

Baptism

#0082

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—May 25, 1962

Our text is Acts, the second chapter, and the 38th and 39th verses. This text is from Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. You remember that thousands of people had come together, drawn by the mighty power of God. And Peter was preaching about what they had done to Jesus. They had crucified Him. They had His blood on their hands. But God had raised Jesus from the dead and exalted Him. And from the heavenly throne, He had poured forth upon His waiting disciples the gift of the Spirit as a sign that He had been accepted and that His church was accepted in Him.

As the multitude heard these things, and especially as they heard the charge that *they* had crucified the Son of God, the Spirit brought conviction to their hearts, and they said, "What shall we do?" Our text answers the question:

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" Acts 2:38.

And to show that the plan was not limited to that particular day or age, notice the 39th verse:

"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" Acts 2:39.

So it reaches down to our time, dear ones. God's plan of saving men today is just the same as it was back there when Peter preached these words. What shall we do? "...Repent, and be baptized... for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Now, it's that last expression that I want to notice especially, "The gift of the Holy Ghost." What does that mean? Those who are baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of their sins are to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Ah, my friends, how each candidate should long and pray for that experience! And how we *all* should be in prayer that God will give that gift of the Spirit for I want to tell you something: unless that happens, all the rest is in vain. It's all in vain. We may teach, and we may baptize, but only God can give the Spirit. We are just as helpless as we are about bringing rain. There's many a person in this area who'd be glad to get some rain tonight, wouldn't they? Yes, it's needed. But oh, how much more we need the rain of the Spirit, the rain of the Spirit of God. And we can't reach up into the sky and bring it down, friends. No.

“Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the Latter Rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field” Zechariah 10:1.

Will God give His Spirit merely because a person is immersed in the water? No, friend, not at all. There's a very interesting experience over here in the eighth chapter of the book of Acts. Phillip was up in Samaria preaching. Many people were accepting the message. We are told in the 12th verse that there were many who were baptized. Among them was a man by the name of Simon. *He* was baptized:

“...He continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done” Acts 8:13.

He became *very* much interested in all those miracles and signs that were being done.

Now on this occasion, Peter and John were sent from Jerusalem, and they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. But I want you to notice what happened. In the 18th verse:

“...Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money” Acts 8:18.

And said:

“...Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost” Acts 8:19.

Was that proposition accepted, friends? Now, this is the same Peter and John that not long before had told the lame man, "Silver and gold have I none..." (Acts 3:6). But poor as they were, they were not at all impressed with this man's offer to trade money for the gift of the Spirit of God.

Notice what Peter said:

“Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God” Acts 8:20–21.

Did he receive the Holy Spirit? Why, no. Had he been baptized? Yes. But my dear friends, the work never got very deep apparently. And I repeat, we may go through all the motions of this ceremony. We may do the teaching that must be done beforehand. We may instruct, and we may examine, and God expects us to do all that, but deep in the heart, there's a work that God only can do and that God only knows about, my friends. And I say to each of you who is preparing for baptism, ask God to do such a deep work of repentance in *your* heart that instead of being like Simon, baptized

and *not* receiving the Spirit, you'll be like all these others we're reading about here, baptized and received the Spirit.

Now, what does it mean to receive the Spirit of God? The Bible speaks of the *fruit* of the Spirit and the *gifts* of the Spirit. *Everybody* is to have the fruit of the Spirit, just as every apple tree should have apples on it. *Every* Christian should have the fruit of the Spirit. You remember Paul tells us what it is in Galatians, the fifth chapter, verses 22–23. Let's turn and read it:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance...”
Galatians 5:22–23.

Ah friends, that's precious fruit, isn't it? Delicious fruit. And this fruit is to appear in the life as evidence of the presence of the Spirit of God. Now that's one of the great reasons we're baptized, that we may receive the Spirit and thereby bear this fruit.

Now, besides the *fruit* of the Spirit, we are told of the *gifts* of the Spirit. Let's turn over to 1 Corinthians, the 12th chapter and we will see what these are. 1 Corinthians 12:1:

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant” 1 Corinthians 12:1.

Then in the fourth verse, he says:

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit”
1 Corinthians 12:4.

In the seventh verse, he says that:

“...the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man...”
1 Corinthians 12:7.

Everybody has *some* manifestation of the Spirit (if he received the Spirit). And then beginning with the eighth verse, he lists some of them:

“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit...” 1 Corinthians 12:8–11.

Now, will you all read with me the rest of the verse:

“...dividing to every man severally as he will” *Ibid.*

Who does the dividing? The Spirit does. Suppose we had a great platter of fruit here, and I should go along the aisle here, and I should give an orange to one and an apple to another, a banana to another and so on. Would you all have exactly the same? No.

That’s what Paul is saying here about the *gifts* of the Spirit. Now, we’re *all* to have the fruit of love and joy and peace. But the *gifts* for helping others, some under the influence of the Spirit can preach, but I’m glad, dear friends, that it isn’t necessary to be saved to have the gift of preaching, aren’t you? Yes, because some of us would say, “Well, I’m afraid that I can’t get in.”

No, God hasn’t called everybody to preach. He’s called everybody to *live* this life of love and joy and peace. But as this says, He’s given *some* the gift of teaching, the gift of preaching. He has given *some* the gift of helping, did you know that? Turn over to the 28th verse. We’ll read that:

“God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings...” 1 Corinthians 12:28.

Then what?

[Audience responds] Helps.

Helps. Oh, isn’t that a nice gift! And some people just have that gift, and it always makes me happy when I see people with that gift of helps. We need a good number of them in the church. It’s a precious gift.

The next one mentioned is the gift of governments. Are there to be governments in the church? Oh yes. And some are especially blessed by the Spirit of God in leading, in acting as Elders, Sabbath School superintendents, or in other offices that require leadership. “...Helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” And then he says, “Are all apostles?” What’s the obvious answer? No. And he goes through the list. Well, my point is the Spirit of God gives Himself to us in the fruit and in the gifts. *Everyone* is to bear the fruit, and each one is given *some* gift.

You know, dear friends, when Jesus gave the parable of the talents, He showed that by using what gifts God gives us, we get what? More. Isn’t that wonderful? That’s true. That’s true.

Now, I want to go to the 14th chapter of John. I want us to notice something *very* interesting. Here is something most precious. We’ll begin with the 15th verse. I want you to notice who comes *in* the Spirit, *with* the Spirit, *by* the Spirit:

“If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom

the world cannot receive..." John 14:15–17.

Can the world receive the Spirit? No. Now don't misunderstand, the Spirit comes *to* every man. Out in the godless world, sinners are reached by the Spirit of God. He knocks at the door of their hearts. But what we're studying tonight, friends, is not that. We're studying about the gift of the Spirit entering *into* the heart and life of the baptized believer.

Now back to our text.

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever" John 14:16.

How long?

[Audience responds] Forever.

Forever.

"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" John 14:17.

And shall be where? In you. Now notice the words immediately following. Jesus is speaking:

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" John 14:18.

Now get the setting. This is Jesus speaking at the Last Supper. He's told His disciples in verses 2 and 3 that He's going away. They're concerned about it. "Oh, Jesus, you're going away!" They feel bad about it.

He says, "Never mind. I'm going to pray the Father, and He will send you *another* Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, and He will abide with you forever, and *I* will not leave you, *I* will come to you."

Why you see, friends, when we receive the Spirit of God, we receive Jesus Christ. When the Spirit is living in the heart, *Christ* is living in the heart. The impartation of the Spirit *is* the impartation of the life of Christ. Oh, I like that! I like to think of Jesus coming and living by His Spirit in my heart, don't you?

Now, what's He coming for? He's coming to give us victory over sin, and He's coming to give us power for witnessing. I like to think of it as a push and a pull, friends. You know, you can use power to push, and you can use power to pull. We need both. As Satan comes with his temptations, we're to *push* against him. And to give us the strength to push, to resist the Devil, we need the indwelling Spirit of Jesus. Thank God, He's promised it.

But oh, we're not to use all our energies merely in pushing against the Devil.

There's a sweeter, happier, more joyous work than that to use our energies in. We're to be around looking for men and women that we can *pull* out of the world, out of sin, into the glorious Gospel experience of being the children of God. And so the power of *witnessing* comes by the presence of the Spirit.

Jesus said:

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me...”
Acts 1:8.

Now, in the world about us, there are many ideas about what is the evidence of the presence of the Spirit. But in the light of the verses we have read tonight, you can see, friends, that there are two things that show the evidence of the Spirit's presence in the life. One is to live the life of Jesus, and the other is to have the Spirit of helping others and see God blessing us in helping others. That's the evidence. I pray that this may be the experience of every one of us here tonight.

Now we'll go to Colossians, the second chapter. We'll see another text that shows how intimately this experience of baptism unites us with Christ. Colossians 2:12:

“Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead” Colossians 2:12.

Who is the “Him” spoken of in this verse? Christ. The word before is that in the 11th verse. “Buried with Him...” That is, with Christ. “Risen with Him...” That is, with Christ. Ah, here we have it, friends! We go down into that watery grave. We are buried with Him. But we have faith that the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the grave will raise *us* from the grave.

We die with Him. We are buried with Him. We *rise* with Him to that new Spirit-filled life. You notice the intimacy of the fellowship with Christ. The whole thing is something we share with Jesus. Dead with Him, buried with Him, *risen* with Him:

“If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him” Romans 6:8.

Turn now to Romans 6, and I want you to see something very important about this matter of *dying* with Jesus. Romans, the sixth chapter. The third and fourth verses of Romans 6 show that baptism—baptism into the death of Jesus and being raised with Him. Now the fifth and sixth verses. Will you read these verses with me, Romans 6:5–6?

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" Romans 6:5–6.

What kind of death did Jesus die? The death of what? The death of the cross. He wasn't beheaded. He wasn't put before the firing squad. He was nailed to a cross and hung up between the heavens and the earth.

And there's something peculiar about the death of the cross, dear friends. A man doesn't die in a minute or an hour, does he? How long did Jesus hang on the cross? Six hours, from nine o'clock in the morning until three o'clock in the afternoon. And it was very unusual for a person to die that soon. "Pilate marveled," the Bible says, "if He were already dead" (Mark 15:44). The truth of the matter is He died of a broken heart at last, didn't He?

But now that death of the cross, watch this point, that death of the cross is the death that we are to die *with* Jesus. What does that sixth verse say?

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed..." Romans 6:6.

What is our old man? It's our old nature, our natural disposition. Is what? Crucified with Him.

I suppose that there's not a one of us but what wishes we could have it once for all and get it over with, this death to self and sin. But Paul told the story in three little words: "...I die daily" (1 Corinthians 15:31). I die daily. In this, he was echoing the words of Jesus:

"...If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" Luke 9:23.

Baptism, now notice, baptism is a sign of my acceptance of two things: I accept the death of Jesus for me, and I choose to go to the cross with Him, and I say from here on, I will live as if I were dead to sin.

Notice how Paul puts it here in Romans, the 6th chapter, and the 11th verse. That's just what he says:

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord"
Romans 6:11.

"Reckon" here means "count it that way." Count yourself dead. Baptism is a sign that we accept that death of Jesus, not only for us but as a death we share. It means, in plain English, that whenever the Devil tempts me to do anything that's wrong, I'll act

just as if I were dead, act just the same as if I were dead.

Suppose here's a man in a coffin. Suppose somebody would offer him a glass of whiskey. What would he do? Would he take it? No. Suppose somebody would offer him a cigarette. Would he take it? No. Suppose somebody would hit him in the face. Would he get angry? No. Why not? What's the answer to all three?

[Audience] He's dead!

Why, he's dead!

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead..." *Ibid.*

Dear ones, who are to be baptized tomorrow, think of it: what does it mean to go down into that watery grave? It means that you say goodbye to the world and sin as truly as though you had died in the service of baptism. That's what it means. But remember, you are going to have to make that choice again every day. That's why Paul says, "I die daily." And baptism is *your* pledge that you expect to do that every day—renew that vow, renew that pledge.

But oh, friends, that's only half of it. Thank God,

"If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him" Romans 6:8.

And the 11th verse:

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord"
Romans 6:11.

So in baptism, I express my faith that Jesus is going to raise me up from that watery grave to respond to *everything* that He says. Dead to the Devil, alive to God. Isn't that wonderful, friends?

Well, that means that when Satan speaks, I'll just act dead. I can't hear him. But whenever Jesus speaks, what'll I do? Why, I'll *respond* with alacrity. I'll say, "Yes, Lord, coming right away. Right away." Anything Jesus says, *do* it right now. Anything Satan says, just be dead to that. And baptism is a sign of that.

Oh, I'm so glad that Jesus has promised us the gift of the Spirit, which is His own life so that we can do that. Without Him, we can't do it. What is it Jesus says in John 15:5? "Without Me, ye can do..." what? Nothing. How would you write that on the blackboard? Just a big round zero, isn't that right? That's how much we can do without Him.

But Paul says:

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” Philippians 4:13.

Let’s say it together: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

Now friends, this closing thought and then I want to hear from you. Who are you baptized into? Yes, you are baptized into Jesus. Turn to Galatians, the third chapter, and the 27th verse. Galatians 3:27:

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” Galatians 3:27.

You’re baptized into Christ. Oh, I trust that the fullness of that fellowship shall be yours so that you can say, as Paul says in Galatians 2:20:

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me...” Galatians 2:20.

You’re not baptized into any man or any set of men. True, you’re baptized into the church, but that’s the body of Christ, and He’s the head. And as you are baptized into Christ, it is your privilege to say, “Lord Jesus, I’m anchored in You from now on. I’m dead with You; I’m buried with You, I’m *risen* with You, henceforth to live Your life. And no matter what anybody else would do, in the church or out, I’m going right ahead with Jesus. I’m going to walk up that narrow way all the way to the city, walking with Jesus all along the way.”

And though all men should forsake Thee,
By Thy grace, I’ll follow Thee.

At this time, I’d like to have a special prayer for these who are to be baptized tomorrow. Will you come forward and just stand here? Brother Damon, I’d like to have you come up and pray, please. Brother Damon is the First Elder of our church, and I’d like to have him pray that God will, in a special way, put His Spirit upon these who are to be baptized.

Let us all kneel together.

[Brother Damon] Dear kind and loving Heavenly Father, we thank Thee tonight for the precious word that Thou hast given to us and the promises that Thou has given in Thy Word, some of which we’ve heard here tonight, that as we go down into the watery grave, we arise to walk in newness of life with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Oh, He died, dear Lord, that we might have this salvation. So we seek tonight for that salvation on behalf of each one of these.

Dear Lord, they’ve surrendered their hearts to Thee, their lives to Thee. They desire to go all the way with Jesus, and we know, dear Lord, that the angels of God in Heaven are rejoicing with us tonight as they look down upon this scene.

Oh, Father, we're thankful for the great family of God, in Heaven and in earth, and that we can be united together. Lord, we're welcoming these additional members of the family, adopted into the family of God. Lord, we want to treat them as brothers and sisters for truly they are.

And we pray, dear Father, that Thou wilt help us, that as we stand and walk before them, that we might do so with the knowledge that we are walking close by Thy side, that we will not step away from the straight and narrow path to lead their footsteps astray.

So bless each one of them, we pray Thee, for the blessing that they stand in need of individually. As we come to the beginning of this Sabbath day that's going to be the beginning of a new birth for them, oh, we pray that Thou wilt draw us especially close, for we ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

[Elder Frazee] We're going to have a little testimony service. We'd be glad to hear from those who in the past have taken this step, not a long recital, but just a word—a word of praise and thanksgiving for what baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ has meant to you. We'd like to hear from these who are to be baptized tomorrow. We'd like to hear your word of testimony tonight. Jesus listens to hear your words. We'd be glad to hear from any others that Jesus impresses to speak. The time is yours to be improved as the Spirit leads.

[Testimony service]

[Elder Frazee's comment following a testimony] Sometimes we feel very alive, don't we? But you notice that's why the apostle Paul says, "Likewise, reckon yourselves to be dead..." Count it that way. Act as if you *were* dead. I want to call your attention to this, folks. We are dead *with* Christ. It's only so long as we stay with Christ that we can count ourselves dead. When the Devil sees us getting away from Christ, he laughs at the idea we're dead. He says, "You're very much *alive* to sin, and I'll prove it." But oh, our only hope is to *run* to Jesus. We are dead with Christ.

[Elder Frazee at the end of the service]

It will be observed that in the baptism tomorrow, there will be those who are being baptized and joining the church and also some who are members of the church, but they're being rebaptized. In God's plan, baptism is once for all. That's all God ever intended anybody to be baptized—just once.

It's just like marriage—when two people stand at the altar, they get married, and the promise is as long as they both shall live. Is that right? But you know, dear friends, if those two go against their vows, turn their backs one on the other, and there's a separation, a divorce; there's just one way for them to live together and that's to be married again, isn't that right? Now that doesn't mean that every time that two people have a little difficulty they're to be married over again, does it? Some people would be getting married every day, wouldn't they? It's too bad; we need to get beyond that.

But my point is this, friends, and it should be an encouragement to every Christian: no matter how many difficulties two people have, as long as they choose to live together, they're still married, right? No matter how often, how much, you've fallen off that way to the city of God, as long as you choose to get up and go on with Jesus, the thing to do is get up and go on, friends. But when, in the experience, there's a separation from Christ, a turning the back upon Him, walking without Him, then, dear friends, it's a privilege to renew the covenant with Christ in the watery grave. To be dead with Him, buried with Him, risen with Him. But I wanted to make that word of explanation. I trust that we shall *never* think of baptism as something that's to be done over again. I hope that no one will get that idea at all. It's to be once for all, my dear friends. You who are to be baptized tomorrow, this is to last you for all eternity. Don't forget it.

[Closing hymn, "I Will Follow Thee."]

Now, as we close this service, is there someone here that in a special way would like to be remembered in prayer? If so, will you raise your hand where you are? We'll pray for you tonight as we close this service.

I don't suppose that anyone will forget this, but may I remind you that in every branch tomorrow, announcements should be made of the baptismal service tomorrow afternoon at 4 p.m. here at the pool. And let us make special efforts to get out to this baptismal service, everyone possible, that they may share the blessings.

Now, our Father, dismiss us with Thy blessing, in a special way, bless these candidates, and may these hours between now and tomorrow afternoon be especially blessed because of the presence of Jesus. And may they come knowing that Christ has pardoned their sins and that these are all to be washed away and buried in the watery grave.

And Lord, bless these who've raised their hands tonight because of some special need. Oh, bless them in a very special way.

Dismiss us all now and bring us together tomorrow here and in the branches and in the service tomorrow evening. For Jesus' sake, amen.

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