



MONDAY 10 APRIL 2017

SERIES: EASTER & THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

Read: Mark 10:35-40

Plug In...

At the end of this week we celebrate Easter. At The Lakes, on Easter Sunday, we will celebrate with others at their baptism. This week we'll look at baptism's significance for us, and for us as a community of God's people.

Familiarity with the word 'baptise' means we can easily miss the starkness and darkness involved with the word. We miss the horror impressed upon the first hearers when Jesus described His coming death as a 'baptism'. In Jesus' time baptism was the common word to express *drowning*, or a ship *sinking*. It was used euphemistically to illustrate destruction (e.g. Jerusalem being flooded with troubles).

In Mark, Jesus says His baptism is parallel to the image of drinking the cup of God's wrath. Jesus says His disciples would not be able to stomach this cup, endure the baptism He has to go through. Yet, Jesus goes on to mysteriously say somehow they will participate in the cup and be baptised (v.39).

Chew It Over...

Baptism explains, shows, reveals, illustrates the Gospel. Without Jesus' baptism (that is, His death), God's judgement would engulf us. When you get baptised, when some of our brothers and sisters are baptised this Sunday, they are doing in symbolic form what was done for real by Christ. By doing so, we and they are stating what was real for Christ happened really for them too *in Christ*. Jesus was baptised on our behalf. That is how we experience mercy and freedom from the wrath of God by putting on Christ (Galatians 3:27).

Prayer Suggestion

Let the knowledge that Jesus drank the cup and drowned under the wrath of God for you infuse how you talk to Him today.



The Lakes

TUESDAY 11 APRIL 2017

SERIES: EASTER & THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

Read: Psalm 69

Plug In...

'Baptism'. To those ears that heard Jesus speak this word, they didn't hear 'immersion', 'sprinkling', 'washing', 'cleansing'. It was heard as demise, destruction, a death by the watery grave. Psalm 69 vividly shows what the word baptism meant. Here, David calls out to God for salvation because he is undergoing baptism – this baptism threatens his life.

Jesus quotes this Psalm when the Jewish leaders hunt Him down (John 15:24-25). Jesus may also be conscious of this Psalm when He refuses to quench His thirst on His road to crucifixion (Mark 15:23, *cf.* Psalm 69:3). Jesus understands His *drowning* to be foreshadowed in David. Psalm 69:6 shows David is not just worried about his own fate, but recognises that the fate of the king spells the fate of the people under him. This is why David cries out to the LORD for salvation.

Jesus is the Messiah who is baptised for His people. In full acknowledgement of this and with all His strength, He refuses to quench His thirst in order to fully absorb this drowning for His people.

Chew It Over...

Think through baptism in our time and place. What often dominates the event and discussion? The method? (Sprinkling, immersion.)
The whom? (Children, adults.)

It should be the *what!* Romans 6:3, "Don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death?"

Prayer Suggestion

Thank God for the gift of baptism to the church as a visible reminder of what is most true about our life.



WEDNESDAY 12 APRIL 2017

SERIES: EASTER & THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

Read: Mark 1:4-11 and Revelation 20:13 – 21:1

Plug In...

We've seen that Jesus' image of *baptism* is drawn from the main idea behind the word expressed in His day (plus the days of the Old Testament – e.g. Psalm 69). In addition, the big stories of God's work of saving in the Bible are all savings from the judgements by water (i.e. baptisms). Noah was saved from the watery grave of the flood. Moses and the Israelites were saved from the watery grave the Egyptians suffered at the Red Sea.

Each time the chaotic waters engulf the world, there was a judgement and a salvation. The salvation is depicted as a new creation emerging from the chaos and destruction. Noah is a new humanity as his family emerges from the flood. Israel is a new nation after they emerge from the Red Sea. From these watery graves, God saves and re-creates; newly creates. Interestingly, even the first creation is described as emerging from chaotic waters setting this creation-from-chaos theme in motion (Genesis 1:2 – “formless” literally is “chaotic”, “confusion”).

We can say, baptism in the Old Testament is both a *death* and also a *birthing*. See:

Psalm 90:2 “*Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*”

Psalm 90:3-4 *“The seas have lifted up, Lord, the seas have lifted up their voice; the seas have lifted up their pounding waves. Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea – the Lord on high is mighty.”*

Chew It Over...

What Jesus did on the first Easter was both a funeral and a birth. When Jesus said to John the Baptist, “Baptise me”, He was vividly stating: I step willingly into this watery grave. Jesus – perfect, sinless, righteous – enters the baptismal waters thereby taking the first steps onto the road to the cross. These were the first steps into the judgement of God.

Easter is the end of the story. Jesus is resurrected from this baptism on behalf of all His people. The final picture of the end in Revelation shows that people’s destiny is bound up with whether or not this baptism and resurrection from Jesus was done for them. Revelation 20:13 – 21:1 shows, although all people die, the sea will give up the dead and they will either go on to eternal punishment or onto the new creation where “there is no more sea”. At the centre of this new creation existence stands the ‘Lamb that was slain (judged)’ (22:1). [NB: ‘The Lamb’ in Revelation is shorthand for ‘the Lamb that was slain’ (5:12).]

Prayer Suggestion

Pray for Isabella Beaman, Lachlan Pratt, Dan Edwards. They get baptised this Sunday. Together we celebrate that they have died and risen again as new creations for they trust in Jesus Christ. Their former destiny has been reversed – *there is no more sea!*



THURSDAY 13 APRIL 2017

SERIES: EASTER & THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

Read: [Matthew 28:18-20](#)

Plug In...

Jesus instituted His baptism after His victory over Satan. The command to baptise is linked with the command to mission, and based on the authority of the victory Christ possesses. The act of baptism is associated with proclaiming that Jesus is sovereign, that He has all authority. One disciple baptises another. This chain occurs throughout the church down through the ages. And, Jesus is with us until the end of the age.

Chew It Over...

Bound up with the preaching of the Gospel, the teaching of Jesus' commands, is the act of baptism. Every time we baptise someone we are preaching the Gospel to one another, we are keeping the truths of trusting in Christ at the centre of our theology. This passage proclaims we are in the 'age' where Christ has won the victory. The Gospel of Matthew also explains this age is an age where there still is a battle (this is what Jesus taught us in His parables in Matthew 13). Baptism is given to remind us that Jesus has won the battle and is with us.

Our faith is often weak and vulnerable, but God in His kindness gives us a tangible, visible picture which instructs us and encourages us about the *invisible* realities. That is why we at The Lakes really should turn up when someone is getting baptised. The sign is not just for them it is for you too. Being part of someone else's baptism works and weaves the Gospel truth into you. This is why it has often been called a 'sacrament' for it 'communicates' the Gospel. When you turn up at Toowoan Bay you are baptising another like Jesus commanded. The more we understand this the more compelled we will be to be present this Sunday.

We baptise twice a year at The Lakes. It is not too late to make sure you are at Toowoan Bay at 1pm this Sunday.

Prayer Suggestion

Thank God that He gives us Baptism and The Lord's Supper as powerful signs that keep the Gospel at the centre of our lives and charging us forward.



FRIDAY 14 APRIL 2017

SERIES: EASTER & THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

Read: Acts 2:32-41

Plug In...

The command of Jesus in Matthew 28 to baptise is an action associated with disciples obeying all Jesus has commanded. All authority has been given to Jesus, so recognition of that authority should drive someone to repentance and faith. Peter preaches to the crowd that Jesus has all the authority of heaven sitting at the right hand of God. Peter says, therefore, repent and be baptised (Acts 2:38). Elsewhere Peter says that the act of baptism is an enactment of your pledge of faith (1 Peter 3:21). So in Peter's preaching, *faith* and *baptism* can be used interchangeably. What is significant about this is that the act of baptism is brought very close to the profession of faith. Both in concept and also in timeframe. The actual act of baptism doesn't save, but following through on the command Jesus gave to be baptised points to saving faith.

Saying it again, the actual act of baptism doesn't save – another example from Acts shows Cornelius receives the Spirit before he is baptised (10:44-48). Baptism is given as a tangible action that expresses what has happened by the Spirit inwardly. Jesus commanded it as part-and-parcel with receiving and understanding the Gospel; that is also how the early church understood baptism (for they did not put the time delay we often place between profession of faith and the act of baptism – see Acts 2:41). So while the action of baptism itself doesn't save, it is not optional nor insignificant.

Chew It Over...

Jesus' words in Matthew 28 show that saving faith means disciples learn and obey all Jesus' commands. Significantly, there is an immediate concrete command given to those who hear this message. Be baptised. In a way, Matthew 28 and what is depicted in Acts, show baptism as the first place of and opportunity for obedience. This concrete action shows faith has emerged, that one understands that Jesus has all authority and is Lord; it actively bows the knee to Jesus for He has commanded it and so His disciple has opportunity to immediately obey His Lord's command.

Sadly, this simple command which symbolises the Gospel and concretely enacts obedience gets lost in all the kaffuffle people have made of things like *mode* (immersion, sprinkling) and tying baptism to 'constitutional' church membership. Some resist baptism on these grounds, retreating to "well, baptism is not necessary for salvation or to be a true Christian". This is true, but only half-true. What is missing is that regardless of what mess other people have made of baptism, it remains a command by your Lord, and one that shows you love Him the most and give all allegiance to Him.

If you have had some bug-bears over baptism and this has held you back from getting baptised, then you need to sort this out for *yourself* even if you find others keep it muddled, or express it confusingly. As the act doesn't save, and God is gracious, we can still take this concrete step of obedience, stating that Jesus has all authority and that we worship Him. So, have you been baptised? At The Lakes, you can speak with Michael Plaege to set up taking this next obedient step.

Prayer Suggestion

Ask God to sort us out. Ask us for clear thinking and clear allegiance to Jesus. Ask God to move you to do what you must do next.



WEEKEND 15-16 APRIL 2017

SERIES: EASTER & THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

Read: 1 Peter 3:13-22

Plug In...

Peter addresses the church's fear. There is a real fear that maintaining a 'good' life because they are Christians will land them being slandered, and ostracised (3:14a). Peter recognises it is difficult to do good when you suffer (even verbal abuse). So Peter says to the Christian, "Do not fear what they fear or be disturbed" (3:14). In 1 Peter, the only fear Christians are to have is a fear of God and a fear directed to God (2:17; 3:14) – "set apart the Messiah as Lord in your hearts" (3:15). Peter then reassures Christians not to fear man, even if you end up suffering for doing good (3:17). Remember the position Christ has in the heavens (3:18-22). The Christian remembers this for at the cross and resurrection there is a victory of Christ proclaimed over everything including the entire powerful spiritual realm.

It is in this context that Peter says *baptism* is a pledge that you fear God and no other power, but your fear is a fear of God such that it places you safely before God (3:21).

Chew It Over...

Peter is not denying that the symbolism of baptism excludes the notion of cleaning and the removal of sin, but here he wants to focus on the part of the symbolism that emerging from the waters displays. Noah and his family came up out of the water. Jesus was made alive after death. Peter's point is because of Jesus' work to atone for sin, there is the effect where Jesus was victorious over all the evil forces in the world. The resurrection/ascension which subjugates everything else, flows from the atonement.

When we get baptised, when we baptise others, when we observe and experience the baptism of others, so much is being proclaimed and reminded in us. It is a powerful gift to the church that keeps weaving the truths of this Gospel into our community of the church. Baptism shows Christ's Lordship. It is given to us in a world where we are tempted to fear man and be dragged under.

Tomorrow, we have this beautiful sign occurring amongst our community of The Lakes. Tomorrow we will be strengthened as we declare that Jesus has all our enemies, evil, and sin subjugated under His feet. Baptism is not merely individual, it is corporate and for the strengthening in faith of the church! When we see others baptised, when we baptise others, we see that the gates of hell are not prevailing.

Prayer Suggestion

Isabella Beaman, Lachlan Pratt, Dan Edwards get baptised tomorrow. Pray that we at The Lakes are renewed as we declare that Jesus is Lord! Pray that we are encouraged that God's kingdom goes forward. Pray that we are bolstered in our faith as we face daily the temptation to fear man.