



## Romans 6:1-4

### **BAPTISM TITLE**

I know it's a bit unusual for a morning service, but I hope you don't mind my quick coffee break!

### **BUSCUIT IN TEACUP**

Actually it's here to illustrate a point. I was watching telly the other day and there were the results of a competition for new inventions. The winner turned out to be an attachment for your exercise bicycle so you can pedal and get fit whilst gently rocking your baby who is placed in a special cradle, to sleep.

Barmy you may think. Well it's perhaps less useful than last year's winning invention which was a special holder for your biscuit so that when you dunked it in your tea or coffee, you wouldn't get your fingers wet!

Dunking, to the serious dunker, is a serious business. In fact, to get a thoroughly dunked biscuits, you do have to get your fingers wet why?

### **IMMERSE, SUBMERGE DUNK**

Because you're immersing the biscuit in your drink to get it nice and wet.. If you remember from this particular picture, I preached on baptism a few months ago. The idea of that was to take the mystique out of the word baptism by giving you its meaning – to immerse, submerge, dunk. It was a term first use by cloth dyers because to dye cloth, it has to be fully immersed in the dye. This is the word we *don't* translate as baptism.

### **BAPTISM IS COMMANDED BY JESUS**

And Jesus said "go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Baptism in the NT is part and parcel of becoming and being a Christian but for some bizarre reason we make it an optional extra. It's not.

### **IT IS FOR ALL BELIEVERS**

Time an again the witness of the NT is that "they believed and were baptised!" No ifs. No buts. No nothing. If you've accepted Jesus as your Saviour and Lord then why haven't you been baptised? Why haven't you obeyed Jesus? Don't give me that answer – tell it to Jesus. The only person in the NT to have believed and not been baptised was the penitent thief on the cross, but he was really unavoidably detained. It doesn't matter what age, shape, size, state of health you are, we can get you baptised.

### **IT'S A DECISION YOU MUST MAKE FOR YOURSELF**

The next thing I want to say about baptism is that to be baptised is a decision you have to make for yourself. The witness of the NT is again that the only people that were baptised were believers. Why? Because baptism is something that is a picture of what happens to someone when they believe. It's usually called an initiation rite because you're supposed to do it near to the time you become a Christian. Sometimes people leave it a long time for whatever reason. That's between them and the Lord.

## **THERE'S NOTHING MAGIC IN THE WATER > OUR BAPTISM WATER COMES FROM THE TAP!**

People often ask if the water is holy water. No, it's Anglian Water. Nothing extra is added to it or taken from it by being in our baptistery. So when we baptise Joyce her being wet isn't going to confer anything on her. It's an outward picture of what has already occurred in her life. It doesn't make her a Christian or gives her forgiveness or eternal life. She already has that through her personal faith in Jesus Christ. You see, if being wet with this water did give people forgiveness of sin and eternal life, then what do you think I'd do. Yes, I'd make sure you all got as wet as possible.

## **BAPTISM IS A WITNESS WE HAVE NEW LIFE IN JESUS**

So what do I conclude. Baptism is what has been called a heaven drawn picture. God has given us something that shows what happens when we become a Christian. Just as Jesus died, we die and in that act of death, God is able to free us from the power and consequences of sin and then He raises us up to new life in Christ. We are made into new people. Actually that's what happens when you dye cloth – it goes in as one thing and comes out as something different. In May we are going to start a series that explores what God makes us in Christ and deals with how that works out in our lives. Water is also a symbol of cleansing. Our sin has been dealt with – forgiven – when we trusted Jesus!

It all starts with faith in Jesus. When we trusted Him, we in effect died and were raised to new life. That is what Joyce is signifying to you as she is baptised this morning.

## **BAPTISM IS A WAY GOD BLESSES US**

I said the water isn't special. It definitely isn't. But it doesn't mean that baptism is just a silly thing that we do in a large pool of water that just is a symbol of something and that's that. God always honours those who honour Him in being obedient to the commands of the risen Lord Jesus. Look in the Book of Acts and you see plenty of ways in which the Holy Spirit dynamically affected the lives of people who were baptised from Jesus onwards. When people get baptised things happen, sometimes they are positive blessings. Sometimes they can be challenges that build us up. But for most people, it's the start of a deepening relationship with God if they have entered into baptism to seriously obey Jesus.

## **HOW ABOUT YOU?**

So how about you? Never been baptised? Think it's time you should be? I guess it's too late for you today, but come and see me afterwards and we'll work towards getting another baptism arranged – you don't have to wait until next Easter – we can do them at any time!

Maybe you've looked at all this and you want to know what it means to be forgiven by God, to have eternal life and you want to have that assurance that brings Joyce to this pool today. Then I invite you to trust Jesus as your personal Saviour and Lord. It's not like waiting for another baptismal date to come around. You can know God's forgiveness this morning. You can have that promise of eternal life today. You can start walking with Jesus in your life, knowing His power and presence through His Holy Spirit day by day. Accept Him into your life this morning.

## **BAPTISM**

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