

# BAPTISM

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**Jonathon Wills, Presbytery Word for week commencing Sunday 16 March 2025**  
**Transcription of recording, slightly edited**

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It is good to be with you in person today. I trust last week you were continuing to be stirred in the faith of your baptism and even understanding the fullness (or the full expression) of what Father, Son and Holy Spirit brought to us when we were immersed into the fellowship of Their offering. We are going to continue to move where we were last week and then at the end, I want to get to the outline of our baptism services and the new flow of those services in the light of the word that we have been hearing. I trust even as we read through that, you will rejoice in your spirit at the statements of faith that will be expressed by those who are being baptised and by those who are watching over the service.

We said last week that 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. The covenant purpose was to make man in Their image and according to Their likeness. We are going to look in a little bit more detail at the three dimensions of baptism again that were touched on last week; but we will move over those. We will then look at a couple of things pastorally before we get to the outline of the service.

As we have been understanding, the adoption only became available after Christ had finished His offering journey and after His resurrection. In the same way, baptism also became available after Christ's offering was complete and then after He commissioned the disciples. This is because He fulfilled the covenant purpose of God, which was to create man in the image and likeness of God. When Jesus was brought forth in this image, the process had been established for every man to become like Him in the image and likeness of God. This is the hope of the adoption; the hope of our redemption; the hope of the atonement; the

hope of our salvation. All these things are found in Christ in whose body dwelt the fullness of the Godhead.

As we continue to run through (and we said this last week), we are not haggling over words in any way here, or even over the fact where you go, 'Well hang on a tick, John was baptising before Jesus was baptising.' And yet we are saying that this baptism that He commissioned His disciples with was not available until His offering journey was complete.

The first element of baptism has no water because it begins with the Father's initiative after a person has received new birth. Let us read in Galatians chapter 4 and we will read from verses 4 to 7. It says here that 'When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father". Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.'

We see that this fellowship is taking place within the heart and the life of a new believer. Having received the spirit of adoption, the Holy Spirit then is able to conceive the Spirit of Christ within them and they are born again as a new creation, son of God. The Father then takes great pleasure as He then initiates toward this new creation son of God, in whom dwells the Spirit of Christ and also the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of adoption. They are then immersed or baptised by the Father into Christ. That is, the Father places them into the church, making them a member of the body of Christ. Using the imagery of the vine and the branches, Jesus then taught that the life of a

believer's sonship depends upon them being established in Him.

We talked with the teens last night about the demeanour of faith that belongs to sons of God. As we are exercised in that demeanour of faith (which is the faith of the Son that has now become our possession), we are able to do the good works that have been prepared for us. This is living and walking by the Spirit and by faith as a sanctified son set apart for His purpose. We are able to get about the good works that are prepared each day. We are then able to be fruitful in each day as a member in particular of Christ's body, as a branch connected to the Vine, bringing forth the fruit of the life of Christ. The Father then (as the Vinedresser) is then reaping fruit, the fruit of the life of Christ within us each day. He is then storing that treasure up in our heavenly body ready for the day of resurrection. It becomes an exciting context for us when we understand how it is and why it is that the Father has placed us in the body of Christ and the good works that are prepared. Then what is the fruit that I am to be bearing forth each day? It is the fruit of the life of Christ in me, and I am able to be fruitful by the initiative of the Spirit.

Paul explained this dimension of baptism. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 12. We could quote these verses, but I would love for us to be able to actually see it here in the Scripture - to actually be really stirred in our faith toward what the Father is actually bringing to pass in our lives. The remarkable thing for children in a covenant home is that this has taken place at conception. It is extraordinary to consider Yahweh's Son, as He continued to empty Himself, that the fullness of the Godhead dwelt within Him in bodily form. That was not when He was a man or even when He was born as a baby. This is when He was constrained even as an embryo within Mary's womb. This is because the fullness of the

Godhead dwelling in bodily form was part of the journey that we would also go on. It is extraordinary the degree to which Christ emptied Himself that He might be brought forth as the first Man in the image and likeness of God to establish a process. Can you hear it here? Even from conception, all of the way through for us to the resurrection body. He has journeyed the whole thing through. It is remarkable.

Let us read here in verse 13 of 1 Corinthians chapter 12. '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. For in fact the body is not one member, but many.' In verse 18: 'But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He pleased.' Then verse 27 (hear this afresh this morning): 'Now, you are the body of Christ, and members individually.' Can you hear that today? I was praying this morning in preparation and my spirit began to leap at that statement. 'You are the body of Christ and members individually of Him.'

That is a statement that is universally said by every Christian, and we hear it over and over again. But can you be stirred in your spirit this morning as to the knowledge of this? I am a son of God, and as a son of God, the first initiative that was taken toward me (even when I was in my mother's womb), is that the Father took great pleasure to initiate and place me as a new creation son of God in the fellowship of Christ's body where it pleased Him, even for the testimony then to be of me! You are a member of the body of Christ. Members of His body fit into place, our function being revealed, the faith and the fellowship of members together.

When Christ ascended after His offering journey and after the days that He ministered to the disciples, He was given the name that was above every name - a name that was above every authority in heaven and on earth and even under the earth. Then when He

ascended, He committed all of the authority of the fellowship of that name and His body to us individually as members of it. He then commissioned the disciples and said to them, 'I want you to go and make disciples. All authority has been given to Me, and I am now committing to you this same authority so that you can go and make disciples and do that by baptising them into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.' The first thing that they then did not do was then rush to fully immerse people under the water and then say, 'In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit' or 'in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ'.

Rather, they understood the authority that had been committed to them. They understood the covenant purpose of God and the call now to initiate and to make disciples of new creation sons of God. This meant that the fruit and the outcome of the gospel being proclaimed was that sons of men could be born again and become sons of God - recipients of the divine nature, with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son all dwelling in them, crying out and knowing that God is their Father. Then an initiative of baptism beginning with the Father could be taken toward them.

You can see that this command to baptise in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit did not begin by putting people into water. It began with the proclamation of the gospel of God, the gospel of sonship, the hope of being born again as a new creation son of God and the hope of then being conformed into the image of *the* Son to be brought forth in the image and likeness of God on the day of resurrection with that glorious spiritual resurrection body. That is where this initiative and authority that was committed began. It would then be new creation sons of God who have been baptised by the Father in one spirit - members in particular of the body of Christ - that are then choosing by faith and by the motivation of the Spirit of

God within them to then be connected to the fellowship of Christ's death, burial and resurrection - the fellowship of His offering and sufferings - whereby they could be joined to the same process by which He was brought forth in the image of God, now knowing that we also can be conformed to that same image through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

As we heard, do you see your calling as a son of God? Do you see your calling as a member in particular of the body of Christ? You are the body of Christ. Amen. We said last night, imagine if father Abraham was here today. We said it with the teens. He is looking out and he is recognising each one of you and saying, 'Yes, when I looked into that portion of the stars of heaven and I saw these glorious sons of God born of the divine nature shining forth, I saw you!' In the same way, if he was here, he would be looking around with a remarkable sense of joy of the mystery of God being made known and manifest in our physical bodies and recognising that each one of us is joined in faith to this process where we will then be fully brought forth in that image on the day of resurrection. He would be rejoicing in his spirit. It would not be, 'Eh, church today; member of the body of Christ; eh, so what?' Do you understand the extraordinary treasure that we have and the extraordinary fellowship of faith that we share together as the word of this hope is being proclaimed to us?

This ought to then activate us in relationship to our calling. Again, do you see and understand and hear your calling as a son of God? It is not then in *agape* fellowship to talk *about* something (as in I will talk about the theory of it now), but it is now to be *exercised in the faith of it* as that member in particular who has been so choicely placed right there in that family; in that intimate fellowship where you have been placed. The good works

prepared for you now are in the service of the other member of the body of Christ who sits next to you - not just here today, but at the dinner table when you are at home; sharing the same room together; however it might be as married couples or as brothers and sisters together. These are the good works prepared for us today. Hallelujah.

That second dimension of baptism that I have highlighted through there is where we are able to cease from sin and where we are beginning to walk in the newness of His resurrection life to the glory of the Father. These elements that belong to Christ's dying and living are accomplishing for us regeneration in our physical bodies. In this process we find deliverance from the other law that brings us into bondage to sin and we are able to participate in the good works that Christ has already completed for us. We can get a little bit easy and a little bit comfortable with ourselves, with the other members of our family and then the other members of the body of Christ. We can get easy with one another relationally, knowing our calling as a son of God and the necessity for us to minister to one another.

We are not baptised for new birth. It is a new creation son of God already baptised by the Father who enters the waters of baptism. This is the second element of the one baptism. It is a new creation son of God who dies with Christ and is immersed into the pathway of salvation where the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit is taking place. The world in Noah's day was baptised by water. Peter talks about this in 1 Peter chapter 3. Noah and his family came up out of these waters of judgement and they were saved. You are not baptised *into* the water - the judgement. It is *by* the water and *via* the ark that you emerge above it. Peter says that baptism now saves us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the answer of a good conscience toward God.

Illuminated by the word to this implication of the gospel, a believer requests baptism by water and quite specifically, under the hands of firstfruits disciples. This is a person who has been established as a worthy house in the fellowship of the presbytery and who is walking on the pathway of salvation that Christ has pioneered for them. We are calling on the name of the Lord to be discipled, not to invoke it as some magical outcome, but that we would be discipled. The cry is 'I want to be a disciple.' The mark of water baptism is obedience from the heart in that you can be a disciple.

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 by water into the offering journey of Christ, is that they are immersed (or baptised) in the Holy Spirit. Once immersed in the Spirit, the Spirit Himself fills a believer full, making them His temple. 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. By this means, through their word and their conduct, they are able to be witnesses of Christ in the world. In many ways we have just scratched the surface of what that functionality of being His witnesses actually means in terms of understanding. Christ did not journey that offering journey that had been prepared for Him until the Holy Spirit came and strengthened Him with this sevenfold Spirit of the Lord. Why would we think that we can find a participation in His death, burial and resurrection but not with this same capacity and power?

Turn with me to Romans chapter 6. We know that Paul discusses our baptism here in Romans chapter 6. Time does not permit me to read from verses 1 through to 7, but I know you will all be very familiar with them. I want to pick it up from verse 8. He says

here at this point (and I love how Paul writes and expresses himself), he says 'Now'. Profound, isn't it? He says, 'now', but that now is in the light of what has been spoken. He said all of this, and he pauses, he gets his breath, and he says, 'Now, in the light of all of this...' He now brings summary to it for us. This is then the summary point. 'Now, if we died with Christ... [which he is saying we have] ... Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe...' It is like there is our first point that if we have died with Christ, we believe. 'By that same spirit of faith, I believe and therefore I speak.' 2Co 4:13. It finds a context of expressing. This is now faith speaking, the mind of Christ within us being expressed. 'If we died with Christ, we believe [and this is our confession of faith, faith speaking], that we shall also live with Him.' This is our confidence. What does it then mean to live with Him? To live with Him means knowing that and then he then gives a statement through. This is then my summary of that. 'If we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.' As those who have died with Him and are believing and speaking by faith, this is what we know. This is what we know in relationship to the life that Christ lives, which is to now be our life.

The summary is Christ lives apart from sin. Sin is dead to Him and cannot be revived. He did not die the judgement of God *because* of sin. He put *sin to death such that sin died*. 'He died to sin once and for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. We have died with Christ.' We believe that we live with Him, and this is what we know about that life - He lives apart from sin. This is what we know about how *He* lives. He then says in verse 11, 'Likewise now *you* also [who have died with Christ and are believing now to live together with Him, you now likewise], reckon yourself to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.'

He is now describing the context of regeneration, the washing of regeneration

and renewing of the Holy Spirit. Sin is dying, sin is put to death in Him, and we are participating. Sin is dying and we are being made alive in Christ through the regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit as we are being conformed into the image of the Son. Hallelujah. Likewise, now, reckon ourselves the same way.

I was talking to one of the kids recently and there had been sinful behaviour. More to the point (initially the behaviour was being addressed. I have in view their sonship, but) it was the *way* in which they were presenting themselves to me. There is a context of chastening, of nurture and admonition for their sake. They were going to be joined to the circumcision of Christ, and yet the presentation of their members was inconsistent with who they were. We are able to say really quite clearly, 'This presentation (which is a projection because it was not the truth of who they were) is sin.' We were not saying, 'The thing that you did was sin; but this presentation of yourself to me in fellowship, this is sin. But do you know that sin ought not be your master? Sin died in Christ and because you have died together with Christ and been made alive together with Him. Do you know that you do not need to present your members as a slave to sin, because sin is not your master? Sin is dead and defeated. You can present your members as instruments of righteousness, as one who is alive from the dead, now presenting themselves to God.' Do you know all of the agitated presentation and everything began to be settled and come to rest? Do you know that the faith of baptism right there begins to work for them?

It is not baptism in the waters that is beginning to work for them. It is the understanding that they are a member of the body of Christ; a member in particular; the two of us together; father and son together; members in particular of the body of Christ. Do you see the fellowship of it there and that

it needs to be by the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord, as the Holy Spirit is ministering to us? The two of us together are temples of the Holy Spirit and He is finding expression there. We are able then to say, 'Likewise, reckon yourself dead to sin. Do not present your members any more as slaves to sin or as though sin is your master; but present yourself alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Can you see the faith of our baptism exercised right there?

Paul makes a similar statement to this in Galatians. Let us keep in view that Paul is writing the book of Galatians in the backdrop of how he addressed Peter in the fellowship of an *agape* meal over Peter's partiality; his duplicity; his hypocrisy. As Paul says he had not been straightforward in the truth of the gospel in the fellowship that they were finding, because he had been persuaded by the Judaisers to not eat with new believers (Gentile believers) who had not been circumcised. These Judaisers were trying to bring people back under the Law, or we could say back under the obligation of sacrament. Peter has been persuaded back to that. He is right then all of the way back in 'the court of Caiaphas' again, but to some point worse off the second time round, because Christ has already finished the offering journey for him.

Paul now, in who he is, as a member in particular of Christ's body is now appealing to Peter and also to Barnabas and to James because they were caught up in this as well. He is appealing to them; he has in view their sanctification and who they are as a member in particular of the body of Christ. He is saying, 'Were you not co-crucified with Christ in the same way that I was? The life that we now live is the life of Christ within us. We live that life by the faith of Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us and died and was raised for us.' The whole context of the book of Galatians is then that they are equally caught up in a similar

hypocrisy brought back underneath the Law again by sacraments, and quite specifically, that the working of circumcision is going to be something that is literal in your flesh.

In the backdrop of this, he continues. You can read it through in chapter 5 as well. He gets to verse 16 and he then says, 'I say then...' This is a little bit similar to where he pauses and says 'now' and then 'likewise'. You have to catch how he is building his points through and then bringing them back again. He then says, 'I say then... [in response to all this contention over circumcision as it pertained to the Law as though that was necessary for salvation. He says], '...I say then [this is the summary of the whole matter]: walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.' He then says further in verse 25, 'If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.'

In other words, in light of the death that Christ died, and in light of our immersion for a participation in the fellowship of Their offering wherein which we are being regenerated and renewed to be brought forth in Their image and Their likeness, he is saying, 'How about we walk in the Spirit? And if you walk in the Spirit, you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.' I love how he said, 'I say then...' What do we say in relationship to all of this? How about we just set our mind on the Spirit and walk in the Spirit, and we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh? What say we then, brethren? What shall we do in relationship to what we are hearing on baptism?

Let me read a number of applied points here. What say we then, brethren? Are we going to embrace where the Father has placed us in the corporate body of Christ as a branch connected to the Vine, receiving the Father's initiative as the Vinedresser and confessing in faith, 'You are my Father. Hallowed be your name? I am a member in particular of the body of Christ.'

What say we then, brethren? Will we walk by the Spirit with this confession of faith? Are we going to cease from fear? Because He has said to us, 'Do not fear. I am your shield of faith. I will be your exceedingly great reward.' I am your life.' We can confidently say, 'I am crucified with Christ. It is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me, and I live by His faith.' That is a statement that is made in the fear of the Lord, not in the fear of man.

Are we going to get easy with the works prepared for us each day and know that the sufferings that belong to each day are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed on the day of resurrection? They are working in us an eternal weight of glory as we are being regenerated and renewed into the image and likeness of God.

What say we then, brethren? Are we going to believe that He is God Almighty, the one who possesses the power to bring to pass what He has spoken? Will we respond in faith to the call to walk before Him and be blameless knowing that He is the One who gives to us the power to walk blameless before Him? He would not command us if He did not give the capacity to walk that way.

Are we going to believe that as sons of God we have been made temples for the Holy Spirit, and as temples of the Holy Spirit, we are the manifestation of the mystery of God right now? The glory of this mystery is being revealed in us. Again, this would be Abraham looking and recognising the glorious revelation of the mystery. The Holy Spirit is in our heart, worshipping the Father and the Son at the altar of our conscience where we bear witness in our spirit that we are sons of God. The Holy Spirit worships by revealing the Father and the Son to us so that we are the full expression of the Spirit of God. This is what it means to be His witnesses.

Are we going to believe that in the same way that the Holy Spirit helped and strengthened Christ with the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord that He is helping us and strengthening us

in the same way? This is the only way that we can journey with Christ. Can we embrace the simplicity of 'Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh?'

I say then brethren, 'What are we going to do?' Are we going to live and function together as the members of His body or are we going to choose something that is so far less than our most glorious calling. Paul then picks up in verse 12 of Romans chapter 6 and he then says, 'Therefore in the light of all of this, do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts.' In other words, he is saying there is no reason at all for you to continue living in that manner because of the faith of what is being ministered to us.

In our final minutes, I would now like to take us through our baptismal service outline. This is really the context where (as I was saying before) my spirit was rejoicing this morning. You are the body of Christ; you are the members of His body. What we are about to read is the expression of faith that belongs to that, and I trust that your spirit will rejoice together with me as we run through this.

The baptism service will be hosted by a firstfruits disciple of the church and two other firstfruits disciples will be in the water baptising those who have requested this immersion. Now again, as I read this through, I want us to be clear, we are not wrangling about the words spoken. In saying that, the words spoken are very important. Why? Because faith comes from hearing the word. We are taking our time to know what to say and why to say it and who needs to be speaking it, because this is where the word gives faith - not because we are thinking some magical dust comes down because that thing was said - but because this is the faith that enables our obedient participation.

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 baptism. That orientation to water baptism will be acknowledging that this is one element of the one baptism that has those three elements to it - the initiative of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The host will then outline the baptism order of service, highlighting the statements that will be made by each participant in the course of the service.

The section for testimony: the first person to be baptised will give a short testimony declaring their faith for water baptism. This testimony should reflect the true understanding 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, together with their parents. Standing with the elder, the person being baptised will deliver their testimony to the congregation. At the end of their testimony, those who are 15 or older will read a statement of faith for baptism that will accompany their testimony. Now, as we read this, hear this as the confession of your baptism.

*Having been born again and placed by the Father in this community of believers as a member of the body of Christ, I am choosing to be baptised by water into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ my Lord. This is the pathway of life that Christ pioneered for me through His offering and suffering journey, upon which I am being saved through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. I am choosing to walk this way as a disciple of Christ in the fellowship of His body. Acknowledging the instructions of Jesus, the condition of my walking in my baptism as a disciple is that I must love Him far more than I love my father and mother, my wife, children, brothers and sisters, extended family and my own life also. I am acknowledging that as a disciple of Christ, I must love Him. That condition is clearly*

*outlined within the Scriptures - that I will love Him more than even my own life.*

Now, that little statement there in terms of loving father and mother, wife, children and so on, will obviously be adjusted depending on the composition of the family there. Continuing here... *This means that discipleship as a member of the body of Christ will be my principal focus and motivation as I bear my cross each day and follow Christ, My Lord.*

Is that your confession of faith today? That I will love Him - I will love Him, and I desire to be this kind of disciple in this fellowship together with my brethren? I love this statement of faith that is expressed there.

If it is a child who is being baptised, they will be accompanied by their parents as they share their testimony before the congregation. Following their testimony, one of their parents (most likely dad) will read this statement of commendation for baptism. This is now the parent commending the child to baptism, reflecting the fellowship that has taken place within this household of faith toward the child's baptism and their testimony.

This is then the parent's statement of commendation. They are speaking this in relationship to the child in the fellowship of the body of Christ.

*Jesus Christ is the Head of our house, and we are submitted to His lordship. Accordingly, we commend our son or daughter... (the child's name would be inserted there) ... we commend Jonathan to their baptism by water into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the pathway of life that Christ pioneered for them through His offering and suffering journey upon which they are obtaining their salvation, through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. They are choosing to walk this way as a disciple of Christ. Acknowledging the instructions of Christ,*



*the condition of walking in their baptism, as a disciple is that Jonathan must love Him, that is Christ, far more than they love their own father, mother, brothers, sisters, extended family, their own life also* (again, adjusted in terms of the context of their family).

Isn't that wonderful? Dad being able to get up and to free the child who is expressing faith toward water baptism, understanding that the Father has already baptised them and placed them in the body and dad or mum is able to stand up and say the command of Christ. The condition of walking in their baptism as a disciple is that they *must love Him before all others*, even before me the parent who is actually freeing them and walking with them in this. This is just beautiful! The fellowship of it.

This means that discipleship as a member of the body of Christ is to be their principal focus and motivation as they bear their cross each day to follow Christ their Lord. Here it is, the father within the home, confessing Christ is the Head of this house. Here he is saying that the discipleship of this child is that love for Christ comes first, and they are first and foremost a member of Christ's body even before there is any obligation to family at all. This is delivering us from the bondage of family obligation right here.

Now to the statement of purpose: Once the believer has shared this testimony and the statement of faith (or statement of commendation) has been made, the host will then read the statement of purpose for baptism. This will be read for every person who is being baptised. We are not trying to be efficient with time here to read it once and say that it applies to all, but this will now be very specifically spoken in a fellowship to the one who is being baptised by water.

We say their name (we could say me): *Jonathan, on your confession of faith that you have been born again 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. Hallelujah.* What a statement of purpose for baptism and faith.

After making this statement the host will then invite the believer to enter the baptismal tank. Once they have entered the water, one of the two baptisers will state to them, the person's name: *Jonathan, 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 water. Immediately after their baptism there will be an opportunity to sing a song of thanksgiving as the one being baptised, the elders and the congregation rejoice together. No doubt, rejoicing together with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit who are singing in harmony together over this fellowship.

If a person has not been baptised in the Holy Spirit, the baptisers will lay hands on the one who has just been baptised, praying for them to be baptised into the Holy Spirit. After the believer's exit from the water, the next person to be baptised will be invited to join the host to share their testimony and to make their statement of faith or commendation. The host will then read the statement of purpose and then invite them into the tank to be immersed in water. At the conclusion of all of the baptisms, the host will pray, commending those who have been baptised to the grace of the Lord for their ongoing fellowship in Christ's offering and sufferings. That would then conclude the baptismal service.

How beautiful is that? The fellowship of this: not a powerful invocation of anything; not into membership of a church or a denomination or a doctrine or a particular leader; not to *make* you a son of God; not because you are saying, 'I really want to go on with my walk with Jesus and I guess this is the next thing to do. But really if you sat five other things in front of me as well, if they were the things that I need to do, I will just keep doing them.' Rather, this is the most beautiful fellowship that only exists within the body of Christ (the members of Christ's body who have received this commission and the authority of grace that Christ has committed to the body) to be able to find fellowship together in this way and to participate in an initiative that began with the Father and now takes place in the Son and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. All of this is so that we can journey with Christ and be conformed into His image. This is so that on the day of resurrection this physical body will put off all of its corruption and all of its mortality. It will put on immortality and incorruption, and that glorious heavenly body ... (that has been having fruit invested into it each day as we have lived by the life of Christ within us and by His faith) ... that glorious heavenly body then clothes the physical body. We are then brought forth in His image and His likeness with this resurrection spiritual body - a temple of the Holy Spirit, fit for the works that belong to the new heavens and the new earth. Hallelujah.