

The Gospel and Baptism

Matthew chapter 28, verses 16-20, it's the end of the gospel there, let us listen attentively to the word of God, Matthew 28, 16 and following. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted.

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. And go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Amen. Let us pray. With the great commission here, God, the call and responsibility of the church collectively, of bringing forth the good news of Jesus Christ and baptizing the nations, may we see and learn anew, again, the significance and relationship of the good news and of baptism itself, and how, God, it's part of the Christian life and the public call, indeed, of ourselves to be holy and to follow you and to submit and to believe in Jesus, and for the world, God, to come and be brought into, we pray, more and more, the kingdom of God through the rite of baptism.

We ask these things by the blood of our Lord and Savior, amen. This well-known text before us begins with the church leadership, the Apostles, although often called disciples, we know them as the Apostles, capital A, meeting with Jesus on mountain in Israel. They are gathered to honor and worship Christ after His resurrection, we read there, even though some of them were still unclear exactly what's going on, they doubted, it says.

They acknowledge, however, most of them, His unique power and supremacy as the God-man, fully God in nature and fully man in body and soul, both united in one divine person, Jesus. And their worship of Him is as the King of the church. He is their leader, showing His power over death itself for the sake of His people.

He has triumphed and now raised His kingdom with a new task, to disciple the nations, what is commonly known as the Great Commission. With the authority over heaven and earth, as He declares, He directs this new task upon the church to go, to make disciples, to baptize and to teach, those are the main verbs. But note carefully, this command to make disciples involves nations, or we get the English word ethnos right from this Greek word.

Not individuals, not persons, but nations, collectively speaking. And Christ's command to make disciples or followers is to baptize them, them who? The nations. And children are part of nations, the last I checked.

So this job Jesus presented to the disciples, to the church through them, is a call to baptize infants. But in our individualistic culture, where everything is about our personal ego, pleasures or perspective, this is hard to accept. We have a cultural prejudice that does not see family units as the basis of a nation, but rather simple individuals.

We're taught this from a young age, of course, told every one of us is a unique individual, it's all about us, what we can do and what the world does for us and should do for us. But Christ's command here does not assume the modern way of thinking about individuals. It assumes the family, that individuals are part of a group, the most basic group being the family unit.

He calls the church to bring them in as disciples, those put into position of learning, the idea there of disciple. And so with this text in mind, I want to delve into the good news and baptism and how the two relate. So the first point here, the gospel and the Great Commission.

Gospel and the great Commission

If you read this carefully and you notice, the word gospel is not here. The word good news, that's what the word gospel means. The good news is in the very words themselves, that word is not here in the text.

He says, all authority has been given to me, go make disciples, baptizing them, teach them, etc. But of course, it is there because he says, teaching them, verse 20, to observe what? All the things that I have commanded you and taught you and displayed before you by implication. Everything which obviously would include the gospel, the good news.

And so it's there implicitly but by good and necessary consequence. It must be there. Or what would be the point of Jesus coming to the earth if the Great Commission doesn't involve preaching the good news? It would be to no avail.

But it's also the assumed context of Christ's ministry, what I just said. Why did he come to earth? To live and die for his people, that's the good news. To suffer for them, to give them redemption and salvation.

And what in particular should be taught of that good news? That Christ saves sinners. That's the gospel in a nutshell. That Christ saves sinners.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the second member of the Trinity, came to earth, the incarnation, to live and die for his people, suffering on the cross for them, died and rose again from the dead, triumphing over sin, Satan, and death itself for his people and ascended on high. That's the same Jesus who came to save us, to save his people, both body and soul, for there is a resurrection. And that is the good news.

It is good news, wonderful news, to relieve us of our guilty conscience, to protect us from our sins, to bring us out of the dominion of Satan and his wicked kingdom. That is the good news. That is the glorious redemption of Jesus Christ that should be proclaimed from the churches and from the pulpit in particular.

But the good news is meaningless without understanding why we need it. And we live in a society more and more, they don't understand what Christianity is about. They just hear, oh good news, I like to have good news, oh good, I don't, I get to live forever, wonderful.

But there's no sense of sin, there's no sense of guilt. Many people as we find out more and more, and perhaps you've seen it in your own life, you certainly see it in the news, seem to simply have no conscience it seems, they feel no guilt, nothing seems to hold them back. That's why it's important to explain why the good news is good news.

It's good news because there's bad news. Jesus himself came to express that bad news and to warn against that bad news. One of the topics he talks a lot about, people forget, is hell.

In Mark 1.14 we read part of his stated ministry on earth. Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. We all hear that name, say amen, this is wonderful, this is what he's teaching.

And saying the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel. Repentance must be part of the call of the good news. You can't come into God's kingdom clinging to your sins and saying, well I can make an exception for this, but unfortunately that's what more and more people seem to be hearing or being taught or something along those lines.

Jesus never did that from day one. He called them to give up their wicked lifestyle. He called a spade a spade.

That's part of the great commission. Teaching all that I commanded you to teach, including by his own example what he did, which was very clearly confront people for their sins and call them to turn away from them and embrace him as their Lord and Savior. Even though they were the church and Jewish garb at this time when Jesus came to earth, many were unsaved, unfortunately, needing to repent from self-righteousness as we see in the example of one of the largest groups of Jews, the Pharisees, of the leadership.

Very arrogant, very prideful, they need to repent as well. Just being raised in the covenant, the Jewish form of the church at the time with circumcision, didn't make them automatically believers. They were given much advantage, of course, much teaching.

They had the Mosaic law, they had the Mosaic gospel, in fact. Jesus preaches the gospel from the Psalms and elsewhere and so did the apostles. It's there, they heard it, but they wanted nothing to do with it when he came in the flesh to call them to true repentance, that they should put their trust in him standing before them, the Messiah himself in the flesh.

But we read as you read carefully through the gospels, over time, over the three years of his ministry, they got more angry, more bitter, and plotted to murder him, their very Messiah. So baptism does not save. If it did, they would be born again and they would embrace the Messiah.

It's not his purpose, but it has a place in our sanctification and belief as believers, of course. All sinners, all of us are sinners. The whole world is born in iniquity and violation of God's holy law.

They have come short of the perfection required of heaven. That's the bad news, that everyone sins in thought, word, and deed, doing what they wish to do when they want to do it, and God has nothing to do with it at all. That's what we see around us.

You've seen it yourself, perhaps, when you were raised outside of the church, as many adults are in the church, it seems. You've been through that lifestyle of wickedness and wretchedness, of being selfish. We may not feel especially bad at times, but that is not relevant.

You may meet people who seem to have no guilty conscience. You talk to them about things of the word of God, and they want nothing to do with it. And you're like, what's going on with them? Why don't they have this feeling? Maybe they're not too guilty, because they don't seem too bad.

Lots of unbelievers put on a good front. Don't forget that. They seem very nice, and I want them to be nice.

I don't want them yelling at me. Sure. It doesn't change the fact that in their heart of hearts, they hate God Almighty.

That's part of being born a sinner. They are born outside of God's grace. They are born in Satan's kingdom, and they are under his dominion as servants and slaves willingly.

We know this because they reject the gospel call over and over again. You've talked to them. You know some of them.

They're probably in your family. It's a terrible thing to see. Can't you see how miserable your life is without Jesus, that you're on your way to hell? That's the bad news.

And people need to hear both, as Jesus proclaims the law and the gospel, and he commands us to preach both to the world. And this commission here, in particular, is given to whom? Who's here in the text before us? Then the 11 disciples went away into Galilee, verse 16, and verse 18, Jesus came and spoke to them. Who? The 11 disciples.

The apostles were given the great commission. The church officers is what they are. God, that is Jesus Christ, appointed them, anointed them, and said, you are the new leaders of the New Testament church to bring it into the new age, expand across the entire world.

I'm giving you this commission, this responsibility, this calling. And so the good news here is the message of the church in general, to be sure, the great commission more broadly, and the good news in particular, that as we have opportunity, of course, be able to give an answer of the hope that is within us, as Peter tells us. But each of us are not given the public responsibility the way a pastor is, the way a ruling elder is, or a deacon is, any more than you are as a judge or a civil magistrate, which of course you can do things that a judge or civil magistrate do, but on a very small scale in your family, in your home.

But it's not public, it's not official in that regard, and same with the great commission. To proclaim the good news, to proclaim all that Christ has commanded, to observe them as

well as to teach them, is the calling in particular of the minister under the leadership of the ruling elders. Important for the call to baptize the nations does not fall upon any one Christian. Going out there and grabbing kids and dunking them or sprinkling water on them is not anybody's call but the church's.

Gospel and Baptism

The gospel and baptism, the second point here. The baptism in the great commission is quite obvious, it's here, this is where you first read about it.

It's an ordinance of God Almighty, it's a particular act that he puts holy signification upon that you would not have known about unless you had heard this message of Jesus and read this Bible verse. You wouldn't know anything about this otherwise. And since the great commission of course includes teaching all things, that would include the good news as well as alongside the baptism.

So baptism is here to be exercised in accordance also in parallel with all that I've commanded you, i.e. the gospel. Gospel and baptism are both here in this text before us. Now what I want to explain about baptism is first what it is not.

It does not bring salvation as such to you. You're not literally born again. Roman Catholic Church for example, amongst many other denominations and churches that teach serious error on this matter, they teach baptism washes away original sin.

That which you are born with, your nature, that you were born as a kid. Everyone who has children knows that they sin intuitively, just like, the kid just already knows how to sin. They do a good job at it.

What's up with that? That's original sin. Manifesting what we call particular or actual actions of sin. It's their nature.

They sin because they are sinners. We sin because we are sinners. Not the other way around.

Secondly, baptism is not primarily about our public profession. This sounds really weird, again, to the American mindset where it's all about the adults and they have to make a public profession. And you ought to make a public profession insofar as you're making a vow before the church that you are a follower of Jesus and you're going to submit to the leadership.

That's true. But baptism as such, as we read here, doesn't include that explicitly. It's implied and expanded elsewhere, to be sure, for adults.

But it simply expresses and shows by its actions the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, of God's almighty power and regeneration in the blood of Christ Jesus. It's a wonderful picture. It makes sense to use this picture of baptism, of being washed, because the child and the adult are both, what, passive in the act.

It is the minister in the name of Jesus sprinkling them to symbolize the blood of Christ as well as the spirit of God upon them, if he so grants that upon their soul. They do nothing. And so it's a wonderful picture of the gospel, because you don't do anything.

In fact, you do the opposite. As an unbeliever, you try with all your might to resist God and the Holy Spirit. Again, you've seen this in your own life, perhaps, or others near you that you struggle.

You wish, why can't you just become a Christian? Why can't you just believe in Jesus and repent of your sins? Because they're depraved. They're bound in iniquity and sin. And then they're born again.

You were born again. You've seen it. You're like, what happened? What changed you? Did they change themselves? Or did the spirit of God change and wake up their hearts? That's the picture of baptism, the power of God unto salvation.

It's a wonderful, powerful picture. So it makes sense, then, from that perspective, that it's primarily about God's grace and not your response to that grace, although you're going to have a response, and you ought to have a response. So what is baptism? Now, I can give you a longer definition.

I'm going to shrink it. Sign and seal of the gospel. Make it very simple.

The sign and seal of the gospel. As a sign, we all know what that is, a symbol pointing to something else. It is not itself the Holy Spirit, so the water isn't magical like in Roman Catholicism or something like that.

You know, flags symbolize a nation, but they're not confused with the nation itself. The bread and wine, to use the other sacrament we know, symbolizes or points to something beyond itself, to the body and blood of Christ. So baptism is a sign.

Everyone, I think, agrees with that in Protestant circles. It's a sign. Clearly, it points to something that is not itself.

But it's one more thing beyond that. It's a seal, a sign and a seal. That is a confirmation of truth or one's status, public status in this case, because it's a public ordinance.

It's a sealing of our conscience towards God that He cares for us and loves us with an everlasting love. When struggling in marriage sometimes, looking at one's ring encourages you and strengthens your conscience that I made a commitment, they made a commitment to me, and we love one another. And so that ring is not only a sign of the marriage, but it becomes an instrument in your marriage to seal, to further reinforce upon your conscience that there is love for one another, in spite of your emotions.

That's the same kind of thing going on in the Lord's Supper when it's a seal, the idea of a seal. In particular, it's a sign and seal of, of course, our union with Christ and regeneration by the power of the Holy Spirit to thoroughly go together, and it's a packaged deal. Baptism

is a pouring or sprinkling with water, as our Shorter Catechism says, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, signifying and sealing our engrafting into Christ, partaking of the benefits of the Gospel, and our engagement to be the Lord's and His disciples.

So again, I'm not going to go into a lot of detail, it's a lot of words and ideas there, but simply again, as a sign, a picture pointing to regeneration and the Spirit of God, as a seal confirming in our conscience that God is for us and loves us, an engagement in fact, that's the language here of the Shorter Catechism that is to make disciples, and our engagement to be the Lord's and His disciples is the language here, and we have that in the Great Commission, to make disciples of the world. It's the same word as we read of the disciples, the eleven disciples, to make them students, sometimes we translate that as a student, for Christ was what? Their master, their teacher, and we are students in the Church, in the school of the Church of Jesus Christ, and it begins at the young age, by God's grace, even to the old age. And so, that's simply another way of describing what I talked about, it's a sign and seal of the covenant of grace.

Baptism as a sign of regeneration alike, and other descriptions of it in the New Testament, is a form of Old Testament circumcision. This was the verse that really woke me up from my theological slumbers when I was a younger man, in my twenties. Colossians 2.11 and 12, Colossians 2.11 and 12, where Paul, without skipping a beat, in one sentence, moves from the word circumcision to baptism.

In Him, that is of course Christ, you are also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, we know that theme from Romans. That is they were what? Born again or regenerated. By putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.

What? I thought Christ came to preach baptism, not circumcision. What's this? Buried with Him in baptism, oh, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God who raised Him from the dead. He moves from circumcision, calls it Christ's circumcision, how is that possible? I thought we had baptism.

And then just says you're buried with Him in baptism, Romans 6, and the other passage like that as well. Because in Paul's mind, they are functionally the same, although outwardly they look different, but they signify the same idea. Being circumcised without hands, which means being circumcised in the heart, again, Deuteronomy and elsewhere in the Old Testament actually has those passages, means clearly being born again, using Old Testament language.

Regeneration. And Paul says, and that's the same idea as baptism. Into Christ, again, you're passive, he's active.

It's all in one sentence, it just moves fluidly. There's no debate, of course, that circumcision was entrance into the Old Testament church. The New Testament church has a ceremonial entrance as well, 1 Corinthians 12, 13, For by one spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, we were all made to drink of one spirit.

It is an initiation or bringing into the church, publicly and formally, in the outward membership at least, we pray also the inward membership, that's between them and God. And so it too is an entrance into the New Testament church, like circumcision was in the Old Testament church, 1 Corinthians 12, 13. Now who is baptism for? So that's what it symbolizes, it's a sign and seal of the gospel, that we are his disciples, he has brought us to him, that we are circumcised in heart, we pray, that's what it symbolizes and we pray it's actually true, but who is it for? Now it's for male and female, and this is not much of a debate, of course, but at the same time, the New Testament doesn't say baptize women.

The examples are often of men, of course there's Lydia who was born again. So we know this to be the case because of the nature in the Old Testament of circumcision was such that it could only be applied to males. So the nature of the sacrament told you who the audience was.

What's the nature of the sacrament of baptism? You sprinkle on anybody, no restrictions that way, and of course, the significance of it being the promise and the picture of redemption is for anybody, and so it's for children in particular as well, as I'm going to argue here in most of the sermon. And again that picture, the children being the most passive of all, being baptized, you're like, that's a beautiful picture, that's me. Before God I could do nothing, and he saved me with an everlasting love by the power of the Spirit.

He made me born again. Biological deduction, just as we have the Trinity, biological deduction, and so we argue circumcision is replaced by baptism, I already had part of that argument already in Colossians 2.11. I will now give it to you in the form of a syllogism. All men are mortal, I am a man, therefore I am mortal.

None of us will argue, you can't find that in the Bible, what's wrong with you? It must follow, because God made the Bible as well as logic and nature. And the Bible, you can use, if you understand it or write, proper syllogisms, if you have the major and the minor, we call it, there to be defended in the Bible, and you can make the proper conclusion as we do with the Holy Trinity. Under the Old Testament, infants were circumcised as well as adults.

Two, baptism occupies the place of circumcision in the New Testament and has the same use that circumcision had in the Old Testament. Conclusion, therefore infants are to be baptized as well as adults. There's no debate again that infants were circumcised as well as adults in the Old Testament.

Proof of number two, that baptism occupies the place of circumcision by significance as well, that is what it points to, and that's clearly there in Colossians 2.11 and 12, what I just read earlier. And therefore, baptism is for children. By the giving of the promise itself, another text that I know I read at least once in my life as a young man, I didn't make the connection here in the Great Sermon of Peter in Acts chapter 2, where he preaches on the day of Pentecost.

For all these Jews, he also preached the law, and he said, what to them? You murdered Jesus! But he went further, because they cried out with pain of conscience. They responded in repentance, and what did he say to them? They said, what can we do to be saved? And he says in verse 38 and 39, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus

Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And there many people stopped reading.

Continue here, for the promise is to you and to your children. And I was like, wow, wow, okay, what? And to all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call. This is another passage that just blew my mind.

He gives a reason. He says, right, verse 37, they cry out, what can we do to be saved? We are wicked, help us, and he says, repent. We all got that right.

He says, be baptized. Why should you repent? Why should you be baptized? For, he gives a reason, for the promise is to you. Well, now this is great, to me and to your children, how does that work out? Well, it makes sense if you have a Jewish audience and they understand circumcision.

They're like, of course the kids are brought in, because it's a unit that's saved by God's grace. Or often is, sometimes they aren't, which is sad to be sure, but he brings them into the outward covenant, which is a wonderful blessing. We all know we would rather be in a good church than no church at all.

The promise, he says, is to you and to your children, to all who are far off, which clearly is the same kind of language as Ephesians 2, which is about the Gentiles. The Gentiles too can be saved. They're far off.

They're far away from the covenant promises we read in Ephesians 2, but now have been brought by the grace of God in the New Testament era, as well as their children. Children are given the promise, this is syllogism, first premise. Second, baptism is a sign of the promise, and therefore children should have the sign since they are also given the promise.

You may say, well, the adults, we know they're saved, so they can have the baptism, because it's only about saved people. You don't really know they're saved. You just simply don't.

You think you do, but you don't. You don't know they're saved. People lie.

Adults make these things up. We all know this. That's not really an objection, that's just confusion about what baptism is about.

You really don't know that they're really, really saved. He simply says, you show repentance. You confess Jesus Christ as you heard in the oath and the vows we had here before them.

They could be lying before God and men. We will never know. That's not my call.

My call is to baptize them, both them and their children, because the promise is to them and to their children. And then general consideration, which I hinted at before, with respect to baptizing infants. All humans recognize the solidarity that children have with family and society, at least they did until the last 15 years when they started taking our kids away from us and all the transgender stuff.

They're making excuses for them because they're predators. But even in doing that, everyone pushes against that, saying, this is wrong. They're under my household, under my protection and my provision.

We also do on the flip side. If the parents are very bad and they're in debt all the time, it's going to affect the kids, isn't it? The good and the bad affect the kid. Our laws reflect this.

All of society has reflected this. Any cursory glance of history reflects this. The children are in solidarity with their parents.

Children are born Americans, for example. I was, my child was, your children are, but don't have the full privileges until adulthood. But we don't pull back and say, you're not really an American until you make a profession of becoming an American.

Any more than we do in the church, the children are members of the covenant, although they can't always articulate why until they get older. And nevertheless, we treat them out of love and charity as American children, and we teach them and we nurture them so they can grow up and be protected from the evils of the world. They don't just naturally become conservatives.

You have to train it to them in your household. And same again in the church. The church has the same situation.

Raising a child in a church context is better than outside the church context. It's a blessing. The church does not subvert society, is another way of looking at it, but lifts it up.

Husbands and fathers, for example, don't stop becoming husbands and fathers because they're born again. In fact, it's reinforced. The apostle there in Ephesians is very clear about that.

There's a husband and there's a father, there's a man and a woman, and you are Christians and that hasn't changed it. In fact, it reinforces it because nature is not destroyed by grace. And so the children are members of the family because that's a natural occurrence and grace does not destroy natural relationships, but rather reinforces it by His mercy.

So you have this close connection, it's so close that Acts 16.31, in Acts 16.31, of course you can go to 1 Corinthians 7 where they're called holy, separate, in Acts 16.31 it's quite interesting. Paul speaking to the jailer, he says, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, talking to the jailer, it's singular, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household. Well, how is the, why is he talking to him, why is he bringing the household in? The Baptist's idea would be bring the whole household here and he will preach to each one of them, make sure that each of them give a confession of faith.

But he doesn't, he says, believe in the gospel and you and your household will be saved. Why? Because he's saying, you're all going to be baptized because the head of the family is being baptized and by implication they're all going to be baptized and we know the other passages in Acts talk about household baptisms and the debate is, well, are kids in there?

The better question is, why would kids not be there? It's not like today where you have two or three kids. They had lots of kids back then. The odds would be very, very miniscule they didn't have kids and they're all baptized because, oh, the one guy believes, you will be saved and your household.

Gospel and Christian Living

Baptism and Christian living, the third point. So baptism and the Great Commission obviously are there but so is the gospel and the gospel is expressed in the outward action of baptism most wonderfully because it's a passive act.

You are being born again is what it represents spiritually. Baptism is a sign and seal of the gospel, as I said, and therefore we talk also about improving your baptism because being born again and saved is only the beginning of the Christian life. You're also sanctified.

You grow up. You become more mature spiritually and we talk about in our circles improving your baptism. So this is essentially the last point.

Baptism and Christian living are improving your baptism. The beginning of improving your baptism and the remainder of your days of improving your baptism for the adults, of course, is a public confession or profession of faith. Therefore whoever confesses me before man him, I will also confess before my Father who is in heaven.

That if you confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ, Jesus is Lord and believe in your hearts that God is raised from the dead, you will be saved and we know all the other relevant passages about professing the Lord. What I want to point out is the timing of the profession of faith is not as significant as the act of baptism. Adult Abraham, for example, owned the covenant before circumcision.

The children Isaac and Jacob owned the covenant after circumcision. They grew up in the covenant and they basically professed it by their actions, of course, over time and following the God of the covenant. Before or after? And so with baptism, confession can be before it with the case of adults and for children, after it.

But it's going to happen. Presbyterians aren't going to say, you baptize the kids, that's the end of it. We expect them to grow up and say, I confess Christ on my own.

I'm an adult, spiritually speaking, and I will embrace the Lord and I'm thankful for my family that they brought me this far. That's what we expect. So I guess you can see the basic argument is when.

I say it's going to happen, but later. And the Baptist insists it always has to be before. So families are called, therefore, to instruct their children about Jesus and the fear and admonition of the Lord.

And parents are to teach their children the law and the gospel of sin and redemption, both by precept and practice. And as a community, of course, we're all involved in this as well,

not just them. So the beginning, or that is, this language of initiating our improvement of baptism by public profession as adults and later on as children that grow up, there's also a continuation of improving your baptism.

What I mean by that is this. An adult makes their profession of faith and get baptized. Is that the end of their baptism? It means nothing else for them for the rest of their life? No.

You have always been baptized. You can't stop being baptized. You can't un-baptize yourself.

That is, it's a public identification. People know it. We often keep records of these things, so we're like, this guy claimed to be a Christian, and then 20 years later he's acting like a fool and being wicked and whatnot, and we're going to treat him different than we would an unbeliever, because now he's apostatizing.

So it makes that significance there. That's the negative example. The positive is your baptism is significant so that when it comes up again, like today, you meditate upon the fact that God brought you in providence, in your life, such that you were baptized as an adult or a child.

You may think as an adult, of course, typically, well, I made that decision. You connected all the dots. You did all the cause and effects of the family, the relationships, of the person that you met, the Bible verses that you read, that all work together such that you say, I believe in Jesus? You really made that conscious? No.

You were just at the end of the process. God guided your entire life to that point of baptism, brothers and sisters, so that you could be identified as a believer, as a disciple, as a wonderful blessing. So improving your baptism continues on, not just that one time you made a profession of faith with your baptism, but from there on out.

Romans 6 is the classic passage for this. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? We do not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death.

Therefore, we were buried with Him with baptism into death, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Even so, we should also walk in newness of life. Paul talks about their baptism as a reason for them to be holy and to resist walking in the flesh, but rather to live in newness of life.

And it already happened however many years ago at the time. That's what we mean by improving baptism in your life, to reflect upon what God has done for you, and to live accordingly. Baptism is part and parcel of the Church's job to disciple the nations, including the children, the little ones.

It is a sign and seal of the gospel, of the Holy Spirit, of union with Christ, given to believers and to their children. And as such, we are called to improve our public status, our baptism, by repentance and confession both before or after, depending on our age, and by a lifetime

of obedience by God's power. Let us walk together, brothers and sisters, as the baptized of the Lord, embracing our baptism with a life of repentance and faith in our Lord as we journey together to heaven.

Let us pray. Father God above, we rejoice and are so happy to see the baptism of the children. And we pray again your blessings upon them, the Holy Spirit would move them even at a young age, that they would grow up, we pray, never knowing a day of not loving Jesus and His Church.

Father God, continue to bless us and bless our children and our grandchildren, we pray. By our Lord and Savior and His love for us, amen.