

## God the Father's Calling & Baptism

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Today I want to talk a little bit about your calling and baptism. For most of us this will be a review, but it's something that we need to know and understand. Not only understand it, but something to realize that as we are going down our Christian walk we need to re-evaluate this and make sure that our commitment to God and everything is the way that it should be.

Matt. 3 is where we first, in the Scriptures, encounter baptizing. This is the beginning of the baptism of John the Baptist; he was the one preparing the way for Jesus Christ.

Matthew 3:1: "Now, in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'" (vs 1-2). The first thing that we need to know and understand concerning our relationship with God is that it must begin with repentance. And we'll see *why repentance* as we go along.

Verse 3: "For this is he who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.'" Now, John himself wore a garment of camel's hair, and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him *those from* Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the country around the Jordan, and were being baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins" (vs 3-6).

The confessing of the sins has to be to God, *because God alone forgives sin*. It cannot be to a priest. It doesn't mean we don't say we confess our sins in that particular sense. If someone says, 'I've been a sinner,' I don't want to say, 'How bad a sinner have you been? Tell me everything.' That's what the Catholics would do. *No!* You tell **God** everything. Everything is between you and God, that's what's the important thing. That's why when we went through the section there in Rom. 3, that we have to—in this repentance—confront our own evil human nature.

Some human nature is in degree, by outward manifestation, not as evil as others; by outward manifestation. But nevertheless, we all have *the law of sin and death* in us, and the potential is there for everyone to be a great and a tremendous sinner, even if a person has led a reasonably decent life because they've been taught some of the precepts that have been in the Bible, which has helped them along the line. That still doesn't change the fact of the inherent sinful nature that human beings have.

God is not going to be fooled! Not everyone is going to be able to do so. And it's interesting what we have here, v 7: "But after seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism..." These were the 'religious leaders.' These were the ones who should have known who he [John the Baptist] was. These were the ones who should have known the Word of God.

This is why God is not calling a lot of Catholic priests today, or He's not calling a lot of Baptist ministers today, because they're not going to admit that they have been wrong. They are not going to see the sinfulness of their nature. If that happens, we'll then have to use the same kind of message that John the Baptist did.

"...he said to them, 'You brood of vipers...' (v 7). That's not very nice—is it? That's not very polite. I mean, this is being mean and nasty and attacking these great religious leaders. Well, no, it's stating the truth.

"...who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath?" (v 7) Just as an aside: this ought to tell us just seeking to go to a place of safety to escape the wrath that's coming isn't going to work.

Verse 8: "Therefore, produce fruits worthy of repentance..." What does this mean? I have a marginal rendering in my *King James* which says: 'answerable to amendments of life.' Repentance then brings about a *change of life*. It brings about a change in your heart, mind and attitude because you begin to understand your own nature. That's the most important thing. Then you begin to see the righteousness of God, which we'll cover here a little bit later.

This is very important, v 9: "And do not think to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'..." In other words, starting with John the Baptist, he was saying it doesn't matter who your ancestors were. What counts *is repentance*.

"...for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.... [then he gives a warning]: ...But already the axe is striking at the roots of the trees; therefore, every tree that is not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance... [he was projecting forward to the ministry of Christ] ...but the One Who *is* coming after me is mightier than I, of Whom I am not fit to carry His sandals; He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit... [that's the whole purpose of being baptized, *to receive the Holy Spirit*] ...and with fire"

(vs 9-11). This is a projection to the Lake of Fire at the end of the age when all of the wicked are consumed. That's why it's very important that we understand the Scriptures and understand where these things fit.

The 'baptism of fire' is not something one should seek after and desire like the Pentecostals say. They say, 'You've been baptized in fire.' That means if you've gotten up and made a fool of yourself and shouted and yelled and screamed. When you understand what that is, when you understand that method—that method of shouting and yelling and screaming and losing control of your mind to another power—is in every false religion of this world. The Hindus do it. The Buddhists do it. The Muslims do it. There are certain Catholic sects that do it, etc. That is the first step in getting you to follow in the wrong way, to follow the wrong spirit.

How many remember Ramani Maharshi (whatever his name was), up in Oregon. He lasted about three years. Well, on the *Jesuit Agenda* videos you can see that they had some videos of what went on in their meetings, when they gave over to the shouting, yelling and screaming. The whole purpose was to devoid their minds of thought. Whenever you come to a situation where the voiding your mind of thought is a step in the process, you know *that's the first step into demonism!* That eliminates the barrier of the demons between you and them *and invites them in*. So, *baptism of fire* has nothing to do with the Pentecostal or similar Pentecostal type experience. It has to do with being cast into the Lake of Fire because you are an unrepentant sinner. That follows right along here with repenting and bringing forth fruits for repentance and so forth.

Let's see where Jesus also was baptized, but we will see that He had His disciples baptize instead of Himself. Go back and read the last part of John 3 where John is saying: 'I must decrease and He must increase' and so forth, because that's all a part of leading up to John 4.

John 4:1: "Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John, (Although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples)." (vs 1-2). They were called to be apostles, so it was perfectly all right for them to baptize.

Let's look a little bit more concerning baptism and what we are to do. Matt. 28 has been used and used to preach the two commissions of the Church: the great commission, which is *to go to all the world*; and the other commission: *to feed the flock*. And these kind of run in cycles. These cycles run according to when and what and how God opens or closes the doors to do any particular one. I firmly believe right now that God is closing the door of

media because it is so completely controlled, that you cannot really preach the kind of convicting message that you need to preach to really reach out to new people. I believe He will open the door again when, and I feel—especially with the new information highway and the new technology—that we can use with computers, etc. I think that will be a time of really reaching out, because then we can go from computer to computer uncensored, and that will be exactly what we will need to do.

So, we just pray that God will give us wisdom and understanding in what we need to do and how we need to do it, so we can, at the right time. But I'm convinced that the Church right now has enough—I'm speaking in general everywhere, all Churches of God—problems and upheavals involved that it is not a good place to bring brand new people. God will have to provide the way.

Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father...' (vs 18-19). It is through the begetting of the Holy Spirit that we become a son or daughter of God. I want you to notice in particular here very carefully. It does not say 'and the **name** of the Son.' It says, '**of the Son**' because it's through the sacrifice of Christ that it makes it possible.

"...and **of** the Son, and **of** the Holy Spirit... [not the 'name of' in the latter two cases, because the Holy Spirit is what seals us with the earnest of the promise until Christ returns and we receive the fullness of salvation.] ...teaching them to observe **all things**... [that is a broad command; that means you're not exclude anything, leave out anything.] ...all things that I have commanded you...." (vs 19-20). This statement means *everything that He inspired the apostles to write*, which is contained in the Scriptures for us today; because Christ's words are the living words of God. When they have been recorded for us, then it becomes part of what we need to be doing.

That's why He says: "...all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age" (vs 20). This really means *until the close of the age or the end of human rule on the earth*.

Note Rev. 11, because that's when the seventh trumpet sounds. I know it's a little aside, but I think this will help us give a fuller understanding of what He's saying there in Matt. 28.

Revelation 11:15: "Then the seventh angel sounded *his* trumpet; and *there* were great voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and His Christ,

and He shall reign into the ages of eternity.” That is the end of the age, right there! There are many, as we know from Scripture, atrocious tribulations and things to happen leading up to it. But this is the **official end of the age**, right here! He said, ‘I’m with you until the end of the age.’ Now, what’s going to happen at the ‘last trump’? *We’re all going to be raised from the dead or changed instantly and then we’re going to be with Christ!* That will finish everything that was started here in Matt. 18:20.

All right, let’s carry this forward just a little bit further now. How is that we are called? God uses many methods, many means, many different things. As in the case of the Apostle Paul, He might reach down and call him directly. BANG! Knocked him right off his horse while he’s on his way to Damascus. With others He might use the Word that He has given in the Bible. With others He may use a friend. With others He may use someone in the family. *God will use many and different means for calling.*

Now then, when there is a calling, a person has to answer the call. That’s why the Scriptures say: ‘Many are called but few are chosen.’ Why are there few chosen? *Because the real truth is few repent!* Repent in the way that they need to toward God. Many people become sorry in their condition. But that doesn’t necessarily mean that that’s repentance. I mean, we’ve all experienced that as children, and we’ve all experienced that with our children. Many times they’re sorry, especially that they got caught doing something wrong. But that may not necessarily be the kind of repentance unto salvation. It’s a different kind of repentance and God wants it from the heart.

Here’s how it starts, here’s how that repentance starts. God’s doing this particularly and individually. We don’t know exactly everything that God is doing everywhere. Of course, we couldn’t because that’s God’s business. But we know what God is doing with us, and that’s what we need to focus on here. God isn’t going to do this haphazardly. God is not going to do this like a shotgun effect. ‘Well, let’s go ahead and send out this huge explosion and whatever comes back to Us that’s what we’ll take.’ *NO!* He does it on an individual basis.

John 6:44: “No one... [Greek: ‘anthropos’—*human being*] ...can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him...” What we’re going to see is a joint operation of God the Father and Jesus Christ beginning to work in the life of the individual. God is not doing this in a haphazard way. The Father has to ‘draw’ you. That’s why you’ve heard me say many times, when everything else is upside down and against you, always remember **God the Father**

**loves you! Jesus Christ loves you!** Don’t worry about the circumstances around.

How does He draw? We’ll see in just a minute. “...and I will raise him up at the last day” (v 44). So, what we have in this statement is ‘the beginning and the ending.’ We have the **beginning of the calling**, and we have the **ending being the resurrection!** Jesus said ‘I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, the First and the Last, which was and is and is to come.’ That’s all contained in here.

Verse 45: “It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me.” Then you have to respond to God. How do you respond to God? *It is when you hear the Word of God* or you read something that is in the Scriptures that is convicting; you read something that gives you a greater understanding of God and you want to know more of God, and the more you know of God the more He reveals your human nature. A human being without being led of the Spirit of God could not stand to accept the **truth of the evil of human nature!** We’ll see how this fits in with the righteousness of God.

God begins to deal with us that way. Here’s another aspect of Rom. 2 that we didn’t necessarily cover when we were going through our study in Romans. This is another very important thing in how God deals with us; another aspect that we need to understand concerning not only how God deals with us but how God wants us to see ourselves in relationship to Him and also to show us that God is not interested in destroying the sinner. God is interested that the sinner repent—that’s what’s important.

Romans 2:4: “Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?” That’s why God reveals to you your sinful nature; so that you can see the goodness of God. Not only the goodness of God, but this has to do with the **graciousness of God**. God is now exercising His grace

- to call you
- to lead you to repentance
- to begin to show you that human nature is evil

then, lo and behold, one day something will happen in your mind, if God is working with you, which is this: **You come to the conclusion that everything you’ve done in your life has been wrong, even though you may have done ‘good’ things.** Along the line it’s always ended up in a difficult mess, because that’s just the end-result of human nature. Human beings can’t take that and really face it. But

if God is leading a person to repentance they will begin to understand that. And being led in this kind of repentance, you will also begin to understand it between *you and God alone*. What do I mean by that? *That you will actually*, in your own way—whether it's prayer, or whether just thinking, or whatever—*begin to confess to God really how bad you are!* That's all a part of God working with you and leading you to repentance.

What does He want done? Whenever we're talking about repentance and baptism we have to come to Acts 2 because this is the most important place. Acts 2 was on the Day of Pentecost, we know that; we've covered that; we have gone through it. But let's ask:

- Were there not a lot of people there at the temple who had seen Jesus?
- Who had heard Him?
- Some maybe even healed by Him?

or

- Maybe some of their relatives were healed by Him?
- Were they not there trying to find out what God was going to do because they heard that back at the beginning of the count for Pentecost that there were those who saw Jesus resurrected from the dead on that day?
- Don't you think there were a lot that God brought there because He was calling?
- When God deals with people what did we learn in Romans that is true?

*We learned: to the Jew first and then the Greek.*

Here's where God began dealing with the Jews. I think God began dealing with them long before they arrived here on this Day of Pentecost. If we put together what we read in John, the sixth chapter—that God the Father is the One Who draws—then the Father had to be doing this work leading up this Pentecost, because something profound happened at this Pentecost.

After he explained to them about what happened, Acts 2:32: "This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, having been exalted by the right hand of God, and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this that you are now seeing and hearing... [the power of God's Holy Spirit given to men] ...For David has not ascended into the heavens, but he himself said, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand Until I have made Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."' Therefore, let all *the* house of Israel know with full assurance... [or of an *absolute truth* from God] ...that God has made this *same* Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (vs 32-36).

- Why would he say this to all of them?
- Who were actually the ones who physically crucified Christ? *The Roman soldiers!*
- Why was He delivered to the Roman soldiers?

***Because Pilate delivered Him at the behest of the Jews!*** Let's correct that and back up: What we're really finding out is that this is expanded out to include all human beings.

- How can all human beings have a part in the crucifixion of Christ?
- Especially us?
- We're over 1900 years removed, so how can that be?

It's this: '*the wages of sin is death.*' Christ took that death for every human being upon Himself—did He not? *Yes, He did!* So therefore, every human being, if they come to Christ, has to realize that ***his or her sins had that part in the death of Christ*** because He paid the penalty. He is the One Who took it upon Himself. That's why he said that 'you have crucified.'

Verse 37: "Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart..." In other words, their consciences were moved—***the goodness of God had led them to repentance!***

"...and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, '**Repent...**'" (vs 37-38). Now you know about human nature and sin in yourself; and the death of Christ and His resurrection.

"...and be baptized... [baptism means *by full immersion*] ...**each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ...**" (v 38).

That does not conflict with Matt. 28:20, because the way baptism is accomplished is that it's in the ***name of*** the Father and ***of the Son*** and ***of the Holy Spirit*** for the remission of your sins—and this is done ***in*** the name of Christ. What does that mean? *That means that this baptism is just like Christ doing it!* Just like in John 4 it said that 'Jesus baptized, yet not He, but His disciples.' So, ***when it's done in the name of Jesus Christ, it's as if Christ is doing it!*** That's what's important for us to realize; because Jesus Christ and God the Father want you to have a personal relationship with Them.

Yes, we do have collective things we need to do together, that is correct. But unless we have the right personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, how can we do anything for God? ***Well, the truth is we can't!*** So, this is why it begins here.

All right let's carry this a little bit further, let's come to Romans, the tenth chapter. And here's how these things then come about. We saw it with the preaching of Peter. We also will see it here in what happens after that and how we are to know and how we are to grow and all of this. God will do it in many different ways.

Let's begin right here in Romans 10:8: "But what does it say? 'The Word is near to you...' That is it's talking about the Scriptures. God has provided a Bible for you, and isn't that a miracle? I mean, in such an evil world, you consider that the Bible is a best seller every year and there are billions and billions printed and given and distributed and sold. That is a tremendous miracle!

"... 'The word is near to you, in your mouth and in your heart.'... [in other words, a language you can understand] ... This is the Word of faith that we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth *the* Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from *the* dead, you shall be saved" (vs 8-9). This is not the only thing you have to do, rather this is a summary statement telling you the overall parameters of where you need to begin, so that you can be saved!

Verse 10: "For with *the* heart one believes unto righteousness..." That is the thing if you are convicted in heart. Didn't we read in Acts 2, they were 'pricked in heart'? *Yes! So they repented!*

So with: "...*the* heart one believes unto righteousness, and with *the* mouth one confesses... [that is to God in repentance] ...unto salvation because the Scripture says, 'Everyone who believes in Him shall not be ashamed'" (vs 10-11). God is going to call whomever He wants. God is the One Who's doing it: individually, person-by-person.

Verse 12: "For there is no difference between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all *is* rich toward all who call upon Him. For everyone who calls on the name of *the* Lord shall be saved" (vs 12-13). Call how? *In repentance, in sincerity, in truth, in crying out to God, knowing what your own human nature is!*

We will see another thing occurs on an ongoing basis. Not only in leading you up to repentance and baptism does God begin to reveal your human nature, then another thing takes place, which is then He begins to reveal the beginning of sin, which are thoughts in your mind. And sometimes you wonder, after you've been baptized for years, 'Why do I have this thought?' Well, the only reason that you recognize that it's wrong is because the Holy Spirit of God that is *in* you is revealing that it's wrong. Then you can ask God to purge it away, and He will do that. Sometimes it

takes a quite a bit of time, because some of our minds have been pretty programmed for a long time, so then it's a process of overcoming.

Verse 14: "How then shall they call on *Him* in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in *Him* of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without preaching?" God is saying that He has a responsibility to send a preacher and a teacher so that they will know.

Verse 15: "And how shall they preach, unless they be sent? Accordingly, it is written, 'How beautiful *are* the feet of those who announce the gospel of peace, and those who announce the good news of good things!' But all have not obeyed the gospel because as Isaiah said, 'Lord, who has believed our report?' So then, **faith**... [is what we're talking about] ...*comes by hearing*..." (vs 15-17).

This is important! We saw how first you have to hear what God is doing to lead you to repentance, *and* answer the call! But then you

- *hear* the Word of God
- *read* the Word of God
- *study* the Word of God

And we are able now in this age to do so in a very profound way that has not been able to be done in ages past.

"...and hearing through *the* Word of God" (v 17). This is what it needs to be: *you need to hear the Word of God*. You need to **hear** what God says, not what a man says about *their* belief in the Word of God, **but the Word of God!**

Verse 18: "But I say... [this is something which Paul said here] ...did they not hear?..." This, I believe, is also a prophecy for our day today. Do you believe that God is going to let Satan's greatest civilization come on this world without everybody hearing about it? There are many different kinds of witnesses out there—telling about the coming one world government, one world religion, many different witnesses. They may not all be called of God at this particular point, but at least they are witnessing to the truth of the political, economic and religious reality that is happening out there. And then out of that, **God will call**.

"...Yes, indeed, *for it is written*, 'Their voices went out into all the earth; their words went out even to the ends of the habitable world'" (v 18). That's why I believe that's a prophecy and it has not been completely fulfilled, yet.

This is how we come to the point that we say, 'Okay, I know God is dealing in my life. So, it really doesn't matter what the initiating thing is which brought you to this understanding. I talked to a man who said that years ago, when he was just a

young fella (he was only 4-5-years-old), he would go in every night (and this was 38 years ago) with his grandpa and sit down to the radio and listen to *The World Tomorrow* and Herbert W. Armstrong. He said through his whole life he could never get away from Sabbath-keepers, though he tried. Finally God just **convicted** him in heart and mind that he needed to repent and get right with God and quit all this stupidity and horsing around that he had been doing in his life. Here was something totally separate and removed; others deal within a family; it comes about that way; others because of a friend. In many different ways God is able to bring those so they will hear.

Let's go back to Acts 3 and let's see what is to happen when we repent. Then when we repent and are baptized and we come to these places. We come to these points that we need to. Then something takes place.

Acts 3:19—this was another sermon that Peter was preaching: “Therefore, repent and be converted...” Conversion is something that takes place over a period of time. An ongoing process is called *growing in grace and knowledge*, which is leading you to a deeper calling and conversion.

{see sermon: *Love of God and Your Second Calling* (Love series #7)}. That just shows the process of this conversion and growing in grace and knowledge continues all the rest of our lives, which is very important for us to understand.

“...Therefore, repent and be converted in order that your sins may be blotted out...” (v 19). Though there is a major initial repentance—which then leads us to baptism—there is also a continual, ongoing repentance as we find ourselves growing, overcoming and finding sin in our lives and things like this. That's why Christ is at the right hand of God as our High Priest. That's why He is there as a ‘propitiation’; a propitiation means *a continual source of forgiveness upon repentance through grace*. Always there! All of this is contained in this statement.

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Now, we'll cover this a little bit more in detail when we again come back to the book of Romans and talk about *grace* in greater depth. But in John 1 I want us to understand something, because what is going to happen down the road will be this: You initially discover what a sinner you are. Then you understand that you have sinful nature and God reveals sinful thoughts that you have so you can repent of them as you're going along. This is able to be accomplished through the grace of God, sacrifice of Christ, which is continually applied to our lives.

Then we come to another understanding of the grace of God, which we need to understand beyond just the initial. Not only do you need the grace of God to lead you to repentance, you need the *grace of God* to continuously live under. We all need that because of the sinfulness of human nature, because you can't save yourself. God told that to Job. You can't start out with mercy and forgiveness of grace and then end up with works, and accomplish it with your own works. You have your works, but they have to be wrought in Christ.

Let's just review this, because it fits in right here, John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full of grace and Truth... [this is a spiritual fullness] (then he reviewed): ...John testified... [v 16]: ...And of His fullness **we have all received**, and grace upon grace” (vs 14-16). This is to inspire us to want to **really let God mold us** in His image according to His grace.

- Is Christ ever going to run out of grace? *No!*
- Is Christ ever going to run out of Truth? *No!*
- When you have God's Spirit—which, after you're baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, or God's Spirit is with you before baptism leading you to repentance—does God know when you sin? *Yes!*
- What does He want? *He wants you to repent, because there is the grace there to cover it.*

As we covered in our sermon series in the *Epistles of John*, there are ‘sins not unto death.’ A ‘sin not unto death’ is a sin then to which you repent. A ‘sin unto death’ is one that you won't repent and refuse to repent and don't understand that you have sinned or refuse to recognize that you have sinned. It's by a willful choice.

But here we have: “...grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses... [which is fine, true, good and should be] ...*but* the grace and the Truth... [**for salvation**] ...came through Jesus Christ” (vs 16-17).

When it is ‘repent and be converted,’ let's understand that that's what it means in this whole process. It is a process. There is an instantaneous change when you are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, but there is a greater change as you grow in grace and knowledge in your Christian walk down through time. That's what we need to know and also understand. This will reinforce what we read in John 6, and this is *the conviction* and *the understanding* that we need to come to.

John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am **the Way**, and **the Truth**, and **the Life**...’ He is that way *alone*. This is one of my very favorite verses, and the reason is that it tells us something absolutely, eternally dogmatic.

- He is “...**the Way**...” Not ‘a’ way, but ‘**THE Way**.’]
- He is “...**the Truth**...” Not only is the Word of God *truth*, but HE Himself is True, and He is *THE Truth!*
- He is “...and **the Life**: no one comes to the Father **except through Me**” (v 6).

I tell you, all these world’s religions are going to violate that. They are going say that *anybody* can come *anyway they want*, and there are many ways and Jesus was *only one of many*. **You know that’s a false message, right down the line!** He is **THE ONLY Way**, **THE ONLY Truth** and **THE ONLY Life**. And **He alone can give it to us!**

Let’s carry this on a little bit further, let’s see some other things. God calls many different people in many different circumstances, many different walks of life, many different ages: young/old. In Matt. 20 we have a parable, which gives us some understanding concerning this. So, it’s never too late to repent. It’s never too late for God to call you.

Matthew 20:1: “The Kingdom of Heaven shall be compared to a man, a master of a house, who went out early in *the* morning to hire workmen for his vineyard. And after agreeing with the workmen on a silver coin... [a denarius] ...*for* the day’s *wage*, he sent them into his vineyard. And when he went out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, ‘Go also into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ And they went. Again, after going out about *the* sixth hour and *the* ninth hour, he did likewise. And about the eleventh hour, he went out *and* found others standing idle, and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all the day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’....” (vs 1-7).

This can be not only in time, in age of life, but that can also apply to some who are young, some who are old. It can also apply in the time of God’s plan. Some were called—like the apostles and the first disciples—back there as we saw in Acts 2. These were the ones who began. Then we have right at the end, like the 144,000 and the great innumerable multitude, that are like those at the eleventh hour. So, this can apply to age, and this can apply to time-circumstances in God’s plan.

“...He said to them, ‘Go also into my vineyard, and whatever is right you shall receive.’

And when evening came, the lord of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘Call the workmen and pay them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.’” (vs 7-8)

This is also telling us something that’s important from a human perspective. God deals with fairness in a different way. What do I mean? We’ve grown up in a society where we have equality, supposedly—it’s not there—when you really understand it. We are dealing in a society that you have unions and worker’s rights and things like this. But that does not apply to what God is *going* to do, or *is* doing. He started with the last. From a human point of view this was not fair. God doesn’t do things that are fair. **God does what He’s going to do because He’s God!** If we all understand that then that’s fine.

Verse 9: “And when those who *were hired* about the eleventh hour came, they each received a silver coin. But when the first ones came, they thought that they would receive more; but each of them also received a silver coin” (vs 9-10).

It doesn’t matter if you’re called at 19 and then the whole rest of your life is devoted to God; or if you’re called at 80 and whatever remaining years you have left are devoted to God. It doesn’t matter if you are called in the first century, the second, the tenth, the fifteenth, the twentieth century or the twenty-first century, you’re all going to receive eternal life. That’s the whole lesson of it.

Verse 11: “And after receiving *it*, they complained against the master of the house, saying, ‘These *who came* last have worked one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have carried the burden and the heat of the day.’ But he answered *and* said to them, ‘Friend, I am not doing you wrong. Did you not agree with me on a silver coin *for the day*? Take *what* is yours and go, for I also desire to give to the last *ones* exactly as I gave to you. And is it not lawful for me to do what I will with that which *is* my own?.... [Job should have read that first ] ...Is your eye evil because I am good?’ **So, the last shall be first, and the first shall be last; for many are called, but few are chosen.**” (vs 11–16). So, there we have it right there. Great lesson for us!

- What does God expect us to do when He calls us?
- What do you do with something that is evil, worthless and no good, being human nature?
- What do you do with it?

*Well, like everything that is evil and no good, you have to get rid of it!* But getting rid of it is different than the process of just junking it and saying that we’ll start new.

Starting new is a different thing. *Each person has got to come to the point that he wants to get rid of the self!* That's the whole point in repentance and conversion. The secret is, you're really not going to get rid of the self all at once; but it's going to be step-by-step, as you grow in grace and knowledge.

This is very important for us to realize and understand. This is an ongoing, re-commitment that we make every year as part of the covenant. When we're baptized we make a covenant with God, which is an everlasting, eternal covenant that He's making with us. Then it's everlasting and eternal with us back to Him.

Luke 14:25: "And great multitudes were going with Him; and He turned *and* said to them, 'If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, and mother...'" (vs 25-26). We will see in Matt. 10, it means to *love less in comparison to*. But maybe even your own relatives will take it this *lack of love* as 'hate,' because you won't do things for them—they are your father or mother, husband or wife—because God has a greater something for you to do. Many relatives take great offense at that.

This is what He means, "...father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also..." (v 26). That's all a part of *calling and conversion*. I've seen that. I look back and see and all I can say is that I'm thankful for God's mercy, kindness, graciousness and forgiveness that He has made it possible.

"...his own life also, he **cannot** be My disciple" (v 26). This, again, is a very definite, dogmatic, separating point: 'cannot' means *it is impossible to be*. The Greek there is 'ou dunatai' which means there is *no power, no power* to make you His disciple unless you come to this conclusion and conviction in your heart and mind.

Verse 27: "And whoever does not carry his cross... [whatever the difficulty and problem there is in your life that comes along] ...and come after Me... [we have to go after God] ...**cannot** be My disciple.... [it's an impossibility] ...For which one of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has *sufficient* for *its* completion; lest perhaps... [*unfortunately*] ...after he has laid its foundation and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish'? Or what king, when he goes out to engage another king in war, does not first sit down *and* take counsel, whether he will be able with ten thousand to meet him who is coming against him with twenty thousand?" (vs 27-31). Overwhelming odds! But, you need to realize that the battle is not between an army. If you're going to resist and fight God, what

He's saying here: you're really going to lose. That's what He's saying. You need to *count the cost*.

Verse 32: "But if not, while his *enemy* is still far off... [Christ has not returned] ...he sends ambassadors... [which is likened unto a peace offering—repentance] ...and desires the *terms* for peace." What are the conditions of peace that we've seen? That God gives us? *Repent and be baptized!* Those are the conditions of peace. Then we have peace with God.

Verse 33: "In the same way also, each one of you who does not forsake all that he possesses cannot be My disciple."

That doesn't mean that you give up everything and just walk off into the wilderness. You can do that, but you can sit in the wilderness and say, 'Oh God, I've given all of this up.' You can sit there in your own mind and say, 'Boy, I really wish I had it.' You really have not separated yourself from your things. You may be physically removed from them, but you haven't separated them mentally. You can even be in the middle of all your things and completely separate yourself from it spiritually and mentally and fulfill what He has required here.

Let's see another part of this. And again, these are basic Scriptures that we have gone over, but maybe in the light of this calling and baptism and so forth, this will shed a little bit different light on it.

Matthew 10:37: "The one who loves... [anyone who is loving—'eth' (KJV) is present tense] ...father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." That's why we know the 'hatred' is not hatred in the sense that you despise them and reject them. But it means *you love less in comparison to* your father and mother and so forth. That's why you put the two together and we're able to understand it that way.

Verse 38: "And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me." Again, always a present tense thing. As you have your Christian walk, you're going to have different troubles from time-to-time, which may be more or less intense; more or less different. That's why it's put in this term in the present tense. You must be taking up the cross. You must be following, and if not, you're not worthy of Him.

Verse 39: "The one who has found his life shall lose it..." In other words, if you say, 'It's not worth it for God, and you go your own way to save your own physical life, you're going to end up losing it. Because God is in charge of everything anyway!

"...and the one who has lost his life..."



[giving it up and growing and overcoming with grace and knowledge and growing conversion] ...for My sake **shall find it**" (v 39). Which means **true, eternal, profound life forever!** That's what He's saying here. That's what's important for us to realize.

Rom. 6 tells us the whole operation. And this is why, every year, we have the Passover, which renews the covenant of baptism. We have the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is getting rid of sin; God getting rid of it for us; we putting it out of our lives together, jointly. We go back and we review our baptism.

Romans 5:21: "So that even as sin has reigned unto death... [the 'wages of sin is death'] ...so also might the grace of God reign through righteousness..." You're going to enter into a whole new phase of living with the grace of God. Grace is to **reign, rule** and **inspire** you—not to go sin, but:

- to **desire to overcome**
- to **desire to seek God**
- to **desire to want eternal life**

with all your heart, mind, soul and being; that's what it's for. That's how it reigns: **through righteousness!** "...unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v 21).

Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?" No, that's not how grace abounds. Grace abounds: **grace upon grace**, if we're truly loving God, yielding to Him.

Verse 2: "MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin..." That's what the operation of baptism does, it makes you 'dead to sin.' Human nature is a motivating force in your life, because baptism in effect is a substitute death. **Dead to sin!**

"...how shall we live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus..." (vs 2-3). That's an interesting phrase because it is true: **into** Jesus Christ. So, it is more than just symbolic washing away of the sins. It is a great and a deep, profound covenant that you're making with God.

"...were baptized **into His death**?" (v 3). Baptism by full water immersion is, in fact, the closest thing you can come to symbolically dying; because you're put under the water and unless you're raised up out of the water you're dead. That's why He has it that way, so you understand that. And it is also **completely under the water** because:

Verse 4: "Therefore, **we were buried**..." That's what you do with what you don't want, you **bury** it. Bury the old human corpse as it were.

"...with Him **though the baptism** into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead

by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life" (v 4). How is this 'newness of life'?

- it is *being led* of the Spirit of God
- it is *walking* in the commandments and laws of God
- it is *living* under the grace of God
- it is *walking* in His way and *loving* God with all your heart, mind, soul and being

*That is the newness of life.*

Verse 5: "For if we have been conjoined together..." What is happening in baptism is that Jesus Christ is symbolically taking you and putting you with Him in His death, because He bore your sins. Now He wants you to conjoin in your death with Him. He died for you as a substitute sacrifice of God so that **you** don't die, but that **you** may have eternal life. That's why you are 'conjoined.' Not only just together, it's not a side-by-side affair; it is together, conjoined.

"...in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection.... [the beginning and the end] ...Knowing this... [this is what we are to always understand as we're growing in grace and knowledge] ...that **our old man was co-crucified with Him** ..." (vs 5-6).

That's what He counts it, that's why He says that 'you have to bear your cross' and come after Him because you, in joining Him in death—conjoined—you have been crucified just like He has been. That takes some real grasping to understand, but that is the depth of what it's meaning. I will have to tell you that all of us have understood this **after** we have been baptized a long, long time.

I did not understand this when I was first baptized. God led me to repentance and I knew I had to be baptized. I knew that when I was baptized that I received the Holy Spirit, but I did not know at the day, time—and that was October 19, 1960—what the future had for me at all. I'll just have to tell you it's *far different* than I may have ever imagined or thought, because we have to walk by faith regardless of the circumstances around us. This is what it means:

"...that our old man was co-crucified with *Him*... [jointly—conjoined—in that crucifixion with Christ] "**...in order that the body of sin might be destroyed**... [getting rid of *sinful human nature is a process*] ...so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin" (v 6). That's what it means! Doesn't mean that you won't sin. It is that *you won't serve sin*. Who are you going to serve? *God the Father and Jesus Christ!* You will have sin, but you put this away by repentance and coming to God.

Let's see how this operates, v 7: "Because

the one who has died *to sin*.” You might insert right there: *by baptism*. The one who is dead by baptism, because that’s how God reckons you.

“...has been justified... [freed or loosed] ...from sin.” God has forgiven it. It also paves the way for you to become step-by-step free of the ‘law of sin and death.’

Verse 8: “Now, if we died together... [jointly dead with Christ] ...with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him... [the hope of all Christians] ...knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the dead*, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all...” (vs 8-10).

That is for the sins of the whole world. But particularly and individually applied to each one who repents. Is that not a marvelous thing, indeed? *Yes it is! That God is able to do that to everyone of us!*

“...but in that He lives, He lives unto God. In the same way also...” (vs 10-11). Here’s how we’re to live our lives and the way it is to be after we are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit:

“...you should indeed reckon... [*calculate*—this is how to figure your life] ...yourselves **to be dead to sin...**” (v 11). You calculate that. You know you have sin to overcome, but you’re dead to it because you’re not going to live in it any longer. You don’t want to live in it any longer. You hate it! It’s miserable!

“...but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, do not let sin rule... [rule and dictate your life] ...in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof.... [showing that it is there and we overcome it] ...Likewise, do not yield...” (vs 11-13). ***Don’t let it reign! Don’t yield yourself to that!*** This can only be done with grace, brethren. I want to tell you something that’s very important; in the past we’ve heard it:

- *You* get the sin out of your life!
- *You* overcome!
- *You* work on your problems!

That is a truism, but that’s not how you overcome, spiritually. The way you overcome spiritually is to ***ask God to help you love Him with all your heart, mind, soul and being!***

- you come to understand the greatness of God’s grace
- you come to understand how God is dealing with you in this way

I’ll tell you, something will happen. All of those problems that you focus on will begin to drop by the wayside because you’re focusing on seeking God. When you do that, these problems will be

overcome in the process of that. Then you are not letting sin reign in your mortal bodies.”

Verse 13: “Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, ***yield yourselves unto God...*** [that’s exactly what I’m talking about here: *through His grace*] ...but yield yourselves... [How?] ...***as those that are alive from the dead...*** [that’s how] ...and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law, but under grace” (vs 13-14). This is a deep and profound thing we need to understand; meaning that you’re in this relationship with God through grace.

Verse 15<sup>[transcriber’s correction]</sup>: “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** Don’t you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as* servants to obey, you are servants of the one you obey, whether *it is* of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (vs 15-16). This is a short summary of how we grow and overcome and grow in grace and knowledge.

Baptism means that you understand that ***you are going to be conjoined in the death of Jesus Christ!*** That He is going to count you in the same death as His. But He is also going to resurrect you when He returns so that you will have the same life that He has, and be in the Family and Kingdom of God. This is why baptism is important. ***We need to go back and realize not only is it a beginning step when we’re baptized, but also is something to renew and review and go back and ask God for a greater conviction of it as we grow in grace and knowledge through the years!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scripture References:

- 1) Matthew 3:1-11
- 2) John 4:1-2
- 3) Matthew 28:18-20
- 4) Revelation 11:15
- 5) John 6:44-45
- 6) Romans 2:4
- 7) Acts 2:32-38
- 8) Romans 10:8-18
- 9) Acts 3:19
- 10) John 1:14-17
- 11) John 14:6
- 12) Matthew 20:1-16
- 13) Luke 14:25-33
- 14) Matthew 10:37-39
- 15) Romans 5:21
- 16) Romans 6:1-16

#### Also referenced:

- Video: *The Jesuit Agenda* (put out by the Seventh Day Adventist Church)

- Sermon: *Love of God and Your Second Calling* (Love Series #7)
- Sermon Series:
- *Epistles of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> John*
- *Romans*

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