



Baptism

Session 8 – 20th May 2018

Bible Readings

Matthew 3:13-17; Acts 2: 36-41

Matthew 28:16-20

Sermon Notes

A healthy, flourishing St Mary's church family is one that habitually baptises new believers.

Baptism is our common ground. We are all the same in this. We all stand before God in our brokenness and our need. We all come with open hands and open heart. When you strip everything else away, what is required of us as followers of Jesus, is to be baptised.

In Acts 2 v 36 Peter's listeners, new followers of Jesus, ask "What shall we do?" Peter says "Repent and be baptised."

Repentance and Baptism go together because baptism is the symbol of a water grave, where our past misdemeanours are immersed, drowned, consumed.

We all fall short of total holiness. Some of us have done wrongs that bother us deeply. Some of us remember things that are deeply out of character, words – relationships – cheating, unless we are in a state of total denial.

When you go in to the waters of baptism, the symbol is of Jesus drowning our sin, which was actually drowned during Jesus' own death on the cross.

Baptism is a milestone in our spiritual life. It is a symbol of something that is already taking place inside.

And did you notice in both our readings, the Holy Spirit descended immediately afterwards. The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus, and he hears those wonderful, reassuring, loving words from His Father, *"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."* In turn Peter promises *"Repent and be baptised and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

As we are baptised, we experience a refilling of the Holy Spirit - to forgive, inspire, challenge, to make us resolute in our faith, to help us be re-formed from the inside out.

Baptism was so important, that Jesus didn't circumvent the process, even though he didn't need it, even though he was sinless. Three of the gospels begin when Jesus was born but Mark's gospel begins when Jesus was reborn in Baptism.

From Baptism onwards our identity is rooted in Jesus Christ. It becomes less about what we were and more about who He, Jesus, is. The story of Jesus becomes our story.

If you want to be baptised then please tell me. Ask yourself today - is this the next significant step of faith for your life.

There's a reason it is a water grave, because the only way to life is through death. If you miss that metaphor, you will miss the whole story. What Jesus most desires, is for you to embrace his death so that you can have life.

Key Quotes

"Baptism is an outward expression of an inward faith – it is faith in action." WATCHMAN NEE

"Baptism is the initial step of a faithful heart. It separates the tyre kickers from the car buyers." MAX LUCADO

"Baptism is bowing before the Father and letting him do his work."
MAX LUCADO

Discussion Questions

Reflect on the picture of Baptism as “Christ dying on our behalf, spending three days ‘under water’, and then finally rising from death.” How do you respond to Jesus drowning our sin in this way?

In what way is the resurrection a picture of our coming up out of the water after baptism? What do you think about the idea of being cleansed? What does living a resurrected life mean for us?

Reflect on the Spirit landing on Jesus after his baptism. Have you experienced the liberating power of the Holy Spirit? Why is it so critical for us to continue to seek the filling and leading of the Holy Spirit as we grow in our understanding of our faith after baptism?

How do you respond to the words of assurance and love that Jesus heard from God after His baptism? “This is my son – well pleased?” How do you think he thinks of you and speaks to you?

What difference should being baptised make – or reflect in our lives already? Can we live a Christian life without being baptised? Can we go it alone? Have you ducked your opportunity for baptism so far? Why is that?

Were you baptised and later confirmed as a child? Did your parents talk to you about it? Why did they do it? Was it important to you as you were growing up?

Have you been baptised as an adult – or renewed your baptismal vows? What led you to take that decision? What did it mean to you? How did it feel?

Prayer

Thank God that he went to the place of drowning for three days for us and that through His resurrection He won the victory for all of us.

Living the Life

Think about what it means to live a resurrected life. Try to walk in that reality this month. Set reminders or continually remind yourself that you are living in the light of the resurrection, in the power of the spirit, in the coming of God's Kingdom right now. Right now as you walk in the street, as you relate to your friends and colleagues, as you encourage your family and as you go about your work and play.

Personal Reflection

Read: Jesus' baptism above – let God's words to Jesus speak to you right now. Are those words easy to hear? How do they make you feel? The reality is that you can hear these words from God. That's how much he loves us, how much he loves you. Allow the words to wash over you. Where does there need to be change in your life.

Blog, Vlog and Social Media

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www.stmarysely.org and join the conversation on our [Facebook Group "Ely Team Holy Habits"](https://www.facebook.com/groups/267574210421687) www.facebook.com/groups/267574210421687