

“He Will Baptise You with the Holy Spirit”

Mark 1:8

Halifax: 18 September 2022

Introduction:

Today, I am breaking from our regular sermon series in Hebrews because we are welcoming nine people into church membership.

- We are so thankful for these members.
 - Four of them are adults who are professing their faith, three of these are being baptised.
 - Four of them are children of these new believers who are being baptised—much as we see in the New Testament where households were baptised together.
 - And one of them is a believer who is reaffirming her faith.

For this special service, I have selected Mark 1:8 as my text:

- In this text, John the Baptist is quoted as saying, **“I indeed baptise you with water, but He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.”**
 - What do these words mean and what do they teach us?
 - That is what I want to focus on today.

Before I begin to explain them, let’s first read the passage in which they are found.

- I will begin in Mark 1:1. Here is God’s word.

Mark 1:1-8: The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ² As it is written in the Prophets: “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You. ³ The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.’ ” ⁴ John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. ⁵ Then all the land of Judea, and those from

Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And he preached, saying, “There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. ⁸ I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

May God use His word in our lives to help us to know, love, and serve Him.

Notice how Mark picks up on the monumental nature of what was happening when John came baptising people in the wilderness!

- It is the beginning of a new era that would change the world.
- He calls it **“the beginning of the Gospel”**—the good news that Messiah who had been promised for 4000 years had come to bring salvation to the world!
 - Mark picks up on the words of the prophet Isaiah who gave an oracle from God seven centuries before that the time of Jesus’s coming would be announced by a voice in the wilderness declaring, “Prepare the way of Lord!”
 - John was His herald, announcing that He was now to appear.

And then, you see, in verse 7 & 8, we are told what John said about Him:

- Mark 1:7-8: **And he preached, saying, “There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. 8 I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”**

In considering these words, I want you to see first of all that:

I. John sets up a huge contrast between him and Christ regarding baptism.

A. He says, “I indeed baptised you with water.”

1. Baptism was a thing well known to the Jews.

- They knew that baptism was a purification rite that God appointed by washing with water.
- They had, as it says in Hebrews 9:10, various washings (the Greek word is *baptismos*).
 - For example, we are told in Numbers 19:13 what was required for their purification when they touched a dead body: **“Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean, because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; his uncleanness is still on him.”**
- That is just one example. There are many other examples.
 - They had to be baptised after contact with many things associated with sin and the curse (after having leprosy [Lev 14], after an emission of semen because now they brought forth children that were unclean [Lev 15:16], after menstruation), and the priests had to be baptised before entering their ministry (Ex 30), and the congregation had to be baptised with blood before presenting themselves before the Lord (Ex 24).
- Water was the main element that God chose for baptisms because it is what we use for washing things. Sometimes it was mixed with soap and blood from sacrifices.
 - In Ezekiel 36:25, the Lord associates water with cleansing when He says, **“Then, I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean.”**
 - It is not, of course, the water itself that will do the cleansing. It is the symbol associated with the cleansing as Ezekiel goes on to explain—more on that later.

2. John tells us that he was indeed baptising those who came to him with water.

- He was, in other words, putting upon the people the symbol of cleansing or purification from sin, the symbol that God appointed.
 - John’s message was that the people were all sinful and that they needed to repent and be cleansed (washed) from their sin.
 - That’s what it means when it says that he preached repentance.
 - The people who saw and confessed that they needed to be cleansed from their sins to enter God’s kingdom were baptised.
- That is what baptism continues to signify—the washing away of sin.

- When people are baptised, it is still a sign of the washing away of their sins. They acknowledge that it is God who washes them.
 - We see this, for example, years later after Jesus had ascended and when Paul was converted. He was told (Acts 22:16): **“Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”**
3. John tells us that this baptising with water is what he did. That is all that he could do.
- That is what Paul received from Ananias, the minister who baptised him.
 - That is what I will be doing, Lord willing, later on in our service. I will be baptising with water, this ritual that God has appointed, to represent cleansing from sin.
 - Jesus told us to go into the world and make disciples of all the nations—baptising them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that He had commanded.
 - John baptised with water and so does every minister of the gospel since because that is what God told us to do when people come to Christ.
 - That is all that ministers can do. That is all that we are expected to do.

TRANS> But now let’s see what is set in contrast with that:

- B. In contrast with baptism with water, John announces that the LORD will baptise with the Holy Spirit.
1. This speaks of an actual cleansing from sin and defilement.
 - It is the actual cleansing that is symbolised by the water ritual of baptism.
 - It is a washing that is accomplished by Jesus the LORD, the Son of God, washing us with the Holy Spirit.
 2. Only He can do this.
 - He is the LORD, Yahweh, whose way John has prepared.
 - He is none other than the Son of God.
 - John describes Him as the one whose sandal he is not worthy to loosen—a task given to the lowest of slaves.
 - The Son of God has come to the actual saving that God promised.
 - People in the Old Testament were saved by trusting in what God would do to save them in the future, but now Jesus has come to do it.
 - It is the beginning of the gospel that God has come to save sinners.
 3. By coming to John’s baptism, the people confessed that they were sinners who were turning from their sin (repenting) and looking to the LORD to save them.
 - That is still what people are to do when they come to Christ.
 - They are sinners. They cannot cleanse themselves. They are trusting in Jesus to wash away their sins.

II. What does the LORD Jesus do when He baptises us with the Holy Spirit?

- **In short, He makes us alive through union with Him in His kingdom.**
 - He uses the Holy Spirit to unite us to Him and His saving work.

- A. This is a most marvellous thing because we are so very dead until He does.
1. When Paul speaks to the Ephesians about this, he says (Eph 2:1), “You He made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins.”
 - This speaks of being spiritually dead—helpless—lifeless—unresponsive to God as God.
 - You see, as sinners (and since Adam, we are all born in sin), we are against God. We don’t engage with Him as our God. We don’t obey His commandments, we don’t trust Him or serve Him or worship Him.
 - It should be obvious that if we are against Him, we are not fit to live with Him in heaven. How could we who are against God live with Him in paradise?
 - Sin is the reason that Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden and brought into a world of sorrow and death.
 - When they rebelled, we all became enemies of God by nature. Once they sinned, they could only bring forth sinful children.
 2. If we are against God, that means that we must be punished.
 - Ephesians 2:3 says that we were by nature children of wrath before the LORD made us alive.
 - Sin is an affront to God and it cannot and will not go unpunished.
 - It presents God as if He is not God at all, as if He is not worthy to be obeyed as God, served as God, loved as God, worshipped as God.
 - It calls for severe condemnation—
 - Even though we want to deny it and say it is but a little thing, God has sentenced us all to eternal punishment for it.
 - He is just and He cannot leave such a breach of justice on record because He is a God of truth.
 - When He judges the world at the last day, He will completely set the record straight, and that means that unredeemed sinners will go to hell forever.
 3. To make matters worse, we are hardened in our sinful condition.
 - We are dead in our sin. Unless and until God makes us alive, we will never come to Jesus for salvation, even when He is offered to us.
 - If we are believers, it is He who has made us who were dead alive!
- B. The Bible uses lots of different ways to speak about the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
1. Jesus refers to it in John 3 as being born of the Spirit or being born from above.
 - He tells a Jewish leader named Nicodemus that unless a person is born again, that person will never see the kingdom of God.
 - As long as we remain dead in our sins, we cannot live with Christ in God’s kingdom where we can serve God and inherit eternal life (go to heaven).
 - As long as we are dead in our sin, we will never come to Jesus for forgiveness because we won’t even want to be forgiven.
 2. Paul speaks of this work of the Spirit making us alive in Titus 3 where he says:

- **Titus 3:3-7: For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.** [that's the way we are until we are washed by the LORD. Paul goes on:]
 - **4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,** ⁵ **not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,** ⁶ **whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,** [You see that we did not wash ourselves somehow—Jesus poured out His Spirit upon us to wash us with the washing of regeneration (life from the dead) and renewing of the Holy Spirit. As our Saviour, He poured the Spirit out on us—or baptised us with the Holy Spirit.]
 - When the Spirit changes us, we then see that we are sinners who need to be saved, and we see that Jesus went to the cross to bear the punishment of our sins and that God accepted His sacrifice. What's more, we want to be reconciled to God—and so we trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, ⁷ **that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**
3. In Galatians, the Spirit is said to unite us to Jesus when He baptises us (Gal 3:27).
- On our part, we repent of our sins (because the Spirit makes us alive) and we trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of sin.
 - When we are made alive, we see that our sins are worthy of everlasting punishment in a clearer way than we ever could see it before, and we see that Jesus came to bear that eternal punishment for us on the cross, and we believe God's promise that whoever believes in Him will be saved.
 - And we want to be saved—we are made willing in the day of His power. We want to be reconciled to God and to live for Him as our God.
 - Our baptism with the Spirit, or new birth, brings us justification because we trust in Jesus to makes us righteous before God by His life and by His suffering and death for our sin.
 - The Spirit is the one who establishes our union with Christ by working repentance and faith in us when we are baptised by Him.
4. In Romans, the baptism that the Spirit does is called being buried with Him in baptism and raised to life (Rm 6:3-10).
- It is such a radical change in us that it is referred to as a resurrection from the dead, a deliverance from slavery to sin to be the slaves of Jesus Christ.
 - The Spirit joins us to Jesus by repentance and faith so that we are pardoned and enabled to live for God.
5. In Colossians it is called being circumcised without hands (Col 2:11).
- It says: (Col 3:11-13: **In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,** ¹² **buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.**
 - Circumcision represented God giving His people a new heart to love Him.
6. Jeremiah speaks of it as God writing His law in our heart (Heb 10:15f).

- He is quoted in Hebrews 10:15-17: **But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,** ¹⁶ **“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,”** ¹⁷ **then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”**
 - Here is life with God, God’s law written in our hearts so that we want to serve Him who before did not want to serve Him.
7. This work of regeneration is described powerfully by Ezekiel where baptism (washing with water) is associated with the baptism of the Spirit.
- Ezekiel 36:25-26 says: **Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.**
 - And how does God get them off their idols? It is by the baptism of the Holy Spirit: ²⁶ **“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.”**
 - It is a heart that is not stone. It is a heart that responds to God. It is a heart that is no longer against God but for God. A heart that wants to please God and to live in His kingdom. A heart that turns to Him for salvation.
 - This is nothing less than a new birth that Nicodemus should have known about.
 - This is what Jesus gave to the Jews when He baptised them with the Holy Spirit and this is what He gives to the nations when He baptises them with the Holy Spirit.
 - He makes us alive by transforming us and uniting us to Him as the one who died and rose again that we might die to sin and rise to new life!
 - The action that brings this about is washing by the Holy Spirit.

III. Baptism testifies to us that salvation is God’s gracious work.

- **The LORD Himself washes us. We do not and cannot wash ourselves.**
- **How should this affect us?**

A. Seeing that salvation is God’s work ought to humble us.

1. Give up on trying to save yourself.
 - You can’t do it.
 - You can’t get your act together and become what you really ought to be.
 - It is futile to try to go on with God—that is what Satan wants you to do.
2. Some people get so far as to want to be reconciled to God, but then they continue to try to wash themselves. You can’t do that either.
 - Can a leopard change his spots?
 - Can you change your own heart of stone?
 - Can you shed tears or do works to atone for your sin?
3. You need to give up on yourself and turn to Him for salvation.

- False religion focuses on what you can do, on how good you are, on how capable you are, but true religion teaches us that salvation is of the LORD—through faith in Him.
- B. Seeing that salvation is God’s work ought to give us great confidence if we are looking to Him.
1. Is anything too hard for the LORD?
 - He is the eternal God who created all things and He is has the power to raise the dead—not only the physically dead, but the spiritually dead.
 - **John 5:21, 24-26: “For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will... v. 24-26: Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. ²⁵ Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself...”**
 2. It doesn’t matter how great your sin is.
 - Our Lord is able to save to the uttermost all who come to Him (Heb 7:25).
 - You ought to come to Him.
 3. You will say, but I have not been made alive. I have no interest in coming.
 - I tell you, that does not change the fact that it is reprehensible that you are against God (don’t try to justify yourself) and even more reprehensible that you should refuse to come to Him who is able to wash away your sins.
 - The offer is open to all who will come.
 - Jesus tells us in John 6:37 that “the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”
- C. Seeing that salvation is God’s work ought to make sense out of household baptisms.
1. We have the pattern established in the Bible of children receiving the sign of the covenant when their parents do—or if they are born later, then at their birth.
 - This began when Abraham was called to be circumcised and commanded to circumcise his son and his servants and their sons—and thereafter to circumcise all who were born in his household on the eighth day.
 - Circumcision, just like baptism, was a sign of the renewing of the heart by the Lord, for God promised that He would circumcise the hearts of the people to love the LORD their God (for example, in Deuteronomy 30:6).
 - In other words, the sign of regeneration was given to the sons before they were old enough to show that they had a heart of faith and repentance in a way that anyone could discern.
 - God was confirming His promise that He would be our God and the God of our offspring— He was giving them the sign of a heart renewed by Him.
 - Then we come to the New Testament and we have baptism as a sign of the new birth (the baptism of the Holy Spirit) to be used after Jesus comes and carries out the work of redemption that was only shadowed in the Old Covenant.
 - Now, the bloody sign of circumcision ends and the bloodless sign of washing with water begins.

- And what do we see in the apostles' times?
 - In every baptism where there is a household, the entire household is baptised.
 - And not only that, but when Peter calls for repentance and baptism at Pentecost, he mentions the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in connection with His call to be baptised, and then declares, **“for the promise is to you and to your children, and to those who are afar off (the Gentiles), even as many as the Lord our God will call.”**
 - He is continuing the promise that God would be God to us and to our children, and since He is the one who baptises with the Spirit,
 - we are not required to leave our children under the condemnation of sin until they are old enough to indicate that they have a new heart of faith and repentance. The Lord marks them out with their parents as His people who belong to Him—His saints.
 - This does not mean that they are all regenerate any more than it means that all the adults who profess and are baptised are truly regenerate.
 - Some of them later show that they are not, but we are commanded to bring our children up, not as outsiders, but as those who belong to the Lord. We are to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
 - And we are to warn them, just as we do adults, to take heed lest there be in any of them an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.
 - But rather than presuming that they are unregenerate and so enemies of God (for we are born in sin) we are to receive them as God's people and tell them what the Lord has done for us that they might profess the Lord when they are old enough to do so.
 - In 1 Cor 7:14, Paul answers the question of what is to be done with children who have one believing and one unbelieving parent.
 - He says that even if there is only one believing parent, the children are holy (they are saints—counted as God's people) whereas if they do not have a believing parent, they are unclean.
 - So even if there is only one believing parent, the child belongs to God.
2. If the baptism of the Spirit was a work that the sinner must perform, then it would make no sense to baptise our children until they can be told to do the work and indicate that they have done it—but if it is a work that God does, then it is quite reasonable to baptise them—especially since God clearly gave the sign of regeneration to children in the Old Testament.
- When a person is of maturity and ability to exhibit repentance and faith, we require it before they are baptised.
 - But when they are the child of a someone who makes a credible profession of faith, we are to baptise them and to regard them as one of His people, urging them to continue in the Lord just as we do with adults.
- D. Seeing that salvation is God's work ought to stir us to tell others of His grace.

1. We have a message of hope from our gracious God that we are to carry to the all the world.
 - That message is that He saves sinners.
 - He does the saving through Jesus Christ crucified.
 - Tell your friends, your family—direct them to this Saviour.
 2. He commands us to go into the all the world and to proclaim the good news that began when John declared that the one who baptises with the Spirit had come.
 - We have the full message now of His saving work on the cross and are to urge all men everywhere to repent and believe the gospel.
 - You cannot save yourself, but the Lord will save you if you come to Him.
 - Not only will you be forgiven, but you will be changed to love Him to serve Him.
 - He baptises with the Holy Spirit.
- E. Finally, seeing that salvation is God’s work ought to make us very thankful.
1. Isaiah tells us (Isa 12:1-3): **And in that day you will say: “O LORD, I will praise You; though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. ² Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; ‘For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.’ ” ³ Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”**
 2. If you are saved, you do not deserve it.
 - It is not on account of what you did—you did not wash your heart and wash away your guilt. The Lord did that.
 - You were dead in sin and did not even want to come to God, but He is the one who made you alive so that you trusted in the Lord Jesus and were forgiven.
 - Let us praise Him and give thanks to His name.