

Baptism To Kingly Service

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[0 : 0 0] Who remembers how much fun it was washing under the drought level water restrictions we had back in 2017 and 2018? Remember the drought that we had?

And then we went from having lovely long warm winter showers or baths to less and less and less amounts of water. I don't know about you, but I started with, I did the bucket thing, but I started with a bucket.

You know, the restrictions were like level one or two, took a nice big bucket, threw it over, washed with water. Yeah, it wasn't too bad. It wasn't great, but it wasn't too bad. But as the water restrictions got more and more, you know, the buckets got smaller and smaller.

Eventually I was using, you know, those half litre of yoghurt containers. And then you must throw quite carefully because half the time the water's going missing.

It turns out hard to get clean with just a little bit of water. We need lots of water to be clean. But why do we clean ourselves?

[1 : 0 2] What's the point of showering and putting water onto ourselves? Well, two main reasons. You will know what it is, but just to remind us. We've got to be clean. We need to wash the dirt of ourselves.

Why do we want to do that? Well, you want to be acceptable to people. If you don't wash often, you get smelly. And people don't like smelly people.

They tend to, as you walk, if you haven't done, if you haven't showered for a while, you see people sort of step to one side as you walk down the road or as you meet up with them.

You can't have a close relationship with someone if you're not clean, if you're dirty. Especially those who are married will know what I'm talking about. If the husbands have spent some time cleaning the car or working on the car out in the yard and they haven't showered before they go to sleep that night, there's often a place down the hall for you to sleep.

The other thing you want to do when you're clean is to be healthy. If you don't clean yourself, you're going to get really dirty. When you get really dirty, your pores get clogged up.

[2 : 1 3] If you don't wash your hands, you often pick up germs and bugs. And then you get really sick. So what you need to do, water is used to clean us, makes us in relationship with others, it's easier to have a relationship with them and it makes us healthy.

It's effective for human flourishing. Now we need lots of water and often to be clean, but in our story today, God is going to take a little bit of water, comparatively speaking, and use it only once.

And because it's God doing something, it's going to have the biggest and ongoing ripple effect in world history. That's because Jesus' baptism is all about him being declared to be the king of God's coming kingdom.

And because of that, we are then, through our own baptism, made ready and effective for kingdom service ourselves. So the first thing we're going to look at today is how Jesus' baptism anoints him as king, but in a way that serves God's people.

Jesus' baptism anoints him as king that makes him, in a sense, fit for service. Now that's not to say Jesus is not fit for service, but these are symbols and signs pointing to something important which we need to look at.

[3 : 40] So our first importance, primary importance, is that Jesus' baptism tells us that he has been appointed to be the king that God has chosen, to lead this new kingdom that he's doing, but also that he will be a king that will serve his people even unto death.

Now you might be looking at Jesus' baptism. You think to yourself, now how do you get Jesus being declared a king from that? Doesn't look like, we don't make kings like that, do we?

No, when we make a king, we put a crown on the head. But this is an ancient text, and it's looking back even further to the Old Testament, and specifically to the Old Testament pattern of how they used to make kings.

And kings would be designated by a prophet, they would be anointed with oil, and through that they would receive the Holy Spirit to defeat their enemies and save God's people.

For example, we see this in a passage where Samuel anoints Saul to kingship. It should come up on the screen. 1 Samuel 10 verse 6. This is Samuel, the great prophet of that time, anointing Saul to be king.

[4 : 54] And it says this, The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them, and you will be changed into a different person. Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds you to do, for God is with you.

This is as Samuel has been pouring oil onto Saul's head, and he says the Spirit will come upon you powerfully. And Saul, the person who used to hide behind the donkeys, he had to go look for him amongst the animals.

You're going to become a powerful person. You're going to prophesy. You'll be changed. And when you've received the Spirit, go and do whatever you want to do, because God is now with you.

We see the same thing working out in Jesus' baptism. Just similar, but just not with oil. So you've got a prophet. You've got John the Baptist. In fact, the greatest prophet, Jesus says, of the whole biblical era.

And he takes water, and he either sinks Jesus into the water, which is likely, but at the same time, they probably would have poured water onto him as well. And we see the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus.

[6 : 05] And then we get these words, this is my Son, whom I love. With Him, I am well pleased. And that's an indication as well of several passages in the Old Testament where it talks of Jesus being God's King and God's Son.

Some of you will remember, we looked at Psalm 2 in our daily devotions, and you'll see that that talks about God putting a King on His throne and declaring this person to be His Son.

So there's this blending of kingship and sonship in the Bible. We saw it in Psalm 110 as well. The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.

And it goes on to talk about what He's going to do to His enemies. But along with those passages, we need to add another Old Testament passage that tells us that the defining characteristic of Jesus' kingship is to rescue those who are stuck and in need of His self.

And we saw that from our Isaiah 42 passage. So we're just going to spend quite a bit of time, a few minutes in the Old Testament, because that's where all these images come from that tell us what's happening in Matthew chapter 3.

[7 : 18] So Isaiah 42, it'll come up on the screen. Isaiah is talking about the servant, this coming servant that God is going to use to comfort His people.

And we've seen already from Isaiah chapter 40, just two chapters before 42, that that refers to John the Baptist, the one who's calling in the wilderness, make way, make ready the paths for the Lord, for His people to return to Him.

And then in Isaiah 42, God says, well, the way that my people are going to return to me, I'm going to send them a servant and He's going to do certain things. So Isaiah 42, here's my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one, in whom I delight.

And so that's an echo, in whom I'm well pleased, that Matthew chapter 3 at the end, verse 17, that voice from heaven, this is my Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased.

That's the same word in Isaiah 42. So it's tracking of places like Psalm 2, Psalm 110, and Psalm Isaiah 42. It's like a multifaceted, multilayered thing that's happening with Jesus' baptism.

[8 : 22] And then look at what the servant is going to do. He will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed, he will not break. And a smoldering wick, he will not snuff out.

It's going to look fairly ordinary. No one's really going to notice him. And he's going to go to people who are really struggling. And he's going to help them.

In verse 6 and 42, just the next few verses, it'll be on the screen as well. So I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness. Talking to his servant again, I will take hold of your hand.

I will keep you and I will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles. This king, the servant, is not just going to serve God's people.

Then the Israelites, he's going to be, he's going to serve the whole world. He's going to serve people that are not Israelites. He's going to serve people that are blind and captive and stuck in prison.

[9 : 24] He's going to open the eyes of the blind and he's going to free captives from prison and release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

You might have picked up another reference to Matthew 3 there of this one who's been called in righteousness. But Jesus in Matthew 3 says that he came to be baptized and it's necessary for him to be baptized.

John didn't want to baptize him. You see what John says there. I need to be baptized by you. He knew who Jesus was. Remember just in the previous section in Matthew. He says, I'm not unworthy to carry his sandals.

I baptize you with water. One is coming who's going to baptize you with spirit and fire. So he thought he needed to be baptized by Jesus but Jesus says, no, I do need to be baptized by you to fulfill all righteousness.

Now what does he mean by that? To fulfill all righteousness. Well, it's no surprise. This takes us to another Old Testament passage this time to Isaiah 53 another servant passage where God's servant will pour out his life to make payment for sin so that his people can be righteous.

[10 : 43] And so Isaiah 53 from verse 11 after he has suffered the servant of mine will see the light of life and be satisfied and by his knowledge my righteous servant will righteous many and he will bear their iniquities.

Now I've changed the translation there depending on your translation by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many but it's the same word justifying righteous is the same word. By his wisdom by what he knows and what he does the servant who is himself righteous is going to make other people righteous and how is he going to do that?

He's going to bear their sins and he's going to suffer and die but God is going to raise him back to life again. Now just to be clear Jesus' baptism doesn't make him clean from sin he's the spotless lamb of God but it does identify him with the people that need their sins to be cleaned and cleared and washed away.

His baptism puts him on our team as it were he's now on our side and he's going to fight with everything he's got even if it costs him his life to defeat our strongest and worst enemy.

See Jesus isn't a king who came to live in the lap of luxury and be served he came to serve to suffer and die to bear your sins to make you and us righteous with God right with God.

[12 : 26] There's a verse in 2 Corinthians 5 that says this 2 Corinthians 5 2 Corinthians 21 says God made him who had no sin to be sin for us that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Our friends what a wonderful description of Jesus as our good shepherd and how tender and patient and kind he is to those who have been bruised and beaten down by life.

And so what is your relationship with this king with Jesus? Have you let him deal with your enemies? By your enemies here I'm talking about the sin that wars against your own soul and your own mind.

The thing that trips you up all the time the thing that causes the most problems in your life. We like to think it's always something out there and sometimes it is. We've gone through Ecclesiastes and life is hard but it actually doesn't matter how hard life is we can have life as easy as we want and you know we're going to find something that's going to trip us up something that we won't like something we can complain about something to blame others on.

Have you come to this king and let him deal with your enemy? Or are you still fighting your own battles thinking you've got what it takes to deal with your sin on your own terms and you don't need his help and you can handle all that life throws at you on your own.

[14 : 01] But here's the thing that you might not have realized if you haven't come to Jesus for help. He didn't just get baptized to be your king he got baptized to destroy your most dangerous enemy the enemy of sin within you and it's so strong that that enemy that we've got is so strong it's too strong for us to handle on our own.

It takes a king level event a king the son of God to die shed his blood and rise again and then give you the gift of the Holy Spirit on top of that so that you can fight it.

And that's why the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in this passage is so important. The Spirit is the one that helps us stay holy. kind of empower he's the one who empowers us to fight back and overcome not just sin but all our enemies.

And you'll know from the baptismal or baptism formulas that we often use we talk about the enemies of the world the flesh and the devil. The world out there that often comes at us and causes us problems but it's our own flesh our own brokenness our experiences in life that makes us fight back and harshly and then the devil is constantly trying to trip us up.

Now those are three enemies that we just can't take on by ourselves and win. We need to learn the lesson from Jesus' baptism by receiving the Spirit and washing these things away.

[15 : 35] And so Jesus' baptism in one sense makes us clean and pleasing and attractive to God by washing away our sins that's part of what he came to do but it also makes us healthy and fit for his service by giving us his Holy Spirit.

And so we look at how Jesus' baptism sets us up for a life of effective kingdom or kingly service. Jesus' baptism sets us up for a life of effective kingdom or kingly service.

Now Jesus' baptism here acts as a kind of pattern of how God works in the life of believers by symbolizing the things we are promised in our baptism that helps us to be effective in our service for Jesus.

But interestingly it does so in the context of spiritual warfare. Baptism in a sense or in a very real sense prepares us for war. You'll notice or remember in our time in Matthew we've seen God's kingdom coming but before well as Jesus was born remember he's got he's got King Herod who's coming against him trying to kill him before he even gets his ministry started.

And then we've Jesus or John the Baptist is talking and then Jesus' own people the Jews the Pharisees and the Sadducees come along and they're like but who's this guy? Do we need John's baptism? And who's this person he's speaking about?

[17 : 06] We don't really need that. So there's opposition coming Jesus' way just because God has started his kingdom his new kingdom project. And we'll see in chapter 4 Jesus comes up against one of our greatest enemies the devil.

And so sometimes the thing is we can sometimes miss the powerful symbolism contained in baptism because we've been told our whole Christian lives how it doesn't do anything because it's an outward and physical sign whereas being a Christian is all about being spiritual and what counts is what I feel on the inside.

But when we read the Bible with sort of Bible eyes if I can put it like that way a more biblical framework we see that God has always used outward and physical things to communicate inward and spiritual realities.

Or maybe to put it a better way God works in the Bible to take ordinary everyday things and make them extraordinary by attaching his word his promise and his spirit to them.

The extraordinary thing they often do is to slay evil and rescue people. Just to make that point again the way that God works in the Bible is to take ordinary everyday things attach his word or his promise he says something about it he says what it will do then he also imparts his spirit to it and that ordinary everyday thing becomes extraordinary and has power and abilities that it doesn't otherwise have and most of the times it's to slay to take care of God's enemies and to rescue his people from those enemies.

[18 : 50] Do you remember in Exodus Moses takes a stick oh man I need a stick Moses takes a stick an ordinary piece of wood and then what does God tell him to do with that piece of wood throw it on the ground and you see the wizards of Egypt the most the highest if you want to put it that way set of magicians in the ancient world they had the most knowledge everyone knew that the Egyptians knew their stuff and here's Moses brings a stick throws it on the ground and because God's word is telling him what to do with that stick it turns into a snake and it takes out the wizard snakes showing them who's the boss yeah think of the waters of the Red Sea in Exodus again Israelites line up they're waiting at the sea enemies behind them sea in front of them and what's interesting is that

God's spirit in a sense is there to make those seas part when you read the text in Exodus it says the wind blew the whole night now that word for wind is the same word as spirit so many see that that's God breathing blowing obviously it came from him anyway and the waters open the Israelites go through and the enemies are crushed under it the water because of God's word and his promise and his spirit becomes a tool for salvation a means for saving God's people and a means of judging the enemies it kills the enemies but they pass through to life and in fact God has often used water to save his people and to deal with the enemies this is a pattern that occurred throughout the story of the Bible go all the way back to Genesis 1 there's the chaos waters with the flood waters covering the earth and the way that salvation happens there is that

God's spirit breathes there's a wind that blows and then remember what Noah does on day 40 or a few days after that he releases a dove and that's a thing that shows him that the waters have stopped everyone all God's enemies are now dead and his people are saved we've seen the example of the red sea and then there's the example of the Jordan in Joshua chapter 3 the Jordan is crossed and the Jordan crossing is likened to the red sea crossing and they cross over dry land the waters are all piled up and they go over and they take out the enemy the city of Jericho and so you've got water you've got God's spirit you've got this kind of undertone of warfare in all of those references God warring against evil overcoming it and saving his people but using this watery image the whole time to do that and so that's why when the

New Testament picks up this language of water being used by God to change his people it does so in the context of warfare being baptized changes us into effective sin killing machines because God wants us to aim the power that he gives us through baptism not at people but at the sin in our own lives and we see this in a very powerful image in Romans chapter 6 and I'll have that up on the screen just notice this is Paul talking to the Roman church and he's reminding them of what their baptism means he says what shall we say then shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase well by no means we are those who have died to sin how can we live in it any longer well don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death we were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as

Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the father we too may live a new life see what it's doing there Paul is saying that you can combat sin now how can you do that what must you think about when you're trying to combat sin here's something to hang your thoughts on your thought that you were baptized when you got baptized it wasn't just water being poured over you or being dunked however you were baptized something else was going on because God makes very strong promises in our baptism that he's going to do things in it it's an effectual thing that happens an effective thing it actually does the things that it promises does is it takes our sinful nature sticks it underneath the water deep down lets it drown there and then the thing that comes out your old nature is dead in the water but you you've been raised to life that's the imagery behind what

[24 : 25] Paul is talking about there water becomes for us in our baptism a means of God killing our sinful nature and a means of raising us up with Christ to newness of life and yet from the outside it looks like all that happens is you get wet maybe that's why so many people don't see baptism as important but not just baptism any of what we would call the ordinary means of grace any ordinary thing that God gives us that helps us in our Christian life and it's not just baptism we took another one today the sacrament of the Lord's supper week in week out there's another ordinary means of grace either Nick or myself or someone else trained in the scriptures telling you what's going on here very normal just a talk for 10 or 20 minutes but a talk for a few minutes words coming out of my mouth and yet somehow God takes the words that are on this page by his

Holy Spirit and works an effect in your life as you trust in the word that we try and explain the more we disdain the ordinary things that God gives us through which he works the less effective we'll be in our Christian life let me put it a bit stronger you will severely compromise your ability to be effective for kingdom work the more you disdain and take little notice of the ordinary things that God gives us to strengthen us for Christian service think of prayer meetings think of just coming to church regularly think of being involved in the church activities oh I'm too busy oh I can't and then our life gets more and more busy more and more difficult but so often if we just meet together as Christians if we just spend time in prayer the things that are really bugging us the things we find hard to to bat off in our life well they take a hammering when

I take the ordinary means of grace I just open my Bible I spend time on my knees I spend time going to church I go to the events that I don't really think is going to be important but we do that and God because he said he makes certain promises that when my people are gathered when you meet in my name I'm going to be there and I'm going to do stuff for you when you meet together it looks very ordinary you're just sitting here and yet the God of universe says yeah you do that and I'll change you you spend time in prayer and I'll change you and what's more I'll take those words and change history but very often we're too focused on what God does for me not what he's going to do through me for other people we want his promises for me I'm comfortable I'm happy I'm healed I'm blessed I receive for me maybe that's why our country is falling apart we've looked inward and made

God's blessings all about me and my spiritual inward intimacy with him now that's part of being a Christian but it's so that we can be outward looking and take God's kingdom plans forward this whole section in Matthew is about how God is coming to start a new thing and he started it 2000 years ago he didn't start it then and stop it and he's only going to start it again at the end of time he started it 2000 years ago and we are part of that process today and we need the things that God has given us to use to push back evil to push back sin in our life and in the world around us God is building his kingdom he's changing the world and he uses us to do that and he gives us ordinary things to make us more able to do that better so the ordinary means of grace ordinary everyday stuff that God gives us but by his word and promise and his spirit is transformed into life giving and life changing things regular church attendance church events

Lord's Supper and then using baptism not just as a once off but as a tool as to how to combat evil and to be more alive to God how do you do that how do you use your baptism as an ongoing tool to be alive to God well that Romans passage helps you because being involved in God's kingdom we're involved in a life and death struggle and we need all the help we can get sin is too strong the world is too big the devil too scary and too clever for me to take him out on my own and so I need constant reminders of God's favour towards God's power in my life to combat these things he actually does give us the power he doesn't leave us powerless that's why you want the things that God promises us in our baptism we need them if we're going to survive the war that baptism plunges us into so remember ascension day we were caught up in a spiritual war and we were in the trenches you as a

[30 : 04] Christian we plunged into this warfare that's me in a trench looking out over the parapet taking pot shots at the enemy when you're in a war and your enemy is there and your enemy is sin your main enemy your first enemy is your own sin and it's coming at you and that sin wants to kill you the thing to do is to shoot the thing kill it before it kills you that is not the time to go well what I'm really concerned about is having deep personal intimate relationship with God so don't bother me about the stuff that God church all that no no I just want to feel close to God imagine you're an Israelite standing at the dead sea at the red sea and God is like well the Egyptians are coming listen do what I say and you'll get through to the other side no no I don't need the water I don't need the staff I don't need the stuff you've given me I just need to have deep personal intimate relationship with you and that's all I need well that's fine but you're going to get overrun by

Egyptians you're going to end up in the water on an Egyptian spike and the baptisms that we experience every time you experience a baptism that's an opportunity to remind yourself of what you've received in baptism not just once not just only at baptism but ongoing a pouring out of the spirit the forgiveness of sins power to live a new life clean washing your sins away and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit now to be fair sprinkling and I don't really the mode of baptism is honestly not important for those who it's just not important but okay every now and then you think to yourself okay but does that capture what baptism does I don't know if you've ever seen an orthodox baptism the orthodox church they take babies and they've got a basin there and they do in and out in and out both sides shake it it's a violent thing that they do because their baby must go in the water and get clean top and bottom submersion helps us as well because now your sin your deadly enemy is coming at you now if you're fighting and there's water and this person wants to kill you and he's trying to drown you so now you must fight and take your sin by the throat you stick it under the water often in the past they baptize him you know they baptize him three times in the name of the father you come out of the son and you come out and the

Holy Ghost and you're holding him down you're holding him down so that the sin that's there gets drowned and the only thing that comes out is a person that's filled with the Holy Spirit and the life of Christ and you need that level of fighting to take out sin you can't do it by yourself that's why you get the Holy Spirit or we need to use the Holy Spirit and why when we witness baptism it's so cool because oh there's another person in the fight okay it's a little baby it's alright he's gonna grow up and I'm gonna make sure he grows up trained so he can fight well so that when I need help I've got someone I can call on so that when I'm fighting sin and this sin is coming at me and I'm holding it down and fighting because this thing is gonna kill me then I can nick this sin nick I can hold he can come I can call Sandy I can call Penny I can call any of you come and help me with this thing and then when you're struggling you can call me and help you with that sin you form an army when you join the kingdom of

God and the army is there to help each other fight off sin fight off the devil fight off the world and change the world ordinary everyday things prayer reading the Bible and when I call them we read the Bible and he points out to me no but this thing you did you could have done that better you shouldn't have done it that way this is what the Bible says let's pray together oh and I'm my stress levels drop I can handle what's coming and we can do this thing together so God baptism ties us together and then God uses us to minister life saving and life giving CPR to each other we are the ordinary means of grace because we've been made extraordinary to help each other win the battle against sin and all other things that rob us of joy and peace and life in Christ so friends use your baptism as a reminder that the spirit stays with you to give you the tools to get the job done to be effective for ministry kingly ministry and he gives you all the ammunition you need in this fight so go and fight in the spirit and the power of the

Lord under the banner of Christ your king may God help us as we do that let's pray Lord Jesus at your baptism you were crowned as king and son of God and received the power of the spirit to overthrow evil and by your blood you clean us from all sin and by your spirit you empower us to continue that fight Lord help us to remember that we are all in this fight together and to help each other as best we can making all the use of the things that you give us to do that in Jesus name Amen Amen

[37 : 09] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.