

Welcome

Hymn MP 1024 All my days (3:52)

Scripture Jeremiah 31:31-34 (page 793)
Ezekiel 36:24-29 (page 868)

Prayer

Children's talk the plague of hail

Chorus MP 254 I am a new creation

Notices: Midweek prayer meeting at Josh and Breeshey's home, Evening service, Fellowship lunch, Sleepout feedback. Prepare for Easter, Passion for Life video

Alkei membership and testimony

Prayer time & Lord's prayer

Reading 1 Cor 12:12-11 (page 1153) (See also Titus 3:4-7)
John 3:1-8 (page 1065)

Hymn Praise 178 Great is the gospel of our Glorious God (CH120)

Sermon *Spirit baptism*

Hymn MP 673 There is a redeemer (Keith Green 3:10)

Closing prayer:

Prayer

- A caterpillar metamorphosises into a butterfly. The result is extraordinarily beautiful. How is it that something derived from a caterpillar can be so new and so different? It's remarkable!

➤ And so too is the change Jesus brings to a person!

Samuel said of Saul **the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power, ... and you will be changed into a different person.** 1Sa 10:6

But what does being 'different' mean? A Christian is different, but how would you spot one in a crowd? Could you? You can't! Wouldn't it be easy if there was an outward sign. Two women - not Christian/Christian.

As we continue with Paul's letter to the Christians in Corinth the subject of the sermon this morning is Spirit Baptism x2.

Our verse is 1 Cor 12:13 **For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body —whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.**

It is a key verse. A verse to memorise. In chapter 12 it is a hinge verse. The 12 verses before are on Spiritual gifts, the next half of the chapter is about how we use those gifts within the body. This hinge joins the two together, the spirit and body. 13 **For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body.** The gifts of Christ are to be used within the Body of Christ.

That is the immediate context, what of its place in the letter as a whole?

Paul was telling them, as he tells us, how to worship God acceptably. Our lives are to be centered on the adoration and worship of God. That's what we were made for, that is what we will be doing eternally, and that is how we function and live best as image bearers of God. This is not just singing his praise as we have been doing this morning, it's our whole life.

If you look at all the chapters in this letter you can see Paul's key points: that worship is corporate, we worship as a body of people, together. Our worship is acceptable when we are united in love. Division destroys worship. Idolatry destroys worship. Immorality destroys worship. Lack of love, pride etc., destroys worship. Worship must be done together, united, loving, and looking to the risen Lord and fuelled by our own resurrection hope. The only way this can truly be, is when the Lord does a work in us by his Spirit. Flesh and blood, our natural selves, will never, can never honour God. That is why this is a key

verse. Now let us look at what spiritual baptism is, what it means, and how we must have it. **13 For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body.**

So firstly, what is baptism?

What does it mean being 'baptised'?

The practice of baptism is not uniquely Christian.

So when John the Baptist called people to come forward and be baptised they understood what it meant. In the simplest sense it is a change from the old to the new. John baptised in water for the forgiveness of sins, their sins went away and they came up out of the water to a new clean start. This is of course symbolical. No amount of water can wash away sin! We can remind our Muslim & Hindu friends busy with their washing

Do we find baptism in the OT? The word isn't there. The word isn't there, but the picture is.

The Apostle Peter said that in the days of Noah the **water symbolises baptism that now saves you also**— 1st Pe 3:21 **flood slide**

Sea, or water, stands for death. All were drowned in the sea. But Noah rising above the water was saved. He leaves the old world and enters the new. **it saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ**, says Peter. 1Pe 3:21

The same is seen as Moses was saved in his little 'ark'. He would otherwise have drowned in the waters of the Nile.

That water means death is very strongly presented by Moses in his Exodus 15 song after **the crossing of the Red Sea**. The Israelites passed through on dry ground - while the water drowned, killed, all the Egyptians. Paul refers to this a couple of chapters back in 1 Cor 10 the Israelites **were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea**. 1Co 10:2 So there are the pictures of baptism.

New Testament baptism presents the same picture of death and return to life. As water baptism is used symbolically there must be enough water for the person to go under and come back again. John 3 says **John also was baptising at Aenon, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptised.** Joh 3:23

- **I hope you can see that a sprinkling on the forehead, or the sign of the cross etc, etc is not baptism.**

John in using water wanted people to realise that a profound change is needed. We read in Acts: **Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel.** Ac 13:24

That is because only Jesus can make this profound change. John in preparing the way said: **"I baptise you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I... He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.** Mt 3:11, Joh 1:33.

The baptism we are thinking about today is not water baptism, it is ...

Spirit baptism

Water baptism is powerless, but when the powerful One comes he will not push you under water but change your heart. This change of heart is not natural, no doctor can help you here, this is supernatural, this is a miracle. Jesus is still doing miracles today, and there is no greater miracle than to change a human heart from one of stone to one of flesh, from hardness to love. That is a miracle. He has done it for many. Has he done it for you? **For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.** Ac 1:5, Some of you have been baptised in water, but have you been **baptised with the Holy Spirit?** Do you know it?

Spirit baptism is invisible. Being **baptised by His Spirit** is something you cannot see. All these Bible pictures of water are visual representations of something invisible. **Just as you feel the invisible wind by being blown by it, or feel the heat that comes from the sun's rays**

With John's baptism as with any water baptism you just got wet, and any commitment is no more than my best efforts and intentions.

Jesus's baptism is done by the **Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit of God** that proceeds from the Father and the Son. He takes hold of a sinful life and changes it completely. Baptism is not more of the same, it is not a better version, it is not giving the cripple a stick, it is not a helping hand, it is the once for ever transformation of a man, woman, boy or girl from being flesh and blood only, to being spiritually united to God our maker.

It's becoming fashionable to think of oneself as 'spiritual'. Yes, there is this dimension to us as image bearers of God. But like **those flowers we are cut off and dead**, only the Spirit of God can **enliven** me and unite me to God. All else is just dappling with spirits, something the Lord forbids.

It is only through the doorway of this new birth that I can enter the Kingdom of God. It is a work of Christ's Spirit who brings His life to me. It produces regeneration, I am a new creation, I am alive to God. I'm justified, I'm put right with God, I am now able to live in repentance and faith. I'm converted and I have a desire and hunger for the things of Christ, and I have a desire and am able to obey Him.

I go through the waters of baptism as part of my witness to others that I belong to Christ and am adopted into God's family.

➤ **Bruce Milne says: 'Baptism in the Spirit' is therefore one of the ways the NT speaks about 'becoming a Christian'; hence every true believer in Christ has been baptised in the Spirit.**

If that hasn't happened to you, then my language will be confusing to you. And if it is not your experience then you won't know what I mean. You'll believe that by being baptised in water and doing your best is all that is necessary. **Do not have the symbol without the reality. True believers baptised by the Spirit along with water baptism have the reality.**

You may well ask "how does this spiritual baptism work?"

John the Baptist said: **"the reason I came baptising with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."** Joh 1:31. In other words the visual **going down under the water and then back up**, the dying and rising, reveals Christ - for this is what Christ does. He alone brings this change by His Spirit.

Salvation has two parts: **there is the cross**, that external event looming large as the axiom of history. It is out there, the crucifixion a verifiable event in time and space. Real divine blood was shed on a small hill just outside of Jerusalem in around AD 33.

Then there is me. living 2000 years later and 2000 miles away. Where's the connection? How can the benefit of that then, be brought to effect me now? If not, it is only an event seen from **'behind glass'** as it were, remote and cut off from me. Something I can only observe from afar, as we did when we watched the **Olympics, something which impresses us and produces admiration, but that's all.**

How is it brought to me? applied to me? **Like those life-saving pills I find on my computer I need them to come from some remote country and arrive at my door, so I can take them and live.** The work of Christ on the cross those years ago is brought through time and space to me by His Spirit. Jesus risen, alive and now ascended to heaven sends His Spirit to do his work of saving souls. Those Christians in Corinth **were washed, .. sanctified and justified, put right with God by the Spirit of God.** 1Co 6:11

That is how it is brought to me, and many of you, and millions of others in the four corners of the world and who have lived throughout the history of the world. Many can say that what the Son of God paid for then on the cross - is now mine. The effect of that then - is mine now!

That sacrifice, that shedding of pure, divine blood bore away my sin. In the sight of God I am now declared sinless, guiltless and blameless.

Christ stood in my place and satisfied God's anger against me – by punishing Him. That is the glorious gospel that we sang of earlier!

And if I have been made clean then the Lord can come in, he can indwell, he can inhabit this vessel cleansed and prepared. So Christ comes in all his grace bringing His righteousness to me, to have him – is to have God! **for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.** Ga 3:27

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour," Tit 3:5,6 That **washing of rebirth and renewal** is an invisible work wrought by the Holy Spirit. Tit 3:7

Gospel challenge

Do you know it? Do you have it? I have no righteousness of my own, and nor do you. Stay as you are and on the day you meet your maker you will not survive the judgment. You need the righteousness of Christ. Will you come to Him for it?

If you want to share in the cross, then you must go under, you must die too. **To have Him - you must die.** Are you willing?

As we saw with the talk last week you must give up being the captain of your life and take Jesus as your Captain and profess Jesus as your Lord.

Baptism has a dying part and a rising part. Jesus speaks of the cross as a baptism saying **I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!** Lu 12:50 Is not the cross the ultimate sign of death? Does not death have to come first before life?

When someone turns to Christ in Afghanistan they can expect death. One man, wanting to become a follower of Jesus and to be baptised thought that if he was to go into the water he would drown. He was willing to do it for he expected to die for becoming a Christian.

In a way he did die, his fleshly sin life dies, **Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death?** Ro 6:3 We put sin to death as Jesus died, that we might be raised to the new kind of life that Jesus brought.

Are you willing to die, die to self?

The mark of baptism is therefore of someone who has died. Died to self.

Paul says of those who have Jesus: **We were buried with him through baptism into death in order that, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.** Ro 6:4

Into - Slide, salvation is being saved from something and saved into something. The Christians at Corinth were saved from sin and the Judgment to come. But they were also saved into something, **into one body.** a body of life.

This is not our body but Christ's body v27 **you are the body of Christ, and each one of you, every Christian, is a part of it.** 1Co 12:27.

Paul says to those at Rome who had forgotten this **don't you know that all of us .. were baptised into Christ Jesus** Ro 6:3

A Christian is someone **in Christ** x2. Christ is alive, He is life, He is the author of life, He is the life-giving spirit so to be in His body is to enter life, the land of the living, the eternal kingdom, the forever family.

Have you entered? The door enables you to enter this building, Christ enables you to enter the presence of God Almighty. Jesus said I am the door or gate, Jesus said: **whoever enters through me will be saved.** Joh 10:9

Have you entered?

- Alkei testimony, could you stand up and tell us as she has?

Baptism may start in death - but it ends in life. It points to a new resurrection life as Paul says using a negative in 1 Co 15 **Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptised for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptised for them?** 1 Co 15:29

Our verse starts **For we were all** - So is this everyone? No. Who are the 'we all'. We can see who Paul is speaking of at the beginning of his letter. **To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:"** 1Co 1:2 These are those who are baptised.

—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free

Whoever you are, whatever you have done, whatever religion your parents did, - or didn't - bring you up in, whether you are as poor as an Indian Dalit or as rich as Elon Musk it is only through the action of Christ's spirit that you can enter. It is an equal, level playing field. 13 **For we were all baptised by one Spirit**, before and afterwards **into one body.**

Finally

—**and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.** This morning the body of Christ here shared in the cup, we drank of one cup. But this cup does not sustain us, it is not by drinking the wine or grape juice, but by drinking into one Spirit. The outward sign of the cup is appointed of God for our participation; but it is baptism by the Spirit, it is internal renovation that makes us true members of Christ's body. And it is the drinking of one Spirit that maintains our union with him. Being animated by one Spirit makes Christians one body. If by His Spirit I have the life of Jesus then he becomes the centre of my desires, my thinking, my action.

- Meet and Olympic athlete in the bar and you know what the conversation will be on, I was once a founder of a Custom Car club, guess what we talked about in the pub. Meet a musician, a football fan or someone into horse racing - all their interest absorb them.

The Christian - **given the one Spirit to drink** - is filled with Christ,

- **Like that water all around all Christians are 'saturated with one Spirit'**

How to tell who has been baptised by the Spirit? There will be beauty as with the beautiful butterfly. Here are some ways in which you can tell:

The **one Spirit** unites us to all of God's people. Bruce Milne goes on to say: Our life of constant ongoing renewing is set firmly in the context of the fellowship of God's people, particularly in the local church to which he calls us. The Spirit knows nothing of one-man-band Christians and ministries. Our most enriching

experiences are those relationships of love and sharing which he gives us within the life of the family of God.

Holiness - The Spirit is holy, separate from all sin and evil. His presence in our lives will therefore always be manifest in moral terms, drawing us away from evil and sin into righteousness and holiness. The Spirit reforms our character into Christ-likeness. Christ is grieved by our sinning, he wills our holiness. His Spirit is given for his continuous ongoing ministry of conforming us to the image of Christ.

Holiness means set apart. How odd, and how sad it is when those who profess faith talk of all sort of things, shopping, pot holes, NHS, their aches and pains, the Council, etc., etc., where is the Lord in all this? Where's the interest in their brothers and sisters?, the work of the gospel? Aren't we to be primarily concerned about what the Lord is doing?

Then there is a world to come, the Christian has the world to come 'now'. The Spirit is the life of the new, coming age imparted to us under the conditions of the present, fallen order. His presence within directs us forward in hope to the coming Day when Christ will return in glory. The Christian indwelt by the Spirit will therefore strain forward in growing anticipation of the fulness of the Spirit's life and blessing which will be the glad experience of the people of God on that day.

We sung '*I am a new creation*' - Here then are some of the signs of being baptised by the Spirit, as with the butterfly they are full of beauty. END