



## God is at Work in Baptism

God is still at \_\_\_\_\_ in this uncertain world, and He's busier than you might think. Today, we're going to explore how God works in our \_\_\_\_\_. God isn't dead; He's not even \_\_\_\_\_. He's not like a man who must \_\_\_\_\_. God is at work all day, every day. The Lord Jesus said, "Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is \_\_\_\_\_ before God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more \_\_\_\_\_ than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6-7). God cares for us enough to hear our \_\_\_\_\_, and God cared enough to enrich our lives with His inspired word, the Bible.

James 1:17-18 says, "Every good thing given and every perfect \_\_\_\_\_ is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting \_\_\_\_\_. In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of \_\_\_\_\_, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures." God gives us the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. God supplies our needs, because He \_\_\_\_\_ for us.

We can thank God every day for the \_\_\_\_\_ that He gives us, giving us new life that will last eternally. First Peter 1:3-4 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great \_\_\_\_\_ has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in \_\_\_\_\_ for you." God prepares us in this life for the life to \_\_\_\_\_. God causes our \_\_\_\_\_ birth in Christ, so that we can be His children forever.

**Our reading today comes from Paul's Epistle to the Colossians 2:12-13.** This passage discusses God's working in the death and resurrection of Jesus, and God's working in our salvation, and shows how that they are put together.

Aren't you thankful that Jesus was willing to die, that how God raised Him from the dead, and how He forgives our sins.

I sometimes hear people say baptism is a \_\_\_\_\_. Some think of a ritual as a customary practice or religious formality that people go through in a prescribed way. They believe that rituals are works of \_\_\_\_\_ and mistakenly think of baptism as an act of "righteousness based on works." They think baptism has \_\_\_\_\_ to do with salvation. No one believed this until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Prior to that time people understood that God grants forgiveness at the \_\_\_\_\_ of baptism. People often think of baptism as something \_\_\_\_\_ do. In reality, baptism is something that \_\_\_\_\_ does!

Colossians 2:12-13 explains, "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through \_\_\_\_\_ in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were \_\_\_\_\_ in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you \_\_\_\_\_ together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions." Who \_\_\_\_\_ us with Christ in baptism? Who \_\_\_\_\_ us up with Christ in baptism? Who \_\_\_\_\_ us? In baptism we're responding in faith to the working of God!

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**Longer quotations may not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.**

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Baptism is indeed a \_\_\_\_\_ of faith in God's power, God's working. It's a response to God's \_\_\_\_\_, to Jesus's sacrifice, and to God's \_\_\_\_\_ in raising Christ from the dead. In baptism we \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves to God's work and to His will. If God could raise Jesus up from the dead, He can \_\_\_\_\_ our sins. We're showing our faith that He can work on us!

God causes us to be saved and to be \_\_\_\_\_ again. The apostle John wrote, "He came (Jesus) to His own, and those who were His own did not \_\_\_\_\_ Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the \_\_\_\_\_ to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:11-13). God gives a new birth to those who receive Him. To receive Him is to \_\_\_\_\_ what He says about being the Son of God is true. To believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God means you're willing to \_\_\_\_\_ Him.

When Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus and confessed that He was a teacher from God, Jesus told him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that unless one is born again he cannot see the \_\_\_\_\_ of God." Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is \_\_\_\_\_? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?' Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot \_\_\_\_\_ into the kingdom of God'" (John 3:3-5). Without a birth of water and the Spirit, we cannot enter the kingdom and be saved. All of the ancient writers said that this passage was speaking of \_\_\_\_\_, which unites water and the Spirit in the new birth.

From John 1, we learned that we have to have \_\_\_\_\_ to be a child of God; and from John 3 we learned that we must be \_\_\_\_\_ of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God. How does the Spirit work in our new birth? First Peter 1:22-23 says, "Since you have in \_\_\_\_\_ to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring \_\_\_\_\_ of God." The Holy Spirit inspired the word and works through the word of God; the \_\_\_\_\_ is given to us to save us and to cause us to be born again. James 1:18 explains, "In the exercise of His will God brought us forth by the word of \_\_\_\_\_, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures."

The Spirit works through the word to \_\_\_\_\_ our new birth. How then does the water \_\_\_\_\_ with the word? Ephesians 5:25-27 reveals how Jesus sacrificed Himself to cleanse those who enter the kingdom, which is the \_\_\_\_\_. He said, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her (that is, make her holy), having cleansed her by the washing of \_\_\_\_\_ with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." We're cleansed and sanctified by the washing of water \_\_\_\_\_ the word. The love and sacrifice of Christ works \_\_\_\_\_ the washing of water with the word. The washing of water is a reference to \_\_\_\_\_, and the word to the gospel which \_\_\_\_\_S us to be baptized.

In Titus 3:3-7 Paul explains, "For we also once were \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the \_\_\_\_\_ of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of \_\_\_\_\_ which we've done in righteousness, no, but according to His \_\_\_\_\_, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His \_\_\_\_\_ we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

When we're born again the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ us to His church. In Acts 2:41, the Bible says about those who responded on the day of Pentecost, "So those who received his \_\_\_\_\_ were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls." The baptized were \_\_\_\_\_ to the apostles. Acts 2:47 says, "And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." This number is a clear reference to the number that's in the \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord adds you to His church when you are baptized. That's when you are forgiven and when God \_\_\_\_\_ you. Being born of water and the Spirit allows us to \_\_\_\_\_ the kingdom of God (John 3:5). We're not born of \_\_\_\_\_ will; we are born again by the will of \_\_\_\_\_, when we receive the Lord and are obedient to His will. When we are baptized, the Lord adds us to His church. Sometimes people talk about "joining" the church, but people by their own \_\_\_\_\_ do not join the church. If you're in the Lord's church at all, it's because the \_\_\_\_\_ Himself added you.

When we are baptized, God \_\_\_\_\_ us with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. This is not merely a \_\_\_\_\_; it is the dynamic working of God! Baptism is \_\_\_\_\_ work on us. Romans 6:3-5 says, "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His \_\_\_\_\_? Therefore we've been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in \_\_\_\_\_ of life. For if we've become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection." We are baptized into Christ, into His death, buried with Him, and raised with Him to walk in newness of life.

The word "united" in verse 4 is translated in the King James Version as "\_\_\_\_\_ together." It says, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Things that are planted together \_\_\_\_\_ together, produce fruit together, and live together. When we're baptized into Christ, God \_\_\_\_\_ us together with Christ in His death and in His resurrection. We are planted in Him, and He is planted in us. Through baptism God unites us with Christ; and we are branches on His \_\_\_\_\_. Baptism is no empty ritual, it's when God plants us together and unites us with Christ.

Galatians 3:26-27 says, "For you are all \_\_\_\_\_ of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have \_\_\_\_\_ yourselves with Christ." Until you're baptized, you're \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ; and once you're baptized into Christ, you're clothed with Christ. There's a great difference, an \_\_\_\_\_ difference, between being in Christ and out of Christ. God unites us with Christ and makes us His \_\_\_\_\_ when by faith we are baptized and clothed with Christ.

Through baptism God causes our old self of sin to be \_\_\_\_\_ from that sin by doing away with our sins. Romans 6:6-7, speaks about what happens in baptism, "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our \_\_\_\_\_ self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be \_\_\_\_\_ to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin." By being united with Christ in His death, you come into contact with His \_\_\_\_\_ which cleanses us from sin. In baptism our body of sin is done away with, and God does that, and we are free! We're no longer slaves to sin!

Later in chapter six, verses 17 and 18, Paul says, "But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become \_\_\_\_\_ from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness." By God's grace we can \_\_\_\_\_. We can \_\_\_\_\_ a life that's enslaved to sin and become slaves of righteousness. We change when we're obedient from the \_\_\_\_\_.

God frees us from sin and makes us His \_\_\_\_\_. You can't save yourself by yourself; God must save you! He saves us when we in faith and love submit to the standard of \_\_\_\_\_ that He gives us. The idea that we're set free by faith \_\_\_\_\_ without any obedience simply ignores this passage.

There can be no doubt that God causes a change in our lives at the time we \_\_\_\_\_ Him in baptism. That's when we're \_\_\_\_\_ with and clothed with Christ. In 2 Corinthians 5:17 it says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a \_\_\_\_\_ creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." When God raised you and me up with Christ to walk in newness of life in baptism, everything \_\_\_\_\_. The old way of life is gone and now we are \_\_\_\_\_ to serve the Lord, to live in righteousness, and to enjoy all the blessings of Christianity. Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with \_\_\_\_\_ spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." It matters whether you are in Christ or not! In Christ we have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. We have an abundant life.

Ananias told Saul of Tarsus, "And now why do you \_\_\_\_\_? Rise and be baptized and \_\_\_\_\_ away your sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16). When we're baptized, God washes away our sins. Paul had been \_\_\_\_\_ for three days according to Acts 9:11, but he still \_\_\_\_\_ to be washed from sin (Acts 22:16). Baptism is \_\_\_\_\_ we call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. First Peter 3:21 explains, "Corresponding to that, baptism now \_\_\_\_\_ you—not the removal of the dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." When we are baptized, God saves us and \_\_\_\_\_ our appeal for a good conscience. He cleanses our souls from sin and gives us that clean conscience. What a great God we have!

When God commands us to \_\_\_\_\_, we do the believing. When God commands all people to \_\_\_\_\_, we do the repenting. When God commands us to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ with our mouths, we do the confessing. When God commands us to \_\_\_\_\_ Him with all our hearts, we do the loving. When Christ commands us to \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves and take up our crosses daily to follow Him, we must act. But when God tells us to "be baptized," that's something that we \_\_\_\_\_ to by letting someone else act upon us. Physically someone else baptizes us, and we submit to it. Spiritually God \_\_\_\_\_ upon us; and we submit to it. God works on us in baptism.

God forgives us. God saves us. God sets us free from sin. God unites us with Christ. God causes us to be baptized into His death. God buries us with Christ. God raises us up with Christ to walk in newness of life. God causes us to be born again by His will. God makes us His children. God adds us to His kingdom, the church. All this takes place when we're baptized into Christ.

When someone says, "Well Phil, we don't have to be baptized to be saved," they reveal they have embraced a 16<sup>th</sup> century doctrine of faith only and missed the point. The New Testament never conceives of a child of God who has not been baptized into Christ. Why not confess your faith in Christ, repent of your sins, and from the heart obey the Lord by putting Him on in baptism. When you do, God will wash away your sins, and make you His child, and add you to His church, and give you newness of life. Won't you consider being baptized today?