


# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- Prior to attending TCC (either in your childhood or as an adult), what was your experience with the rituals of baptism and the Lord's Supper (often called "communion")? Were they a "big deal"—or barely mentioned? Did they make sense to you, or did they confuse you? Did you participate in them?

Some people are **superstitious** about these symbols, treating them as religious tokens, trusting in them to make God pleased with us. Others view them **sentimentally**—giving undue focus to the special circumstances or emotions associated with them. Instead, our practices must be **Scriptural**.

- In baptism, what is the symbolic significance of going down under water, and then coming back up?

Why water? Why not some other substance?

Think of an exclusive organization you've been a member of (eg. Phi Beta Kappa, varsity ball team, airline platinum traveler, etc.). **How** did folks know who was in the group and who wasn't?

**Why** was it important to know who's in—and who's not?

**Why** is it important to know (via the sign of baptism) who's officially in the family of God, and who's not?

- Through the Lord's Supper we retell the story of our redemption (see 1 Corinthians 11:26). Think of a bit of your own family's lore (eg. how Mom and Dad met and married, the origin and meaning of your surname, how Thanksgiving is celebrated, etc.). **Why** does it get retold from time to time at family gatherings or explained to those entering the family (through birth or marriage)?

What benefits do the "newbies" gain as they learn that family lore? How do "old timers" benefit?

What do **we** gain when we retell the story of our redemption?

## Application-Challenge

What benefit does **Christ** gain when we retell that story?

- If you have believed on Christ alone as your sin-bearer, but have not been baptized subsequent to your conversion, commit to obey your Lord by receiving believer's baptism.
- Participate regularly in the united proclamation of the gospel through the Lord's Supper. Prepare yourself for this meaningful symbol through self-examination, confession, and obedience.

# Sermon Summary (Key Texts: Romans 6:1-4 & 1 Corinthians 11:23-32)

Triangle Community Church makes the gospel visible when we actively proclaim it through the practices of believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper. In Romans 6:1-4 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-32 the Apostle Paul corrected false thinking concerning the purpose of baptism and the observance of the Lord's Supper. What is the significance of these two gospel symbols that Christ gave His church? How can we treasure these symbols and why must we continue to proclaim the gospel through them?

## Believer's Baptism (Romans 6:1-4).

Baptism puts in symbolic form our union with Christ. It is an expectation for all Christians (v. 1-3a). It was the clear practice of the early church (Acts 2:38; Matthew 28:18). Baptism expresses our new life in Christ (v. 3b); we are baptized "into Christ Jesus...into His death". It is an external practice that represents an internal reality (v. 4a). Believers are buried into death and raised from the dead. When a believer is baptized, it evidences a life of faith to others (v. 4b); we have "newness of life".

<sup>1</sup> What should we say then? Should we continue in sin so that grace may multiply? <sup>2</sup> Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

<sup>3</sup> Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life.

## The Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-32).

The Lord's Supper is a symbol, an illustration, of Christ's sacrifice for sinners. It was established by Jesus for the local church (v. 23-24a). Paul "passed it on" to the churches he planted. The Lord's Supper emphasizes the costliness of Christ's sacrifice—he was "broken" for us. (v. 24b). It also explains the result of Christ's sacrifice: it inaugurated the New Covenant (v. 25; also see Ezekiel 36:25-28 and Jeremiah 31:31-34). The Lord's Supper is an enduring proclamation of the gospel for the local church; we proclaim the Lord's death "until He comes [again]" (v. 26). It demands that we examine ourselves; participating "in an unworthy manner" makes us guilty of the body and blood of the Lord (v. 27-28). This is serious! The Lord's Supper aims to effectively unify the local church in Christ (v. 29-32). Disunity was a huge problem in the Corinthian church (v. 17-22 and 33-34; cf. 1:10-12 and 12:12-27).

<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." <sup>25</sup> In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

<sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

<sup>27</sup> So, then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup> Let a person examine himself; in this way let him eat the bread and drink from the cup. <sup>29</sup> For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup> This is why many are sick and ill among you, and many have fallen asleep.

<sup>31</sup> If we were properly judging ourselves, we would not be judged, <sup>32</sup> but when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined, so that we may not be condemned with the world.

Today we get to actively respond to God's Word by remembering the sacrifice of our Savior together by participating in the Lord's Supper, and in two weeks we will be celebrating Believer's Baptism.

### Talking To God About This Week's Message

*"Heavenly Father, today I want to be a 'doer' of the Word, and not just a 'hearer'. Amen."*

### Talking To Others About This Week's Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asks you, "What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?", how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

***In the New Testament, believers are commanded to be baptized. Is it really that important? Let's dig into this controversial issue of baptism...***

**Monday**—The *meaning* of baptism.

Read Luke 12:49–53. Let's "plunge right in" to this confusing subject (pun *intended*)! Jesus refers to his **future** "baptism" (v. 50), yet he was **already** baptized (see Luke 3:21–22). Notice the images and issues which form the context to Jesus' statement of his future baptism: "fire on the earth" (v. 49), "distressed" (v. 50), "division" (v. 51-53). Clearly he's **not** referring to a joyous event. Jesus uses the word "baptism" here to describe his upcoming death on the cross! How can that be? Read the first line of this webpage: [www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/baptize-baptism/](http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/baptize-baptism/) and you'll see. Now, in your own words, rephrase Jesus' thoughts found in Luke 12:49-53.

**Tuesday**—The *mode* of baptism.

We saw yesterday that the basic meaning of "baptize" is "to plunge, immerse, sink". Jesus spoke of being "plunged or immersed" in suffering, as he bore the wrath of God against our sins. Now we'll explore the most common meaning: to be plunged or immersed" in water—ie, "water baptism". Many churches have a tradition of sprinkling a little bit of water on a person in order to baptize them. Given the fact that "baptize" means "to plunge, immerse, sink", what's the error involved with baptism by sprinkling? How does Jesus' own baptism reveal that he was immersed (see Mark 1:10)? How does the practice of "John the Immerser" (aka John the Baptist) reveal that immersion is the proper mode of baptism (see John 3:23)? One more proof: Acts 8:26 tells of a man who was traveling across a desert. After he'd believed in Christ, he was anxious to be baptized (see v. 36)—but he didn't say, "Here's my canteen—please baptize me!". When they finally found a body of water, he "went **down into** the water" (v. 38) and was baptized.

**Wednesday**—The *symbolism* of baptism.

Romans is the clearest, most complete explanation of salvation. The word "baptize/baptism" occurs three times in Romans. Read Romans 6:1-7 and circle those three occurrences. Now, bear in mind that the basic meaning of "baptize" is "immerse". Now read v. 3-5 aloud, replacing "baptized" with "immersed" and "baptism" with "immersion". Keep on re-reading it that way as you answer the following questions:

- If you have believed in Christ for salvation, you have been immersed into...what (v. 3a)?
- If you have been immersed into Christ, into what else have you been immersed (see v. 3b, 4a, and 7)?
- Verse 4 says that we were "buried with Christ through immersion into death". **Dead** people get buried—how do v. 2 & 7 describe believers? Verse 5a says it again! Into what have believers become united?
- After dying on the cross, Christ gloriously arose to new life (v. 4b). What does v. 5b say has happened to us?
- Look up the word "vicariously" at [Dictionary.com](http://Dictionary.com). What do you learn?
- Do you see that what Jesus **literally** experienced—death, burial and resurrection to newness of life—we get to experience vicariously? Verse 4c says that Jesus arose "**so that** we too might walk in newness of life".

Now, to answer that question, "What does water baptism **symbolize**?" Jesus **literally** died, went into a grave (a cave), and then came out of that grave with new life. Verse 5 says that we have been **united** with Christ in **his** death and resurrection. So, how shall we picture, how shall we symbolize, **that** reality? Do you want to be buried under ground? *I didn't think so!* So God graciously gave us a **symbolic** death, burial and resurrection—immersion into a liquid "grave", followed by a "resurrection" back up, out of the water—to picture what Jesus literally did for us, and what we participate in vicariously! (Not only is a brief "burial" in water more pleasant than a burial under ground, but it also is a meaningful symbol in this way: since we use water to wash things clean, water baptism fits well the concept that Christ "washes away our sins by his blood" (see Titus 3:5–7). Baptism doesn't wash away our sins—Jesus' blood does—but baptism symbolizes this washing.

**Thursday**—The *subjects* of baptism.

**Who** is to be baptized? Once again, the Bible—and the Bible **alone**—is our authority on this issue.

- In Acts 2:41, what qualified these 3,000 people to be baptized? What had they done?
- In Acts 8:12, what was the content of Philip's preaching and what was the response of those who qualified for baptism?
- In Acts 8:36–38, what question is asked (v. 36) and what answer is given (v. 37)?
- In Acts 10:47-48, what undeniable proof of regeneration qualified these people for baptism?

**Friday**—The *necessity* of baptism.

- Baptism is **not** necessary for salvation. Read Luke 23:39–43. Did this man make it to heaven? How do you know? Was he baptized? How do you know?  
Read 1 John 5:11-13. **Exactly when** does a saved person begin his eternal life? (Look carefully at the verb tenses.)
- Baptism **is necessary** if you wish to be obedient. How important is obedience **to you?** ...**to God?**  
Read Matthew 28:19. What is commanded of every believer?  
In v. 28, how much authority does Jesus have? Should a person with that much authority be disobeyed? Why or why not?  
Read Matthew 7:21-23. Is everyone who claims Christ as his Lord actually saved?  
According to v. 21, who will enter the kingdom of heaven?  
What reason for disobeying the clear command to be baptized will God find to be sufficient?

**Saturday**—Your response.

- Have you believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to save you from the just wrath of God against your sins?  
If not, baptism will do you no good. Do **not** be baptized. Instead, repent and believe the gospel.  
If yes, have you been baptized **subsequent to** your salvation?  
If yes, then you have obeyed God. Never be re-baptized; like the salvation it symbolizes, it is a one-time event.  
If not—if you've **never** been baptized **or** if you were baptized **prior to** salvation (either as a child or as an adult)—then you still need to obey the command to proclaim before others your regeneration and to declare your allegiance to Christ through believer's baptism. Be in touch with us immediately ([tcc.org/ministries/baptism/](http://tcc.org/ministries/baptism/)).