nothing resting on how hard you believe

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, August 14, 2022
PASSAGES	Romans 6:3-11; Matthew 28:16-20; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Ephesians 4:4-6; Romans 5:12-15; 1 John 1:8-9; Romans 3:23
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:03:41 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

We baptise first because Jesus commanded it. But baptism is not a certificate that we have believed hard enough; it is a way of physically preaching the gospel – that Jesus saves by grace through faith. In him we are baptised into his death and raised to walk in new life, and because it rests on his finished work rather than on us, there is one baptism, and nothing to be nervous about.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The people around you may have more appetite for spiritual things than you expect. Many of us are equipped to host a Bible study in our living rooms.
- Early Christians met in many kinds of places and baptised in different ways, but everywhere they baptised – because Jesus told them to.
- Baptism proclaims that Christ is the one to believe in, not that the candidate has been proven to believe hard enough.
- There is one baptism because there is one Lord. It does not depend on the person baptising or on how your morning went.
- All have sinned. In Adam we were all shut out from the tree of life; in Christ, who opened his death to us, we share his resurrection too.

- Noah's family was saved through the water: God's judgment on wickedness was their rescue. Baptism is an appeal to God, not a bath.
- You cannot get union with Christ à la carte – his death without his life. He gave us himself.

▶ 1:03:41

It was Baptism Sunday, with four children and one adult to be baptised after the service and water slides on the playground to follow. Before preaching, Matt pointed to the updated list of small groups on hope.org and the return of Wednesday family night, with dinner.

An appetite you might not expect

▶ 1:05:45

His encouragement: your neighbours and co-workers may be hungrier for spiritual things than you think. We imagine that the treasure we love is something no one else would want, and that inviting someone to study the Bible will only get us yelled at. About twenty years ago, praying for people downtown with friends, he saw a woman standing a little way off while they prayed for a mother and daughter. He assumed she had come to mock. "No – she was in line. She was just politely waiting for her turn." It still makes him laugh, and reminds him that "there are a lot of us who are plenty equipped to host in our living rooms… a place to study the Bible, maybe pray for one another." Then teachers and students stood, and the congregation blessed the school year.

One thing every early church did

▶ 1:09:16

Matt shared what he teaches in Hope's baptism classes – and plugged a second baptism Sunday on October 9th, since so many wanted to be baptised this fall. Scholars of the early church say there was no single liturgy: believers met by rivers, in homes, in a rich uncle's courtyard big enough for the thousands converted at Pentecost. Some poured water, picturing the Spirit poured out; others submerged, as Hope would that day. "But there's one thing in common everywhere, and it's that they did baptise."

▶ 1:11:23

> "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"
>
> MATTHEW 28:16–20 ↗

Jesus did not specify the water temperature or whether to hold your nose, but he did say to baptise, "so that is what the church has been doing as a way of obedience." If you have not been baptised, Matt encouraged you to commit.

What baptism proclaims

▶ 1:13:10

Baptism can be a way of joining a church or celebrating your faith. But its harder meaning is "a little bit harder to grasp, in part because it's not directly about you." "Baptism is a cool way to physically preach the gospel." It is not a way of showing the world "I have been proven to believe hard enough – the pastor examined me." It is "a way of professing to the world that he is one to believe in... a proclamation that Jesus saves by grace through faith, more than it is 'I for sure have my ticket to eternal life now.'"

▶ 1:14:34

That emphasis has a long pedigree. Bishop Ambrose reminded the newly baptised that they went down into the water, but also how they answered: that they believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. "There's always been water, but the emphasis has always been the person we're trusting." So Matt tells his classes not to be nervous. What if I slip on the bottom of the tank? What if I was mostly good but argued with my family that morning – is it cancelled? "It's normal to feel these things, but the real answer is that it's not about us."

One Lord, one baptism

▶ 1:15:43

In the ancient church, some priests and bishops became traitors, handing over church locations and Scriptures to Rome – and they had baptised people. Did those people need re-baptising? The church's answer: no, because it was never about the one who baptised you. "It's the work of Christ by Christ – not the work of Christ by a dude."

▶ 1:17:05

> "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 Nicene Creed says the same: "We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins." Not one dunk only – poured or submerged, river, pool or horse trough – but one Lord to be baptised into.

▶ 1:18:13

> "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 ↗

▶ 1:18:49

God became flesh, lived a sinless life showing what God is truly like, and died by giving us his life – opening his death "as an invitation to others to join him." He rose because he is the giver of life; "you can't kill the author of life." He ascended and rules now.

Why a death at all?

▶ 1:20:16

Because of sin. God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden "lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever" (Genesis 3:22–23) – not from his presence, but from that particular tree. Since they are our parents, we were all born outside the garden, and we have been dying ever since. Nor can we say, "I wouldn't have eaten it": "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "Who's part of all?" Even on our best days, when we did not murder anyone, we fall short of a standard it is silly even to attempt.

▶ 1:23:05

> "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
>
> 1 JOHN 1:8–9 ↗

Confession is not only for the day you first trusted Christ; it takes bravery and honesty. "We're usually not deceiving our family, but we can deceive ourselves. People who are married are like, my spouse is not convinced." And the second emphasis: *he* cleanses us – not the person who baptises you.

▶ 1:24:59

So Matt tells parents who baptise their children: it is an honour, but if the milk spilled that morning and everyone ended up yelling in the car, "it was never about your spiritual purity… we weren't really hoping it was going to be resting on you to begin with." Hand under the head or on the nose, the exact words – "you don't have to redo it later, and if you believe harder next week you don't need to get re-baptised," because we are proclaiming that Christ is the trustworthy one.

In Adam, in Christ

▶ 1:27:33

> "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… 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 ↗

▶ 1:28:03

How can all humanity be "in" one man? Eve came from Adam's side, and everyone came from them – "like a Russian nesting doll for all of humanity. Actually I don't like those things, because they're full of themselves." Just as Levi paid tithes through Abraham while still in his loins (Hebrews 7:9–10), we were there, and were shut out with him. Adam is a "type" – a blueprint – of Christ: as we were in Adam when he sinned, so Christ opened his death wide so we could "barge in inside of him." He did not stay dead, and he shares not only his death but his resurrection, so we walk in new life and expect to live with him for ever.

▶ 1:32:16

Why "much more"? "It's easy to die, but much harder to give life." To bring dead and dying lost sheep from every generation back to life was far greater than Adam's sin. "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). We see those wages in the flood, Sodom and Egypt; and they can be satisfied by Christ's death. Both his death and resurrection are gifts.

How do I seal the deal?

▶ 1:34:24

"That's all theology, great, but how do I seal the deal? Tell me what to say." (Here the children rejoined the room for their testimony videos – "Lord, give us back our children.")

▶ 1:37:03

> "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God… 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."
>
> 1 PETER 3:18–22 ↗

▶ 1:38:19

Noah's family was saved *through* the water, not from it. Peter was writing to a scattered, persecuted church about a remnant God saved through his judgment: God's intervention against the wickedness of their world was their rescue. Likewise in baptism "you're not saved from the water" – "although if you get held under too long, that might be an issue" – you are saved from the sin that seeks to destroy you. "This is God's just judgment for you, not against you." And it is not the water ("although our water is clean, we put a little chlorine in there"). It is an appeal to God.

▶ 1:40:19

So you need not wonder whether your appeal had the right words, was long enough, or made you cry. "The thing that's important is the person we're appealing to." Hope does not ask candidates to rate their trust from one to ten. Everyone in Scripture faltered; the great God who came near never did.

> *"Did he save me hard enough? Yeah. Did he die properly? Yes. Was his death good enough? Yes. Did he come back to life the right kind of way? Yes, he did. He did it right, and he already did it – so you can't even mess that up if you wanted to."*

▶ 1:42:03

"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… So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:5–11). It is not à la carte; "what he gave us was himself." Still waiting for the children, Matt joked that he would "just filibuster" the chapter "real quick."

▶ 1:44:13

To sum up: get baptised, out of obedience – today, on October 9th, or later. “But even more than that, do believe in Jesus. Don’t believe in your own ability to follow him; don’t believe in your recent history. Do believe in his established work that he’s already finished.” Then the livestream signed off, and the church went outside to baptise.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE

- Matthew 28:16–20
- Ephesians 4:4–6
- Romans 6:3–4
- Genesis 3:22–23
- Romans 3:23
- 1 John 1:8–9
- Romans 5:12–15
- Hebrews 7:9–10
- Romans 6:23
- 1 Peter 3:18–22
- Romans 6:5–11

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Matt told of a woman waiting “in line” for prayer. Who around you might be hungrier for spiritual things than you assume?
2. What is the difference between baptism as proof that I believe hard enough and baptism as a proclamation that Jesus saves?
3. Why does it matter that there is “one baptism” and that it does not depend on the person baptising?
4. How does seeing yourself “in Adam” and then “in Christ” change the way you understand sin and new life?
5. Where are you tempted to trust your recent history rather than Christ’s finished work, and what would it look like to rest in him this week?

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=KONsCpFM7l8&t=3821s

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.