

Baptism and Membership Service of Jacob Reynolds, Kevin O'Keefe

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] We delight to see that God saves sinners of all ages and all types. We have seen tonight, Jacob, that God saved you in your youth! In order that he might be glorified by the strength of your youth all the days of your life.

And we've seen, Kevin, that God waited to save you. That he might glorify the wonder of his grace and his power. That after your soul laid long in sin and nature's night, his eyes still diffused that quickening ray and you woke.

Though you'd been dead for some 61 years, you woke to newness of life. And you're a new man in Christ. Jacob in his youth.

Kevin in older age. Jacob raised in a Christian home under the sound of the gospel each week in the church. Kevin, saved from a life, lived apart from the church and without the true knowledge of God and the only way of salvation in Christ.

And yet, for all of your differences, you both have much in common. You both were going your own way in rebellion against God's way and would have continued going your way right into hell had he not interrupted you.

[1:17] You both needed a new heart for your heart was taking you far from God. You both needed the Lord Jesus to die for your sins and to make you right with God.

You both were saved not because of anything you had done to deserve it, but because of Christ's blood and righteousness. And you both have the same father, the same elder brother, and the same Holy Spirit living within you.

And so you actually have more in common than you have a difference with each other. And we rejoice in what we have in common with you as well in our Savior. Why did we baptize you tonight? We did so because before Jesus ascended into heaven as the resurrected Lord of glory, he said to his disciples as representatives of the church, he came to them and he said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

[2:33] And surely I am with you to the end of the age. So by faith and repentance, you have become disciples of Jesus Christ.

It was then our obligation as the church to baptize you upon the profession of your faith in the Lord Jesus. Part of discipling you means teaching you to obey everything that Christ commands, but it also means to baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Those very words were just pronounced over you as you were baptized. Why do we do that? Those words were important enough to the Lord Jesus to include them in the instituting of this ordinance for the church.

He told us to baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. There's something important about that that we dare not let go of and miss.

And so let us seek to understand them better this evening and to be helped by them. Now baptism is a symbol. It's a symbolic ordinance, which means it's not just an empty ritual.

[3:54] It's not just something we do without thinking about what we're doing. No, it's an enacted word, which is what Augustine called it, a visible word.

It's a word picture. Something's being pictured in baptism. And as such, we are saying something in our baptism. We're professing something, many things.

But I want to limit our thoughts tonight to these instituting words of our Lord Jesus when he said, baptize them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

I believe at least three things are being said by our baptism. Number one, baptism is a declaration of our triune God, that God is three in one.

Baptizing them into the name, singular, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

[4:57] And in these words, Jesus gathers up the teaching of the Bible on the Trinity and puts it into one concise statement, that the God of the Bible is one God in three persons.

He does not say baptizing them into the names of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, but into the name, the one name, because there's only one essence, one being, one God that we're speaking of.

And yet this one God exists in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And they exist in relationship with each other. They're co-equal since they all share the one name, the one essence of God.

The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Spirit is God. But they are not three gods. Now, Jesus doesn't try to explain the Trinity in this verse, but he does declare it, does he not?

And all true disciples of Jesus declare this truth in their baptism as they're baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

[6:09] This alone is Christian baptism. There is no true Christianity. There is no true discipleship of Christ where the Trinity is denied. Jesus attaches this confession of the Trinity to the very ordinance of baptism, that initial step into his church.

He doesn't say you have to understand it. No human does. But he does set it forth for us to believe and to confess. It's interesting that at the baptism of our Lord Jesus, that all three persons of the Godhead are thereby explicitly spoken of.

Remember the Father's voice boomed from heaven. This is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased. And then the Spirit descended as a dove upon him.

You have all three persons of the one God present and acting and expressed at Jesus' baptism.

And so it is at the baptism of his disciples, we confess that our God is triune.

Now the second thing we see in this statement is that baptism is a declaration that our salvation is the work of the triune God. That the salvation that they have talked about is the work of God the Father and of God the Son and of God the Holy Spirit.

[7:41] Baptism is the way we go public with the fact that Almighty God has saved us. And this saving God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

It's not only Jesus who saves us, but the Father and the Son and the Spirit.

The entire Godhead are working together for our salvation. Let's think of each member of the Godhead, each person of the one God. God the Father planned our salvation, planned your salvation.

The Bible teaches that he chose us to be saved before the creation of the world. The Bible teaches us that he, the Father, so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

He, the Father, sent us a Redeemer to rescue us from sin and death and hell. He punished the Son in our place. It pleased the Lord, our Father, to crush him, his only Son, that by his punishment we might have peace.

[8:59] He, the Father, adopts us into his family and loves and cares for us as the perfect Father. There simply is no salvation apart from the activity of God the Father.

But there was something more to be done in order to save us. And so we see the second person of the Godhead, God the Son, accomplished our salvation that had been planned by the Father.

The Son came to this earth. God the Son became man for us. He kept the whole law for us. He became sin for us.

He became a curse for us. He bore the wrath of God for us in our place. God the Son laid down his life voluntarily for us and died for us.

He was buried for us. He was raised and rose again for us. He ascended into heaven and ever lives for us, sending us grace and interceding on our behalf.

[10:10] Again, there simply is no salvation apart from the activity of God the Son. But hear me, there was still more to be done to save us.

Because though the Son of God was such a great Savior, we despised him and we rejected him. We saw no glory in him that we should have him as our Savior.

We preferred our sins to him. You've testified to that this evening. We had no ears to hear his welcoming voice.

We didn't want to be saved from our sins. We were spiritually dead in our transgressions and sins. Unable to repent and believe on Christ. We were slaves to sin.

We were in bondage to Satan. We were living for ourselves, seeking our own glory. So God the Son applies the salvation.

[11:17] I'm sorry, God the Spirit applies the salvation accomplished by God the Son and planned by God the Father. The Spirit comes to apply what Christ has won for us on the cross.

And the Father has planned for us from all eternity. He's sent by the Father and the Son to bring salvation to all those chosen by the Father and given to the Son and bought by the blood of Jesus. And so in your lifetime, Kevin and Jacob, the Holy Spirit came and convicted you of sin and guilt. He showed you you needed to be saved.

You were lost. The Holy Spirit does that work. He came and he gave you a new heart and he made you alive when you were dead in transgressions and sins. He gave you a desire to be saved.

He enabled you to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus and then to walk in newness of life to forgive others. He gave you a new heart to love God and to hate sin.

[12:24] And now he dwells within you to sanctify you and to empower you to be killing sin and to obey your new Lord, Jesus Christ.

He's living within you to comfort and encourage you, to assure you that God is your Father and Jesus, your elder brother. And he gives you understanding of his word and gives you hunger and thirst for truth.

There simply is no salvation apart from the activity of God, the Holy Spirit. He is the one who brings us to Christ. In whom are all the blessings of salvation.

So being baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we declare that our salvation is the activity of the entire Trinity working together on our behalf.

Each person of the Trinity was involved in the first creation. And each person of the Trinity is involved in the new creation of a new man, a new woman in Christ.

[13:30] So in baptism, we declare that our God is triune. The salvation is by the triune God. And thirdly and lastly, baptism is a declaration that we belong to this triune God.

We belong to him. To be baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is to have the name of God put upon you. It's to be publicly joined to him, to take his name upon yourself.

Much as a woman comes to the altar and publicly takes the name of her new husband to herself. And in so doing, she is declaring, I'm his.

I'm his. And so baptism into the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit means God has given himself to you and you have given yourself to him.

You've taken his name upon you. You can say, I am his. And he is mine. Now, in the Aaronic blessing in the Old Testament, the Old Covenant, God said to the priest where he says to the priest, put my name upon the people of Israel and I will bless them.

[14:47] That they put the name of Jehovah upon the people. Indeed, we find in the Old Testament that God's people were called by his name. If my people who are called by my name, the scriptures say.

So, his name was put upon them. They're called by that name. And if his name is on you, if you've been baptized into the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then you're his.

You're his. And you profess that in your baptism tonight. Now, we see something like this in everyday life, don't we?

Putting our name on something is a claim to ownership. When you're doing an assignment, kids, at school, one of the first things you're told to do is to put your name on it.

And when you do that, you're saying, this is my work. These are my answers. This is my test. This is my homework. Your name is the claim to ownership. Where you put your name.

[15:52] When playing softball or baseball, kids, you put your name on your glove. And you're saying, this glove is mine. Or as in marriage, when ladies take the name of their husband, they're saying, I'm his wife.

He's my husband. So, of all the papers that the teacher has on his desk, the one with my name on it is mine. And of all the gloves in the dugout, the one with my name on it is mine.

And of all the men in the world, the one whose name I bear is mine. And so, when God takes a people for himself, he puts his name on them. And we are baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

And in doing so, he is saying to you, you are mine. You are mine. You are some of my people. And I am your God.

It's a public declaration that I belong to the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So, Jacob and Kevin, by your baptism into the name of the Father.

[17:05] Let's think of each of these. By your baptism into the name of the Father. You are saying tonight, I give myself up to God the Father to be his child. To have him be my father.

To be his adopted son. To have him as my father to discipline me. My father to love and care for me as his child. And as being baptized into the name of God the Son.

You are saying, I hereby give myself up to God the Son to have him as all that he is for me. As my prophet and my priest and my king.

As my prophet to teach me the will of God. I hereby renounce all my thoughts and all my ways. And I bow my mind and my heart to him as my prophet.

To have him teach me. To teach me to believe whatever he says. And to obey whatever he commands. Remember, immediately following this, he says, To be baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

[18:10] And to teach them to obey whatever I have commanded. You are confessing. Jesus is the one whose teachers are to teach me to obey everything that he says.

So baptism is not a graduation ceremony. It's not a diploma that's given for those who graduate from the school of Christ.

Rather, baptism is an induction ceremony into the school of Christ. You're just beginning. And here you become lifetime students of Christ.

You take his yoke upon you and you learn from him. Who is gentle and humble of heart. Being baptized into the name of the Son means you take him tonight as your prophet to teach you.

But then you also take him as your priest to die for your sins and to plead with God for you. And that means that you're renouncing all self-righteousness. And all self-help techniques to save yourself.

[19:12] You're submitting to being saved by him. You're submitting to be saved by his blood and righteousness and to have him present your soul to God.

By being baptized into the name of the Son, you're submitting to him as your king to rule over you and defend you. You're renouncing the world and all other rival authorities.

You're saying, I give myself up to Christ to be ruled by him and to be dependent upon him for my protection.

Yes, we give ourselves up to the Father. We give ourselves up to the Son. And to be baptized into the name of the Spirit is to give yourself up to God, the Holy Spirit.

To be his temple. To be indwelt by him. To not grieve him. But to submit to him as the indwelling sanctifier and guide and comforter and divine enabler.

[20:15] Working in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. So what have we seen tonight? Well, we've seen that Jesus tells the church to baptize disciples into the one name.

The one God. Of the three persons of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. And thereby we confess our God is three persons in one God.

And we confess that the salvation that has changed our destiny forever from hell to heaven is the work of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

And we confess in our baptism that we are being baptized into his name. His name is put on us. We belong to him. To the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Now that has both a challenging part to it and an encouraging part to it. And for all of you who have been baptized as a profession of your faith in Jesus Christ, it has that same challenge and encouragement for you and for me.

[21:23] Let's think of it. First of all, Jacob and Kevin, for your challenge, you've taken the name of God publicly upon you. Tonight. You've been baptized into the name of God, the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

It's no small thing to bear the name of the Trinity. You carry his name with you into your home, into your workplace, into your school, your recreations, wherever you go, into your church. You go with the name of God upon you. Carry it well. Carry it well. Don't misuse the name of the Lord your God.

Don't let the name be drug through the mud by your life. Rather, hallow his name. And follow him in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Hold the name high by the way that you live. Regularly renew your baptism pledge to be his. And give yourself up to him afresh each morning.

[22 : 26] To no longer live for yourself, but for him who died and rose again for your salvation. Give yourself up to him every day, considering yourself to be dead indeed to sin, but to be alive to this God who is your God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Paul puts it this way. And notice the mention of the three persons of the Godhead. 1 Corinthians 6. Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God, the Father?

You're not your own. You were bought at a price. The blood of Jesus. Therefore, honor God with your body, which is his.

Bear the name well. You are not your own. That's what you said tonight in taking his name. You said, I'm yours, God. Remember, you are not your own. You belong to him.

So bear the name of God well, wherever you go. That's for your challenge tonight. But there's also much for your encouragement. Because God has named you as his own tonight.

[23 : 40] His claim is upon you. This one, that one is mine. And he is yours. All that he is, is yours. For all that you need. Now, as you're just starting out on the road to the celestial city.

And it's a difficult road. And it's a road fraught with temptation. And it's a road full of danger. It's a dangerous journey that you've undertaken. There's a trinity of evil out there.

That would resist you. There's a world that hates our Savior. And hates all of his people. There's a devil who wants you damned. And there's your own flesh.

The traitor within. And all of them resist you. And they resist every step of holiness that you'll take on the road to heaven. But know this.

Though there is a trinity of evil to resist you. There is a trinity. A holy trinity to help you. All the resources of the entire Godhead.

[24 : 45] Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Are combined to see you safely home to glory. Greater is he that is in you. Than he that is in the world.

So act fresh faith in your God. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To do all that they have promised to do. And this is why Paul can be so confident about those believers in the church at Philippi.

And why you can be as confident yourself. That even though you're just starting out on this journey. And even though it's a dangerous journey.

With many enemies. You can say being confident of this. That he who began a good work in me. Will carry it on to completion.

Until the day of Christ Jesus. Who began this work in you. This work of salvation. God the Father. God the Son. And God the Holy Spirit. There are enough resources in the Trinity to see the job.

[25 : 51] Brought to completion. The Father's plan for your salvation. Will not be thwarted as long as he is God. The Son's blood will not fail to cleanse you.

And save you from sin. As long as he is God. And the Holy Spirit's work cannot be frustrated. In applying the benefits of Christ's work to your souls.

As long as he is God. So there's a great responsibility for those who bear the name of God. There's also great encouragement.

That you don't belong to yourself but to him. And hundreds of years ago when men sat down to put in just one paragraph. What is the greatest comfort that we have in life and in death?

This was the answer in the Heidelberg Catechism. Question one. What is your only comfort in life and in death? And notice the Trinity. That I belong body and soul not to myself but to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

[26 : 58] Who at the cost of his own blood is fully paid for all my sins. And has completely freed me from the dominion of the devil.

That he protects me so well. That apart from the will of my Father in heaven. Not a hair can fall from my head. Indeed that everything must fit his purpose for my salvation.

Therefore by the Holy Spirit. He also assures me of eternal life. And makes me wholeheartedly willing. Both now and forevermore. To live for him.

Jacob and Kevin. And believers in our Lord Jesus. Living in union. With the triune God. Secures. Your salvation.

May you know increasingly the peace and joy that comes from believing it. And resting upon him who claims you tonight to be his own. Maybe you tonight are where Jacob and Kevin were.

[28:06] When God laid hold of them. Still lost in sin. Maybe deceiving yourself. Thinking that you can clean yourself up. Make yourself good enough for God.

Maybe not really caring at all about God. Whatever your condition. We've seen tonight that Jesus is the Savior. For both. And that this God.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Saves both kinds. All kinds of sinners. Would you see tonight what could be yours? If you came to Christ.

To have God as your Father forever. To have Jesus. As your prophet, priest, and king. To have the Holy Spirit living within you.

Together. The three persons of the one God. Saving you. From your sins. And giving you eternal life. Let's pray together.

[29:05] Lord Jesus, we look back upon your words just before you left this earth. And telling us that we are to baptize disciples into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

And we would be sobered tonight that you have put your name upon us. And that we are yours.

And as you have begun a good work in us, we pray according to your promise that you would complete that work. Do this for Kevin and for Jacob.

How we thank you, Lord, that you didn't leave them to yourself. But you came to them. Holy Spirit, you came in their lifetime. And troubled them.

And bothered them. And convicted them of sin. And brought them to faith in the Lord Jesus. Lord Jesus, 2,000 years ago, you lived the perfect life that they could never live.

[30:06] And you died the death under God's wrath that they should have suffered forever in hell. And, O Father in heaven, before the creation of the world, you had Kevin and Jacob on your mind.

And you chose them to be united to Christ. To be your children. Predestined them. To be your adopted sons. And so we worship you as the God of salvation.

We thank you then that they can take great encouragement as they head into this world. That this God is their God forever and ever. He will be their guide even to the end of the age.

Bring others to trust in this saving God. We ask for your praise. Amen. Amen. Amen.