

KEY UNDERSTANDINGS OF BAPTISM

Peter Hay, Presbytery Word for week commencing Sunday 02 March 2025
Transcription of recording, slightly edited

Coming out of our prayer and fasting weekend and the fellowship that we have been finding from house to house, there is a great thanksgiving and enthusiasm among us all as the Spirit is illuminating to us the gospel of sonship. As we are applying ourselves to search these things out, we are rejoicing that the Spirit is continuing to enlarge our understanding. Associated with this increasing illumination on the gospel of God has been further clarity on the subject of baptism. Today I am going to revisit and summarise some of these key understandings of baptism and outline their implications for the reformation of our baptismal services.

As the Spirit has been delivering us from all our former gospels which have served as a deluding shroud over our understanding of the word, the Lord has been bringing reformation to us in our houses individually, but also as a church - in relation to the *agape* meal; in relation to our dedications; in relation to our wedding services; and now we are applying ourselves to understand the implications of the gospel of God for our baptismal services. That is what our focus will be today.

What I want to do is not begin in the negative. I want to begin in the positive and summarise what baptism actually is - what the Scriptures reveal to us that baptism is. The first point to note is that the Greek word that is translated 'baptism' in the Scriptures means 'immersion'. It means to be immersed in something. The gospel of God... (which remember Paul said, 'I preach nothing else except the gospel of God and I am not ashamed of this gospel for it is the wisdom and power of God unto salvation') ...reveals to us that baptism is both a believer's *identification with* and *substance of* their immersion into the process.

I know I have packed a few things in there. It is a believer presenting themselves for this immersion. It is the substance of something. It is not a sacrament. Baptism is the substance of an immersion, not in water. It is an immersion into a *process*. This process is the means by which the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit's covenant purpose for us can be accomplished. Baptism is immersion into the process through which the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit's covenant process for us can be accomplished. It is not a point in time — a sacrament representing something. It is an entire process. What is that covenant purpose? It is, 'Let Us make man in Our image and according to Our likeness.' That is the purpose of baptism.

Now with this in mind, we recognise that there is only one baptism. That is exactly what Paul said in his letter to the Ephesians in Ephesians 4 verse 5. 'There is one baptism.' But there are three elements of it that belong to the initiative of the three Persons of the Godhead towards this covenant purpose. One baptism but with three elements (or initiatives or dimensions) to it.

The *first dimension* of baptism is not by water at all. The first dimension of baptism is by the *Father* Himself. This happens after the Holy Spirit enables the conception of the Spirit of Christ in a believer's spirit, causing their identity to be born again and making them a brand-new creature. When a person is born again, it is not Jesus dwelling in your heart. That is the beginning point. A person needs to be born again, and that is by the capacity (or the power) of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables the conception of the Seed, which is the Spirit of Christ in the spirit (or identity) of a person by which that identity is born again. They are made new - a new creation. That is the new birth.

This is when Christ's life becomes the life that we now live. It is no longer your life. The life that is the expression of your sonship (or the means by which your identity has expression), is the life of Jesus Christ. That is the Spirit of Christ within you, crying out, 'Abba Father'. Next week (Lord willing), I am going to slow down on this point and highlight where our confusion has been on the distinction between Christ abiding in our heart and our spirit being reborn through the Spirit of Christ by the agency of the Holy Spirit. Those are two different things.

The point that I want to dwell on today is that when you are born of God (because your identity has been reborn through the agency of the Holy Spirit), you are a new creation. When that happens, the Father places you (or immerses you, or baptises you) into the church by making you a member of the body of Christ. That has nothing to do with water - nothing to do with water. You are not a member of the church or a member of the body of Christ because someone dunked you in water. You are made part of the church, the body of Christ, because that Seed has been ignited or germinated or conceived within you and you are now Christ's. He is now your life, and the Father has now placed you in Christ. Using the imagery of a vine and branches, Jesus taught that the life of a believer's sonship... (this is Jesus has become your life) ...the life of a believer's sonship depends upon being connected as a branch to the Vine, who is Christ.

Your sonship requires you to be placed (or immersed) or joined to the body. You do not have sonship apart from Christ. This is the first dimension of baptism. It is fundamental to the new birth. This is what Paul meant in Romans chapter 8 verse 9. He said, 'If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.' He is not Christ's. Another way of saying that is, 'If you have been born of that Seed, you are Christ's.' Can you see that if we baptise you into Christ through water, we are

denying that this birth happened and that the implication of the birth was that the Father placed you in the body? At best, we are ignorant of that reality. At worst, we are denying it. We are saying that birth did not happen. This is an amazing point, that we have to be clear that we have been confused on this. The whole of Christendom is confused on this, and we have been too. Thank the Lord for His mercy that He is delivering us to illumination on this point.

Now explaining this dimension of baptism (remember it is an immersion), the apostle Paul said, 'For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body.' Now when you are born again, you have abiding within you the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in one Spirit in you. By that one Spirit, you are baptised into the body, not by water. It does not say, 'For by *water* we were all baptised into the body.' It says, 'For by *one Spirit*, we were all baptised into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.' 1Co 12:13. Later in this chapter in verse 18 it is highlighting that this is the initiative of the Father. Paul said, 'But now God the Father has set the members, each one of them, in the body, as He pleases'.

Can you see the first dimension of baptism is new birth? The Father is immersing (or placing) a person in the church by making them a member of the body of Christ. He is not making you a member of BCF, the denomination. He is making you a member of this community and He is placing you here as a member of the body, and your life as a son of God depends on that connection. That is the first dimension of baptism.

With the *second dimension* of baptism, having been born again and baptised into Christ by the Father, a new creation son of God is then baptised by water. *Water* is the second dimension of baptism. The question is: what is the purpose of being baptised by water? They are baptised *by* water, not into

water; baptised by water into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, to walk on the pathway of salvation that belongs to their daily pilgrimage in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. That is what Paul said in Romans chapter 6 verses 2 and 3. 'Do you not know that as many of you as were baptised into Christ were then baptised into His death? ...that you should no longer walk...' This has to do with the pathway, a way of walking, a way of living, as you did formerly. As you are immersed in His death, you also live by His resurrection.

Water baptism is delivering us to a pathway. On this pathway, the other law is being circumcised from our heart, and we are being regenerated and renewed as sons of men who are progressively changing into the image and likeness of God. That pathway is our daily fellowship in the offering and suffering journey that Jesus pioneered for us. That is what you are being immersed into through water, and water is connecting you to the dying of Jesus (the judgement) and also to the living of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now a key point to note is that it was a *new creation* that died with Christ. You have already been born of God, already been baptised into the body. That is the first dimension of baptism. It is a new creation that gets immersed into this pathway - the dying and the living of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the pathway of salvation because it is connecting you to the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

When a person is illuminated to these implications of the gospel, that believer will request baptism by water under the hands of a firstfruits disciple. It does matter who baptises you, but the baptism does not require an ordination. A person who is a firstfruits disciple is able to baptise others. The question would be: what is a firstfruits disciple? A firstfruit is a person who is firstly a worthy house. The gospel has access to

their house, and they are being called out (or sanctified) by that word and they are beginning to bear the fruit of that word as a cultural expression. They are a disciple because they are receiving that word, walking in it, and they are themselves a follower of Christ on the pathway that He pioneered for them. That is the qualification to baptise. That is pretty good. All of you are going to have to muscle up as disciples because there is going to be a lot of baptising to do when the 144,000 go out into the world. We have to be firstfruits disciples.

Let us now look at the *third dimension* of baptism. After a person has been born from above and baptised by the Father into the body of Christ and baptised in water, they are to be immersed or baptised *in the Holy Spirit*. This is the third dimension of baptism. This second and third baptism are not necessarily sequential, but you cannot be immersed into the pathway of Christ's dying and living or receive the Holy Spirit unless you are born from above. When Peter was speaking to Cornelius' house (as he is speaking the word that is birthing them), the Holy Spirit falls on them. He says, 'You need to go and get baptised now in water to be joined to this pathway.' All I am saying is, we are not talking about a sequence here. We are talking about three dimensions of one baptism.

Once immersed in the Spirit, the Spirit Himself fills a believer full, making them His temple. This is the implication of the third dimension of baptism - that a person becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit. This baptism is indicated by the capacity to speak in tongues. When baptised in the Spirit, a son of God receives the power of the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord, enabling them to journey with Christ. You have to be immersed in that pathway, embracing it as the context of your life through which you are fulfilling the will of God. But you cannot do it without the sevenfold Spirit of God as your capacity

because Jesus did it by the sevenfold Spirit of God. You need to be filled with the Holy Spirit to finish this pathway of salvation.

When baptised in the Spirit, a son of God receives the power of the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord, enabling them to journey with Christ. By this means... (this is going to be the implication of being a temple) ...by this means, through your word and conduct, you are Christ's witnesses to the world. That is what Jesus said about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. 'You will receive power from on high (this is the sevenfold Spirit of God), and you will be My witnesses to the ends of the earth.' They are the three dimensions of baptism.

Before we move to our baptismal service (having defined what baptism is), we need to take a moment to acknowledge that this has been confused in our understanding and [to acknowledge] what the issues and controversies around baptism have been. These controversies have been happening for thousands of years, so we will not go through them all. I want to touch a couple, because some of these will still be pervasive in your thinking about baptism. You will not be able to escape them; you probably do not even know that you think this way.

In terms of contention within Christendom around baptism, we can identify three interrelated issues. These are the *purpose* for baptism; the second issue has been the *procedure* for baptising; and the third point of contention has been the *formula* for baptism.

We will look at each of these three now, the first one being the purpose for baptising. In most denominations, baptism is considered a sacrament. Now even though we do not consider baptism a sacrament, I will demonstrate that some of our practices have been highly sacramental. Some denominations (in fact most of them) are avert (?) to say that baptism is one of *the* sacraments. That is, it is viewed as 'a solemn

admission'. I am reading directly from one of the key denomination's documents here. This is classic. I found this most intriguing. It is viewed as 'a solemn admission of a person into the denominating church and as a sign of the vicarious work that God achieved through Christ's death on the cross'.

What they are saying is that when you are immersed in water, you become a member of that type of church - baptised as an Anglican; baptised as a Presbyterian; baptised as a Catholic. 'A solemn admission' — you belong to us, as well as a 'sign' of something. It is not the *substance* of it. It is a *sign* of it - the sign of the vicarious work that God achieved through Christ's death on the cross. A person who is baptised is identifying themselves as a beneficiary of this work - the benefits of it. This is another interesting point. 'As a sacrament, baptism can only be dispensed.' I found that an intriguing word as an action of a church - dispensing baptism. 'Baptism can only be dispensed by a minister of the word who has been lawfully ordained.' I am afraid if we are following this, none of us can actually baptise. This would be a real problem.

With this understanding of the *purpose* of baptism in mind, for many people in the myriads of congregations that belong to the seven unclean daughters of Zion (whom the Lord is coming among, to call people to be cleansed), baptism has become a demonstration of their association with a particular doctrine, a particular church group, or even a person. When Paul was addressing the Corinthians on their sectarianism, he said, 'Which one of you was baptised into Paul?' People were associating themselves with people or with groups depending on their baptism. With this in mind, we note that many people quite openly identify themselves as having been baptised as a Presbyterian or an Anglican or a Catholic or whatever. This understanding of baptism denies (or at best remains

ignorant of) the initiative of the Father to birth and baptise us into the church, the body.

Now I am going to talk a little bit about us as well in a moment. We have been a bit confused on this point where people have been baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus thinking that that is a better formula to join you to a better statement of what it means to be in the church. This denies the discipleship that belongs to the process of being made in the image and likeness of God. That is the purpose for baptising.

The next point of contention in the church over hundreds, thousands of years has been the *procedure* for baptising. Arguments have persisted across the history of the church concerning who can baptise and how water baptism should be conducted - whether by immersion in water or dunking... (I was not quite sure what the difference between immersion or dunking was, but there is a difference), ...or by pouring water on somebody's head or sprinkling their head - a vitriol and angst over controversies to do with how to apply water to a person.

The third controversy (probably where our history has run somewhat) has been the baptismal *formula*. Associated with the purpose and procedure for baptising is the formula or words that are pronounced when a baptism is being conducted. These different formulas have been largely based upon contrasting denominational doctrines to do with baptism. Before we develop this point a bit further (I want to unpack or dismiss some of our fallacies about the formula), we need to acknowledge that within our congregations, including among many leaders, baptism has been quite confused. For example (and I am talking myself here too), some people have viewed baptism into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as their connection to the body of Christ. We have already demonstrated that that is actually the work of the Father and belongs to the new

birth. Probably our misunderstanding on that was because we did not understand the new birth. I thank the Lord that He is delivering us from our doctrinal proclivities to the truth - to the light. Baptism into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is not a person's connection to the body of Christ. Others have been baptised with these words, 'Baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ' to identify themselves as part of this fellowship of churches. They might have been in a different church, and they are wanting to say, 'I really want to be part of this congregation here', and we say, 'Well, you need to get a better baptism. Be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.' People have said, 'Okay, great! In I go. Now I am part of this church.' That is no different from someone identifying themselves as an Anglican or a Catholic on the basis of their baptismal practice.

Those issues are easily resolved, and I think most people can move on from that. The thing that we really do need to take stock of (and has been perhaps more insidious among us) has been the importance and the emphasis of the words associated with our baptism. Now this will not be true for everybody, but it has had purchase among our fellowship of churches. I have been very specific about how I have written this. Perhaps more insidious and unhelpful has been the *importance* and *emphasis* of the words associated with our baptisms: 'Into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ', as if there is power imparted through the use of these particular words. The emphasis and insistence on the formula by some is what has made baptism sacramental, as if the power is in the words that are said when a person is immersed in water.

There is a reason why we need to take stock here. I am not saying our formula was worse than other formulas. I am saying the insistence on the formula is the problem in every denomination. These appropriations of

baptism into the name have rendered their practice not too dissimilar from an incantation. Interestingly, when we look through our history and the leaders who have pushed this point the strongest and the hardest, they have often been the most corrupt among us. That is because their view of the name has been very little different from an incantation.

What is an incantation? An incantation is a verbal charm or spell that is spoken or sung as part of a magical ritual. That is a bit scary. Baptism could be viewed as a magical ritual. [By being] immersed in water, somehow, I am magically okay with God now. The words that have been proclaimed over a person have endowed them with a power that they can use to go their own way; to justify their own understanding and own sight; to justify their disobedience which denies the discipleship that belongs to baptism. The words have been a problem - not because if you were baptised, you were incantated, but where people have used them and focused on the words as the source of the power, it has denied the reality of baptism as an immersion in a process through which we are disciples.

Let us look further at what baptism is, leading to this reformation of our services. When Jesus recommissioned His disciples following His resurrection, this is what He said to them in Matthew 28 verses 18 to 20. He said, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...' You can add in there 'by baptising them...' A disciple is a learning follower, someone who can be instructed, someone who is following in a pathway. Baptism is a process that informs learning followers. '...Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising 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.'

We know this passage well. However, the Scriptures record that Christ's messengers in the New Testament baptised their hearers in the name of Jesus Christ. For example, Luke wrote this in Acts chapter 2 verses 38 to 39. 'Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let everyone one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.'" It immediately appears that there is a contradiction. Jesus said, 'Go and be baptised in the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, in the name of the Holy Spirit', and the disciples went and baptised in the name of Jesus Christ.

How are we to understand this apparent contradiction? It is pretty straightforward. In the first instance, it is necessary to recognise that the Scriptures pertaining to baptism are not defining or articulating baptismal formulas. Jesus was not saying, 'These are the words you have to say over a person.' That is not what the disciples were saying over people. They were describing an entire process, connecting people to their predestined pathway so they could be made in the image and likeness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Can you see that when Jesus was saying that He was not saying, 'These are the words you have to say over a person.' When Peter said, 'You have to be baptised into the name of Jesus Christ', He was not saying, 'That is what has to be said when you are immersed.' These statements were explaining the implications of being disciplined.

The instructions concerning baptism outline the implication of a person's reception of the gospel of God. In this regard, 'Go and make disciples,' is proclaiming the gospel of God, and baptism is an implication of (or a response to) this declaration. The

instructions concerning baptism outline the implication of a person's reception of the gospel of God. In this regard, baptism is immersion into a process through which the covenant purpose of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is accomplished in the life of a believer. As we mentioned earlier, this purpose is to make man in the image and likeness of God.

Now here is a key. Following Jesus' resurrection, He was the first Man made in the image and likeness of God. He rose from the dead and there He was, the Firstfruit, the Beginning, the very first Man made in the image and likeness of God - the Forerunner, the Pioneer. He was Yahweh Son, who had been begotten by the Father as the Son of God; who had come in the flesh; who had been made a mortal Man in the garden of Gethsemane. Then through His offering and suffering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary, He accomplished our redemption and pioneered the pathway of our salvation. Because of this offering, by which He was revealed as the first Man in the image and likeness of God (the substance, if you like, of the covenant purpose of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit), Paul said, (this is Philippians 2 verses 9 to 11), 'God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'

Jesus pioneered the pathway. He became the first Man who was made in the image and likeness of God. Because of that, He received the name above every name. Jesus Himself called that His baptism. That whole process by which He was made a Man in the image and likeness of God, Jesus called 'My baptism'. He called this entire process His baptism, saying to His disciples in Matthew 20 verse 23, 'You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptised with the baptism that I am

baptised with.' Baptism is connecting us to the process by which He was made a Man in the image and likeness of God.

This is the one baptism through which the covenant purpose of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is accomplished. (The name that Christ received...) We are being baptised into the name, not through a formula, but by joining the pathway that He pioneered and He received the name above every name because it was finished. The name that Christ received became the context and authority for a person to be disciplined in relation to the initiative of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When Jesus rose from the dead, He had received the name above every name in heaven and on earth. Then, when He met His disciples, what did He say to them? 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples.' By what means? By baptising them or immersing them into the process that has been initiated (or offered to) by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I will start again. The name that Christ received became the context and authority for a person to be disciplined in relation to the initiative of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. A person calls on the name of the Lord. When they do this, they are submitting to the lordship of Christ. But the implication of calling on the name of the Lord is that they want to be disciplined. He received the name above every name, delivering to His messengers authority to disciple a person who is acknowledging that authority by saying, 'I want to be a disciple.' A person who calls on the name of the Lord is becoming obedient from the heart. That is the mark of a baptised person. 'Obedient from the heart to the form of doctrine' is one baptism with three dimensions to which they are delivered by the Lord's messengers. That is what Paul said in Romans 6.

Romans 6 is the statement of these three dimensions of baptism. We will pick up this

point on the form of doctrine. This is Romans 6 verses 17 to 19. It says, 'But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin...' That is in your state when you are not born of God. 'Whatever is born of God does not sin.' '... though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart... [from the heart; something changed in your heart] ...that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.' The form of doctrine proclaimed by a messenger through which you could be disciplined by being baptised in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. That is '...the form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness [This is the obedience, the fulfilment of the will of God in Christ Jesus]. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.'

This 'form of doctrine to which you are delivered' is 'go therefore and make disciples'. The mark of baptism... (if you have been baptised into this process), ...the mark of it is 'obedience from the heart'. The mark of baptism is that you can be disciplined by the word of present truth that establishes you in the daily process through which the initiative of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is being accomplished in your life every day. That is what it means to be baptised.

In summary, baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not formulas or words that must be invoked upon a believer, making them a part of the church. Rather, baptism into the name is one's immersion into the process established by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit through which we are being made in the image and likeness of God. This one baptism, which Jesus established and which was

consummated when He received the name above every name, requires a person to be born of the divine nature, and set by the Father in the body of Christ, so that they are able to live as a son of God in Christ. They must also be baptised with water into the fellowship of Christ's, death, burial and resurrection to walk in a new and living way upon which regeneration and renewing are at work within them. Finally, they must be baptised in the Holy Spirit and become a temple for the Holy Spirit, which enables them to be witnesses of Christ to the world. That is our baptism. That is the one baptism. As we walk each day with Christ, in these aspects of the one baptism, we are progressively changing from one degree of glory to another into His image.

Now in these last couple of minutes, I am going to explain some changes to our baptismal service that are part of the reforming of our culture as a church in the light of the gospel of God. What is going to happen? It is going to look reasonably similar to what we do. There is going to be a person who is hosting the baptism. Next week we are having a baptism, and I am going to be the host of that baptism - not because I am an elder of the church, but because I am a firstfruits disciple among you, with you, journeying together.

The baptism service will be hosted by a firstfruits disciple of the church and then two other firstfruits disciples will be in the water baptising those who have requested this immersion. Remember this is the second dimension of baptism. At the commencement of the service, the host will gather and welcome folk. They will then give a short orientation to water baptism acknowledging the faith response of those who have requested it. There is an explanation or a declaration of what is happening and then there is an acknowledgement that those who are being baptised have demonstrated (or articulated)

the faith that belongs to their identification with this process.

The second element is testimony. We normally do this, but this is going to change a little bit too. Each person being baptised will give a short testimony declaring their faith for water baptism. Now here is a key point: it is not whatever anybody thinks about water baptism. Their testimony should reflect the true understanding of this dimension of baptism. It will therefore be the fruit of their fellowship with a disciple who is a firstfruits believer in the church and in the case of children with their parents. Both things are true. Parents, you are going to need to get clear on this baptism as well to explain to your children when they want to be baptised that this is what you are choosing. This is 'train up a child in the way they should go' and when they want to choose it, they are choosing for themselves that way. That is the way of salvation. It is the way of regeneration and renewing.

We have testimonies written and ready to go. Normally what we do, particularly with the children, is we have them come on up and stand next to the host. We are still going to do that, but if you are a child being baptised, we are going to ask your parents to come up and stand with you as you share your testimony, because the reality is, the dying and the living of Jesus is going to happen at the hand of your parents. That is what you are choosing.

A child who is being baptised will also be accompanied by their parents as they share their testimony before the congregation. Once that has happened, the hosting elder or firstfruits disciple is going to declare the purpose of baptism in the same way that a person who is dedicating their children makes a statement of purpose. As the host next week, this is the statement I am going to read once we have heard the testimonies of all those who have been baptised.

'Joe, on your confession of faith that you have been born as a son of God from the Seed of the divine nature, which is Christ, and have been placed by the Father into the body of Christ, we then, as disciples of Christ and members of His body, baptise you by water into the fellowship of Christ's suffering death, His burial and His resurrection. We do this so that just as Christ was raised from the dead to live by the glory of the Father, so you also with us will walk and live as Christ does in sanctification as a member of His body, which is the church, by the power of His resurrection life.' That is the statement of purpose for baptism. That is what is happening.

Then after that, the host (that is going to be me), I am going to explain to everyone what is going to be said to the people being baptised when they go into the water. This is the statement that is going to be made just before the children or (whoever is been baptised) the adults are baptised into the water. We are no longer saying, 'We baptise you into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.' We are no longer doing that. That denies the work of the Father, who is the One who places us in Christ. If it is not understood properly, then it has an unhelpful communication that is not what baptism is.

What is going to be said is what is happening. It is not a mystical name; this is what is happening. I will read the statement, then I am going to explain to everyone when these people are being baptised. this is what is going to be said. 'Joe, we baptise you into the fellowship of Christ's offering and suffering, that is, into His death, burial and resurrection.' Then I am further going to explain that if a person being baptised has not yet been filled with the Spirit, the baptisers will lay hands on them and pray, 'Be baptised in the Holy Spirit', because this is part of these three dimensions of baptism that belong to our pilgrimage.

Once I have read that statement and then explained what is going to happen to each person, as they are being submerged in the water, each person will then individually go in the water. The two firstfruits disciples who are baptising them will say (as I have already explained), 'We baptise you into the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, that is, into His death, burial and resurrection.' The believer will then be immersed in the water. Immediately after their baptism, there will be an opportunity to sing a song of thanksgiving, which those who have been baptised will have chosen as the one being baptised, the elders and the congregation rejoice together; it is a fellowship. If a person has not been baptised in the Holy Spirit, the baptisers will lay hands on them and pray for them (as I said before), saying, 'Be baptised into the Holy Spirit.'

That is quite a brief run-through of what the Lord has illuminated to us about baptism. Part of our repentance and reformation has been a change in our baptismal services, which reflects the reality of an immersion into a process through which each person is being made in the image and likeness of God. Thanks everyone.