



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 16th 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!

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

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PO Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 1-800-321-8633

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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 _____ 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 16th 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?