

Receiving the Promise of the Father - Household Baptism

by Michael Flowers

The sermon emphasizes the importance of household baptism as a sign of God's covenant faithfulness and a way to bring children into the one people of God.

Duration: 30:58

Scripture: Luke 24:49, John 14:16, Acts 1:1-5, Romans 14:17, Galatians 3:26

Topics: "Water Baptism"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by asking the congregation if they believe in God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son of God. He then goes on to talk about the promise of the Father, which is the Kingdom of God, defined as righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. The preacher connects this promise with baptism, stating that while John baptized with water, the disciples will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Jesus is preparing his disciples for his ascension and promises to send them the Holy Spirit as a comforter. The sermon concludes with the presentation of a candidate for holy baptism and the congregation renewing their baptismal covenant.

Transcript

Father, send your Holy Spirit to once again illumine our hearts so that we can hear the living word of God in the scriptures this morning. May the words of my mouth and the meditations and thoughts of my heart be acceptable in your sight. Oh, Lord, our rock and our redeemer.

Amen. Amen. You may be seated.

We're going to begin with the gospel reading and we're going to talk today about household baptism. Receiving the promise of the father, that would be a subtitle, receiving the promise of the father. We heard in Luke's gospel account this morning where Jesus appears to his disciples after the resurrection and he's explaining once again what is found throughout the Old Testament.

He said that it's written that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day. Verse forty nine. And see, I am sending upon you what my father promised.

So stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high. What is the promise of the father and the context here is actually Jesus unfolding the old covenant in light of his death and

resurrection. So we have to keep that in mind until Christ explained himself throughout the Old Testament.

No one really saw this. And so he had to explain it to his disciples. And also the gospel of Luke and the acts of the apostles, or we could actually call it the acts of the Holy Spirit, it wouldn't be wrong to call it that they were written together to provide continuity.

So Luke wrote both the gospel and acts and they were to provide continuity between the ministry of Jesus and his church, his body, his ongoing life in the power of the Holy Spirit. And so acts one carries through with this theme that we're left with in Luke twenty four. I'm sending upon you what my father promised.

He's saying in verse one of Acts chapter one in the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach from the beginning until the day that he was taken up to heaven after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit. I love that passage. Jesus gave instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

And after his suffering, he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs appearing to them during 40 days and speaking about the kingdom of God. I just wish they had made a podcast. That would have been awesome.

That would have been the most, you know, iTunes would have just exploded with downloads, too many. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to here it is again. Wait, wait there for the promise of the father.

This, he said, is what you have heard from me in talking about the promise of the father. Those 40 days, that podcast, it's been lost. It's been talking about the promise of the father, the kingdom of God, which is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit is one definition in Romans 14, 17.

Now he's tying it in with baptism for John, baptized with water. But you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. We recall that Jesus is preparing his disciples for his departure, his ascension.

Don't worry, I won't leave you as orphans. I'm going to send you the promise of the father. I'm going to send you the comforter, the Holy Spirit.

He will be with you and in you. And then we looked at Acts two today. We sort of piggybacked Acts, Acts one and Acts two together in the readings this morning where the Holy Spirit is poured out.

Actually, on the day of Pentecost, the promise of the father actually is in motion now. And then in verse thirty seven through thirty eight of Acts two, it says now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, brothers, what are we going to do about this? Yes, we believe we kill the Messiah. We're cut to the heart.

We're under conviction now under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. What are we going to do about it? It's basically the question. Peter said to them, repent, metanoia, change your mind, change your way of thinking and change your way of living right now and be baptized every one of you.

Don't forget that every one of you. Right. There's women and there's children here standing here on the day of Pentecost.

It's just not a bunch of guys. Right. Every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins may be forgiven and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, be baptized and you will receive the gift of the Holy

Spirit.

And then Jesus is tying in the gift of the Holy Spirit coming through baptism with the promise of the father saying, for the promise is for you. The promise is for you this morning, the promise of the father is for us, but it's not only for us, Jesus says, but the promise is for you and for your adult children. Doesn't say that, does it? This is for your children.

The promise is for you and for your children and not only for them, but all who are far away in the Gentile mission go into all the world and make the sign beyond the Jewish pedigree. Now the Holy Spirit is being poured out on all flesh, all nations, all of us. And we're, in a sense, this morning a witness to this truth.

We're here this morning enjoying the promise of the father is celebrating the promise of the father and ministry, the promise of the father, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him. That's who the promise is for. Where does the promise originate? It's the next question.

We don't have time to go through the book of Genesis, but, you know, it starts with Genesis 12, really, in the call of Abraham, a pagan, pagan guy out there, probably most likely an idolater, you know. I mean, you know, the Jewish nation has been formed through faith, not ethnicity. Right.

It comes through Abraham, the father of faith. He was living somewhere in modern day what we know to be Iraq. OK, and the Lord just knocks on his door one day and says, hey, you're the guy.

I'm too old and all this, all these excuses, you know, start happening. But you're the guy. No, you're the guy.

And then we follow Genesis 12, where God is making a covenant with Abraham and he's expanding on that covenant and expounding on the covenant is growing in its illumination to Abraham. In chapter 15, he reiterates the promises of this covenant. And then chapter 17, he starts talking about the C word circumcision as the sign of the covenant.

Genesis 17, nine says this, God said, Abraham, as for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your children, your offspring, your seed after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep between me and you and your children after you, your offspring, your seed. This is my covenant.

Here it is. Every male. Here's the sign of it.

Every male among you shall be circumcised, you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. Now we have to fast forward, OK? The sign of the covenant became the most controversial topic in the New Testament. Paul going out into the Gentiles, into those who were not of Jewish descent.

Preaching the gospel. And then we saw in Galatians this summer how Judaizers would come in and say, no, you need Jesus plus you need Jesus plus circumcision to make you full members of the people of God, of the one people of God. These were Christian Judaizers, though they were born again, baptized, circumcised Jewish believers who are saying that there's you must become Jewish.

And this was a big controversy right throughout Galatians and Romans and Colossians we heard this morning. And so how is the promise fulfilled? How is the promise of Abraham fulfilled? When I say

fulfillment, Christ didn't come to abolish the law, but he came to. Fulfill it, right, he came to fulfill it.

Christ is the tell us the end of the law, the fulfillment of the law, the fullness of the law. Well, Peter is telling us in Acts two that the promise is the Holy Spirit where we read in the Old Testament it was the land. It's being reinterpreted in the New Testament to be beyond the land, but the Holy Spirit, the promise is the Holy Spirit.

The promise is for you and your children and for all of those who are far off the Holy Spirit. And the sign of the covenant is now what? What's the sign of the covenant now? What are baptism, household baptism? I, you know, I was talking to some brothers this week and we were geeking out theologically over coffee and it was a great time. And, you know, I just I just thought, you know what, I don't believe in infant baptism.

I believe in household baptism. And I want to work with that idea. Because we don't baptize any infant, right, there has to be qualifications in the household.

Right, just like in Ephesians six, talking to fathers, Paul says, fathers, raise your children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, raise up your children. That's not happening. We don't need to be doing infant baptism.

And so household baptism is the household faith baptism, the sign of the covenant no longer being circumcised on the eighth day. You see, these were infants, male infants circumcised on the eighth day. Baptism replaces that.

OK, we're going to work with that a little bit. Paul picks up on this in Galatians 3, 13. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is a written curse.

It is everyone who hangs on a tree. Jesus took the curse in order that in Christ Jesus, here it is, in order that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promise of the spirit. You see, you see how Paul is tying in.

This is a good Jewish Pharisee teaching us here. He's just had an encounter with the risen Christ, and he's reinterpreting the Old Testament now in light of Jesus, just the way Jesus was doing with the apostles in Luke 24, because that's not apparent when you read Genesis, you see, it seems like it's all about the land. And yet Paul himself, Peter himself, the apostles are reinterpreting the land as the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

In order that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles so that we might receive the promise, we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith. Talking about households of faith today, verse 26 in Galatians 3, for in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God, sons of God is the literal word there, but children is a better translation. For in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God through faith.

As many of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ, there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, not male or female, male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise. And so circumcision definitely is being replaced by water baptism.

Colossians 2, we heard this today, there was a problem in Colossi, the church in Colossi with this controversy over Judaizers coming in, just like in the churches of Galatia, who were saying and demanding that, yes, Jesus, but Jesus plus circumcision. OK, and Paul is responding to that with this phrase in him. Also, you were circumcised, New RSV says, with a spiritual circumcision.

The literal word is what we heard this morning by a circumcision not made with human hands. Right. So it is in a sense of spiritual circumcision that he's talking about.

And this is this is not just the New Testament concept. This is an Old Testament, Deuteronomy 10, circumcise your hearts and not just your foreskin. This is what's taking place.

Paul is saying now in baptism, you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with human hands, with a spiritual circumcision by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ. Christ himself is doing the circumcision now in baptism. He's the rabbi who shows up with the scaffold in the heart and he's cutting away that which none of us could ever get to.

And he's bringing renewal and regeneration and redemption and adoption and all of the benefits of Jesus in the spirit. When you were buried with him in baptism. Right, when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead.

So a moving fast. So why baptize the children of believers? Why do we do that? In the Old Testament, God made promises to believers, the Jewish nation and their children. OK, got to get that and gave a sign of those promises that was to be given to believers and their children, which was circumcision.

In the New Testament, he reiterated those same promises. OK, we have the blessing of Abraham. We're sons and daughters of Abraham.

And so we're in we've been grafted in to that. Now we're a royal priesthood, a holy nation of people belonging to God, the one people of God, Jew and Gentile. OK, that's what that's saying.

In the New Testament, he reiterated those same promises to believers and their children. Here's the key part to believers and their children. Just like in the Old Testament, children were a part of the nation through circumcision.

Now children are a part of the church through the circumcision made without hands. Baptism. Believers and their children are brought into the one people of God.

You see the same parallels here. In the New Testament, he reiterated those same promises to believers and their children. Therefore, the sign of those promises should be given to believers and their children.

And this constitutes who is the church, brothers and sisters, is it just believers and not your children? Or is it believers and your children being raised in the household of God? Now, it was only until after the 1500 years that this ever became a question. Household baptism took place throughout the Book of Acts and for 1500 years before somebody woke up and started contesting. And the church is not made up of believers and their children.

The church is made up of believers. And when their children get intellectual enough to decide, they can become a part of the church. So we're saved by intellect in that model.

That is so anti what the church for 1500 years practiced and taught even before Christ. You have to go back to the nation of Israel. How did you become a part of the one people of God through circumcision? Male and female receive that sign.

That's that's the upgrade that we get in Jesus Christ. In closing, for some, water baptism is a sign of one's commitment to Jesus. But we believe, at least I believe, that water baptism is a sign of God's covenant faithfulness.

It's not a sign of my faithfulness. It's a sign of his faithfulness. And that's two different ecclesiologies, you guys.

That's two different ways of looking at the church. There's only a few branches of the precious church out there that contend with this, and we love them. My first pastor was a Baptist pastor, and it took me so long to get what I'm sharing with you today.

It took me so long to get it because I couldn't couldn't receive it. I couldn't get beyond that. I must make my decision.

I make a lot of bad decisions. I'm glad I'm glad he decided for me faith is important for everybody. And so as you know, my son and my daughter, they were raised in the faith and they weren't baptized as infants because I was an Anglican then.

But they never really had that come to Jesus, I was that I was in darkness and I was this great sinner deal because they were raised in a household of faith. Right. And so my daughter says, I don't remember when I was converted.

I've always been, in a sense. And in a sense, that's true, she was praying as soon as she could talk, you know, she's got journals that high, just walking with God and my son. Yeah, the same thing.

While some of us, you know, we raise our kids and we do everything right and they do everything wrong, you know, I mean, it's just like it's really, really there's no formula here that I'm putting out here. Right. It's the grace of God that I can say what I just said.

I don't take it for granted, but it's that overemphasis on this revivalistic style of Christianity that can push us into devaluing what the church is, you know, for fifteen hundred years has believed and taught. Right. And I had to work through this myself.

I struggled and struggled and struggled with it. And so today we're getting ready to baptize a precious daughter in a household of faith. Yeah.

Jason and Annalise and little Jubilee. Yeah. Born in the year of Jubilee, born in a jubilee year, what Pope Francis deems the year of mercy.

This is a day that we've anticipated. Amen. And so let's turn to page five as the family and the sponsors are coming forward.

The candidate for holy baptism will now be presented. Will you be responsible for seeing that Jubilee is brought up in the Christian faith and life? Will you, by your prayers and witness, help this child to grow into the full stature of Jesus Christ? Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God? Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures

of God? Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God? Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your savior? Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love? Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord? I'm going to ask the congregation now, will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support Jubilee in her life in Christ? Let us join this family who are committing themselves to Christ and renew our baptism covenant. Let's all stand.

Do you believe in God, the father? Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the son of God, the son of the Holy Spirit? He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day, he rose again.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. You believe in God, the Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Will you continue in the apostles teaching and fellowship in the breaking of bread and in the prayers? Will you persevere in resisting evil and whenever you fall in sin, repent and return to the Lord? Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God and Christ? Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself? Will you strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being? May almighty God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit and bestow upon us the forgiveness of sins, keep us in eternal life by his grace in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Have Sherry come and lead us in the prayers this morning. Lord, hear our prayers. Grant, oh Lord, that all who are baptized into the death of Jesus Christ, your son, may live in the power of his resurrection and look for him to come again in glory, who lives and reigns now and forever.

Amen. The Lord be with you. Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

We thank you, almighty God, for the gift of water over it. The Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation through it. You led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise in it.

Your son, Jesus, received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us through his death and resurrection from the bondage of sin into everlasting life. We thank you, Father, for this water, for the water of baptism. It is we who are buried with Christ in his death.

By it, we share in his resurrection. Through it, we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in joyful obedience to your son, we bring into his fellowship those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Now, sanctify this water, we pray you, by the power of your Holy Spirit, that those who here are cleansed from sin and born again may continue to live forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Savior, to him, to you and to the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory now and forever. Jubilee. Hi, baby.

Hi, sweetie. Hi, sweetheart. I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Father, Les and I will anoint Jubilee this morning with oil. It's called chrismation and this is we call it holy chrism. It was blessed by our bishop.

And this is how we this is one of the signs and symbols of our unity as a diocese with our bishop. He is here in spirit because he's blessed this oil for us. Yeah, in the top of your head to the sole of your feet, Jubilee, you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ's own forever.

Come, Holy Spirit, upon Jubilee and empower her as your servant in your holy church and as a witness of Christ's presence in the world, train her in righteousness and mercy, pour out all your gifts of grace upon her. I mean, this is a candle that Jubilee will have the rest of her life and we have a little box and it's dated, but we're going to present this as a representative of the light of Christ, the very presence of God dwelling in Jubilee. May this blessing continue upon you and your household.

That's yours, baby. Yeah, let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon Jubilee, your child, the forgiveness of sin and have raised her to the new life of grace.

Oh, Lord, in your Holy Spirit, give her an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to live and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. Amen. Let us welcome Jubilee, the newly baptized and chrismated into St. Aidan's in this family.

Amen. Let's pray together, we receive you into the household of God, confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection and share with us in the eternal priesthood. Can I hold her? Oh, hi, baby.

Hey, baby. Oh, you're such a wonderful girl. Oh, and I'm going to just walk you down so that everybody can go.

I want one of these grandmas are saying, yeah, right, right. Oh, yeah, isn't she beautiful? She's beautiful. Jubilee, you have a radiance and a peace about you.

And we appreciate that you get to enjoy that every time we see the countenance of your face, the peace of God is on your life. Really, yeah, yeah, yeah, you can get used to this, couldn't you? Right. There's mommy.

Yeah. One more round. Thank you, Lord.

May the peace of the Lord be always with you. Let's pass the feet.

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