

# Appeal for Baptism

Sermon #0916

Study given by W. D. Frazee—May 11, 1962

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" Revelation 21:1-5.

Wouldn't you think everybody would want to be in the earth made new? Wouldn't you think that everybody would have reservations made? The sad thing is that while there is going to be a great multitude there which no man can number (Revelation 7:9), it is also true there are going to be multitudes outside. They are pictured in Revelation 20:7-9.

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city" Revelation 20:7-9.

Think of it. The nations of this earth, deceived by Satan, gathered together to make war against that beautiful city. We are not left in doubt as to the result. It says that "fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." What a foolish thing for man to fight against his Creator. What a silly thing for the nations of this earth, with their swords, their pistols, or their hydrogen bombs, to think that they could in any way have success in attacking that city. That city is the city whose builder and maker is God.

It is only a little while until it will be here, and we will either be on the inside looking out, or we will be on the outside looking in. And between the two groups there is a great gulf fixed. Those who would pass over from one side to the other

cannot. Do you know what that great gulf is? I would like to have us look at it, and the good news is that you can pass over it now. Then it will be too late.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" Galatians 6:14.

The cross is what stands between the world and the Christian. Which side of that cross are you on? Paul says, I glory in nothing but the cross, for by it I have been crucified and am dead to the world, and the world is dead to me.

If you put on blue glasses, everything looks blue. If you put on glasses with a green tint, you will be looking at green things. The cross is the instrument of death. We glorify the cross today. We put it on churches. We use it as a symbol of the Christian religion. But in the days when Paul wrote these words, and in the days when Jesus talked about the cross and suffered on the cross, the cross was no mere symbol. The cross was the instrument of the most cruel torture and the most degrading, ignominious, shameful death.

That is what Paul is talking about. He is not talking about something up here on a church spire or something in a picture. Those things remind us of what Jesus did, but we must never forget that to the early church the cross was forever associated with the great sacrifice of Christ.

It was also associated with the way this world treated their Lord. Paul says, I and the world are separated by a great gulf. It is the cross that stands between us, and I am crucified and am dead to the world, and the world is dead to me.

When the world looks at me (if I am a Christian), the world says, That is a dead life. If I have been going with the world, and leave the world and go with Jesus, the world marks me off the list. Sometimes over in India when a high-cast Hindu accepts Christ his family treats him as if he were dead. They even have a funeral. He is disowned. If his own father or mother meet him on the street after that, they don't even speak to him. It means something to follow Christ over there, doesn't it?

The cross means death to the world and those who follow it. It means you look dead to the world, but it means that the world looks dead to you. And if you have been in the world and have found the way of Jesus, do you say, I used to have such a good time, but I gave it all up to be with Jesus? No. If that is as far as you have gotten, you haven't gotten very far.

If you have crossed the gulf for Jesus you say, That life I used to live I see as nothing but death. I am glad I am through with that dead existence and have entered into life.

There is a simple way to tell if you have been born again or not. How does the world look to you? If it looks alive and gay and wonderful and attractive, you may well question whether the Spirit of God has done very much in your soul. But if the world looks dead and the religion of Christ looks attractive, then you can believe you are on the way to heaven. God forbid that I should glory save in that cross of our

Lord Jesus Christ whereby the world is crucified and is become dead to me, and I unto the world. There is a sign of that death, a symbol of that separation:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" Romans 6:3-5.

We die with Christ, we are buried with Christ, and we rise with Christ. The Christian is identified with Christ. So Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ" Galatians 2:20. And notice that baptism is the sign and symbol, appointed so by Jesus Himself. He sent His church into the world to teach and baptize in His name (Matthew 28:19-20).

I want us to see the picture. Dead with Him, buried with Him, risen with Him. Can you rearrange the order and improve it? No. You would have to be dead before you are buried, and people who are dead should be buried. And certainly resurrection comes after death and burial. It did so with Jesus. It is to be so with the Christian. As many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death. Because we died with Him to the world, to sin, to self, we are buried with Him. How? By baptism, "That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Baptism is the sign and symbol of the Christian's acceptance of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, not merely as a historical event, but as an experience into which he enters and shares with Jesus. As he sees the cross he not only says, Dear Savior, I see that you died for me, but he says, Dear Savior, I chose to die with you. As You died, I chose to die to this world. As You were buried, I chose to be buried in the watery grave. As You rose from the grave, so I believe that my Lord will raise me from that watery grave to walk a new life. But let's never forget that we have been buried into the likeness of His death.

Over thirty years ago in San Hosea, California I was giving a series of evangelistic and prophetic sermons in a woman's club building. Among others who were listening to the truth of the Bible focused upon this last generation was a woman who was a bookkeeper for the largest printing firm in the city.

One of my Bible workers was studying the Scriptures with her, and she was having a real battle with herself. To accept God's message and keep all of God's commandments meant that she might lose her job. She was weighing the matter.

Just about this time she got word that her daughter was coming to visit. Her daughter was a fine young woman attending art school in New York City, preparing to design for Hollywood. She had no interest of any kind in religion. She was interested in her career. The mother wondered what in the world this daughter would think of her going all out for religion, and whether the daughter might think she

was becoming fanatical over it. But it was one of those providence that we can marvel at.

In a short time that daughter was just as deeply interested in this wonderful message as the mother. Mother and daughter decided to obey God and walk in all the light, and to prepare for baptism. With a number of others they were in a class where I was studying with them to prepare them. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark 16:16. So we were teaching what Jesus told us to teach, and they were getting ready for baptism.

One night we were studying these very verses I am studying with you now in Romans 6. I had a blackboard there, and we put the cross right in the center of the blackboard. Then we put a line going down to the cross, and a line going up from the cross. We put there those three steps—dead with Christ, buried with Christ, and risen with Christ.

I presented it as a river of separation like a boundary. Some of you who have read history remember about Julius Caesar crossing the Rubicon. He was up to Gall and decided that Gall was not enough for him. He wanted to be the ruler in Rome. He gathered his legions, and when he came to the river that was the end of his territory, he knew that when he crossed it he was committed to march on Rome and seek to establish his power there. My point is, when he crossed that river he made a commitment.

So the individual who goes down into the waters of baptism is crossing a boundary, that river of death and burial that lies between the life that was and the life that is to be; the world and Christ. Sodom and Babylon on one side, and the New Jerusalem, the pearly white city on the other.

As that young woman sat there and heard the word picture, she saw it in her mind. She went home and drew it on paper and gave it to me.

In the center of the picture she drew the cross. The light of the cross is reflected in a flowing stream. There is the city of destruction, and I can't think of any better representation of this world with its sin and folly and vice than the city that Nimrod established on the river Euphrates, down through Sodom and Gomorrah, and on through Rome and the cities of our time. They have always been the cesspools of vice and the headquarters of sin. I see what the last message of God to men is:

"And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying,  
Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, . . . Come out of her,  
My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins"  
Revelation 18:1-4.

I see some leaving sin and darkness and starting out for the pearly white city that lies on yonder side. As they leave that world of sin and start for that city of light they come to the river of final commitment which baptism represents.

As the individual approaches he should stop and think, Do I really mean to say, Goodby, or am I just going to be dipped into the water and turn around and go home and live like I have been living before? That, my friends, is a travesty. It is a sacrilege to go through the form of baptism and go back and live as before. Baptism is farewell. It is goodby to sin and the old life.

It is as real as a funeral is. When one comes up to the time of his funeral and lying in the sick bed knows it, what does he do? He gets his affairs in shape for the final goodbye. God intends that every heart that hears the Gospel call and accepts it shall get his affairs settled as far as the old life of sin is concerned. Make right every wrong, give up every sin, and come down into the water meaning to bury it and to separate from it forever, and go into a new life altogether.

So you see them at the water's edge. You see them going down into the water. You see them buried into the likeness of His death; buried in that watery grave where the glory of the cross is reflected. Then you see them climbing the bank on the other side. You see them kneeling in prayer as Christ knelt on the banks of Jordan, pleading for the anointing of the Holy Spirit, for it is a rocky road, a steep trail ahead. It is rugged and narrow. That is what Jesus said:

"Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" Matthew 7:14.

I would rather be with those few who, through faith in Jesus, are walking that narrow rocky trail than with the multitudes in Sodom or Babylon. Wouldn't you? Up that road, as surely as God is true, lies that beautiful city, the beauty of which closes the record of Scripture. That glorious city with its gates of pearl and streets of gold.

Thank God that all the joy is not at the end of the way. It is true that the trail is narrow and rugged. It is true that there is bloodstain along the path left by Jesus and the feet of the martyrs who walked the path after Him. But what a fellowship, what a joy divine walking with Jesus the upward path.

Let's be practical about it. Is there any difference between the two sides of the river? If a man were looking for a bottle of whiskey, which side of the river would he go to find it? You know. Anybody here tonight could tell him that there is no whiskey on this side. It is all over on the other side.

I wonder if it would be a good thing to look at a great many things that are flooding the world today and say, Before I put that into my mouth or my stomach, before I put it into my mind through my eyes or ears, let me see which side of the river it came from, and which side it will lead to. Do you think that would be a good thing?

I can tell you this: Whichever side it came from is the side it will lead to. The Devil is not getting out anything that will lead men to the New Jerusalem. He sends out the attractiveness and the allurements to lead men into what he calls the gay spots of this world. The end thereof are the ways of death. The things of God came from God, and they lead to God. And although Satan controls much of what goes on in this world, thank God there is still room for a man to live the life of Jesus. He did it

in our flesh and in our world, and He will do it again in every life that is consecrated to Him.

A man could fall walking up the pathway. I have never seen a trail up a mountain yet but that someone could fall on it. But it does not prove the trail does not lead somewhere. And it does not prove that the man must lie there, much less that he has to go back to the cities of the plains which are doomed like Sodom and Gomorrah.

The Devil tries to discourage Christians. Many who have made the consecration and started up that narrow path finds he has fallen. The Devil comes along and says, See? Nothing is different than it was before. You are right back where you were.

Don't let him tell you any lie like that. Say, No sir. It is true I have fallen, and I am sorry, but I am in no sense back with the Devil and the world and sin, the enemies of my Lord. If I have fallen I am sorry, and I am going to ask Jesus to forgive me.

It is written, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" 1 John 2:1. Can a man ask Jesus to help him right where he has fallen, and get up and go on in the strength of Jesus? Yes, he can. He can turn defeat into victory, disappointing the enemy and honoring his Redeemer.

I am sure many here have been baptized. Some of you have not. You who have been baptized and crossed the river, are you glad for all it means in separation from the world and sealing your union with Christ? Would you wish to be back on the side of the world and sin? You who have crossed the river with Jesus, and have accepted His cross as a sign of separation from the world, and have been baptized in token of that surrender and consecration, would you like to renew those vows and repeat that consecration? Would you like to raise your hand where you are? Jesus will see you. Thank God. And may heaven seal those vows.

If there is somebody here tonight who has not taken this step, the best news I know is that there is still time to cross the river. There is somebody here that is thinking about it. I am sure there is, for the Spirit of God tells me that in every congregation there are souls who are longing for something they do not have, and are almost persuaded to be wholly for God. But do you know what I would do if I were the Devil? I would tell such a person you are not good enough to take that step.

I remember a baptismal class I was holding a number of years ago, and a woman who had made her decision to be baptized spoke with me and said:

"Brother Frazee, I have decided not to go ahead."

I asked her what was the matter. She said, "I feel I am not good enough."

I said, "Bless your heart, sister. We do not baptize good people."

"You don't?"

"No. Baptism is not for good people. Baptism is for bad people. People who are so bad they know there is only one hope for them, and that is to die and have that old self put clear out of sight. And they have faith that because Jesus died, they can be raised and walk in a new life through the power of Christ."

Thank God, she saw it and went ahead. Thank God, Jesus is still on the receiving hand. Aren't you glad?

There is nobody so bad they cannot be baptized. Some people are too good in their own eyes to be baptized. But no matter how weak or faulty you are, or how many mistakes you have made, you can come.

Someone says, I don't think I know enough. How will you know when you do know enough? God has given the church the business of teaching and baptizing. You can't baptize yourself. You do not know when you are ready.

Once a man came and wanted to be baptized. As we talked he said, "I can answer any question a minister would ask me."

Right away I got cautious. We baptized over a hundred people in that series of meetings, but he was not one of them. He thought he knew too much. He was not converted. He was proud. The church was better off without him.

Oh friends, what God is looking for is people who in humble, simple faith will say, I am a sinner, but I want to be a child of God. I do not know very much, but I am willing to be taught. I am willing to put myself into the hands of the church and the ministry to be instructed into the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to the Bible. When the church finds I am ready, I am ready. When the church sees that I am prepared, I am willing. I want to go all the way with Jesus, and go down into that watery grave, and take my stand publicly before men and angels as one who is leaving the world and going all the way with Christ.

I say to any of you who have not taken this step, you do not have to get your problems solved in advance. You do not have to decide you know everything you need to know. Some do not know. Students in school do not decide when they graduate. The teacher and the faculty decide it. But the most ignorant child can come and say, I would like to be taught.

Jesus is saying to everyone, Come unto Me. Come and leave the world. Come and leave sin.

"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" 2 Corinthians 8:12.

How much could the thief do hanging on the cross by the side of Jesus? How much could he take by way of instruction? Thank God he got enough to make a

decision that day. He pled with Jesus to accept him. Was he accepted? Yes. Was he saved? Yes. The word of Christ Himself sounds down the isles through the ages since, "Thou shalt be with Me in paradise." When you and I go to that pearly city we will see that thief.

It does not take long weeks and months and years to make a decision. You may have many things to learn. It is the business of the church to teach you, but it is your business to see Christ on the cross and make a decision. It is your business to hear the call of the Gospel and make a response; to say, Lord I come, I am willing, I want to go all the way.

Do any of you hear the call of Jesus? You may not be ready, but if you would like to have Jesus know and us know you want to get ready, raise your hand that we may pray for you. Thank the Lord. I believe in prayer. I have seen people come into a meeting like this who had no more intention of going all the way with Jesus than they had of taking a trip to the moon, and I have seen them yield to the entreaty of the Spirit, the call of the Spirit, and go out changed in their direction.

I hear Thy welcome voice that calls me Lord to Thee,  
For cleansing in Thy precious blood that flowed on Calvary.  
I am coming Lord, coming now to Thee;  
Wash me, cleanse me in the blood that flowed on Calvary.

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