

MidWeek Study: Church Essentials: Baptism

Pastor Mike Ruel: Week 1

- Defining Terms

- Baptism: Generic - Applying _____ to a person in a Christian ceremony.
- More complete (still generic) definition:
 - Baptism: “The practice of sprinkling with, pouring on or immersing in water as an act of Christian initiation and obedience to Christ’s own command. Baptism as a Christian ordinance or sacrament is nearly universal in application throughout the Christian church, although there is great diversity in whether it is applied solely to those who consciously exercise faith in Christ (believer’s baptism) or whether it is also to be extended to the infants of Christian parents (infant baptism, or paedobaptism).” *Pocket Theological Terms Dictionary*
- What is the same?
 - Involves water
 - Initiatory ordinance/sacrament
 - _____ - an order/practice to be obeyed
 - _____ - a sacred rite of the church that conveys something spiritual
 - Universal practice of the church (in some form) from the beginning
- What is different?
 - _____ of baptism - sprinkling, pouring, immersing?
 - _____ of baptism - adult converts or adult converts and children
 - _____ of baptism - purely memorial? Sign and seal? Regenerative? Salvific?
- How do we go about understanding the practice of baptism?
 - _____ (all of it) - This is the most important
 - Church _____ - This is also (quite) important
- For our purposes, we are going to look at the 2nd part first and then look at Scripture - interpretations of Scripture are used to support various views - IOW, historical overview first... then theological/biblical

- But first, let's continue to define terms... There are differences between major views on baptism, but I'm going to boil them down to three...
- Three major interpretations/types of Baptism prevalent today

- _____ **Baptism (BB)**

- What is it?
 - Simple Definition: Baptism by _____ after _____/_____, that _____ salvation.
 - Official Definition: "Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience ***symbolizing the believer's faith*** in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper." *Baptist Faith and Message*
- Who practices BB?
 - Baptist churches/non-denominational/evangelical churches
- What is the purpose?
 - Symbolic ceremony
 - Public testimony and profession of faith/conversion - Initiation into the faith

- _____ **Baptism (RCB)**

- What is it?
 - Simple: Baptism of infants before faith (Christening) and adults after faith by sprinkling/pouring* as an act that _____ to _____.
 - Official: "1213 Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (vitae spiritualis ianua) , and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are **freed from sin and reborn** as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the **sacrament of regeneration** through water in the word.""*Catechism of the Catholic Church.*
- Who practices RCB?
 - Only the Roman Catholic Church
- What is the purpose?
 - Baptismal Regeneration:
 - Baptism regenerates (makes new) the soul and forgives original sin (Ex opere operate)

- Baptism (CB)

- What is it? (Two fold)
 - Simple: Baptism of adults (usually by pouring) after faith/conversion and baptism of infants (usually by sprinkling) of believing parents before faith/conversion, as a way of _____ into God's _____ promise of salvation.
 - Official: "Baptism is a **sacrament**, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, **doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ**, and partaking of the benefits of the **covenant of grace**, and our engagement to be the Lord's." Westminster Shorter Catechism #94
- Who practices CB?
 - Most "reformed" churches: Presbyterian/Lutheran**/Christian Reformed/dual view churches (LFC)
- What is the purpose?
 - Sign and seal of God's covenant promise to save his elect
 - Adults: public testimony and profession of faith/conversion - initiation into the (visible) church
 - Infants: A sign and seal of the COVENANT promise of God's salvation upon future faith/conversion - initiation into the (visible) church
 - ** = Lutherans and Orthodox churches have a modified view of baptism closer to RCB
 - A graph might help us...
 - So...HOW are we supposed to get our arms around all this?
 - Remember, we are going to look at the Biblical texts for each, but first, I want us to look at CHURCH HISTORY as it RELATES TO THEOLOGY

- **Defining Terms - Theology and History**

- Theology - The study of _____ (Theos).
 - Theology of WHAT? (Besides God...the things the Bible has to say about God...)
 - Included in theology is the study of _____: Summary of a particular theological topic.
 - Ex. Doctrine of Sin/Heaven/Hell/Repentance...or for our purposes: Baptism
 - To do that we have to look at ALL the Bible and church history
- Example: Justified by faith - "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith.'" (Romans 1:17 ESV)

- Major caution: we can't build a whole theology on just one verse - we have to look at the whole of Scripture
- Case in point that verse - it quotes an OT verse...WHY?
- We also need to realize the massive impact of justification by faith in CHURCH HISTORY - ex. The reason we are sitting here today in a protestant church - the PROTESTANT REFORMATION!
- If we studied Justification by Faith and didn't look at what the Reformers thought/wrote about it, we would be woefully uninformed.
- Caveat: All our theological knowledge will be _____. (1 Corinthians 13:12)
 - For that we have a few other lenses to look at things through:
 -
- _____ Theology - What does (Baptism) mean in light of the Big Story of the Bible?
 - "Tracing the key patterns, symbols, and themes that bind the Bible together." (Hamilton, What is Bib Theo)
 - Big story of the Bible - Creation/Fall/Redemption/Restoration
 - How does baptism fit into the Big Story of the Bible?
 - The Bible is the authority.
- _____ Theology
 - "Seeks to determine the meaning of Biblical texts." (Allison, HT, 32)
 - Ex. What does Revelation 10 mean?
- _____ Theology - What does the whole Bible have to say about (Baptism)?
 - "Collecting and understanding all the relevant passages in the Bible on various topics and then summarizing their teachings clearly." (ST, 21)
 - Ex. What does the whole Bible tell us about baptism?
- _____ Theology - What has the church historically believed about (Baptism)?
 - "The study of the interpretation of Scripture and the formulation of doctrine by the church of the past." (HT, 23)
 - History - the study of the past with a view of how it effects the present.
 - What does church history tell us about baptism?
- _____ Theology - How do we LIVE OUT theology

- In our personal lives - ex. How do I grow in knowledge of God and personal holiness?
 - In our corporate (church) life - ex. How do we practice baptism?
 - [Diagram] Historical theology is not the authority, but it INFORMS exegetical, biblical, systematic theology which leads us to actually live it out in practical theology.
- Why Study Historical Theology? (HT)
- “Understanding and obeying the Bible is to be done corporately by the church of Christ, and the church of Christ exists throughout the generations, therefore, the church of any one generation ought to listen to the church of previous generations so what we truly do understand together.” (I didn’t get the source...)
 - Protects us against rampant individualism in the church (we drift this way, esp. since the Enlightenment/Non-Denom/Eva explosion)
 - Shows us how doctrine has developed over time
 - _____ knowledge (Thus saith the Lord in the Bible) vs. _____ knowledge (from the study of ALL the Bible)
- Helps us with understanding what is essential. (Theological _____)
- _____: 1st order issues: very clear in Scripture and very close to the gospel (closed hand: must divide fellowship)
 - Ex. Justification by faith, deity of Christ, Trinity, the resurrection
 - _____: 2nd order issues: less clear in Scripture, farther away from the gospel (semi-open hand with wisdom)
 - Ex. Eschatology interpretations
 - _____: 3rd order issues: least clear in Scripture and farthest away from the gospel. (Open hand with grace)
 - Ex. Church musical styles