

Resurrection Sunday – Romans 6:1-7 – 24 April 2011

1. Funeral

2. New Birth

3. Wedding

There are three things I want to share with you about baptism. Baptism symbolizes spiritual realities that has occurred in your life because of Jesus Christ.

Now, we all know that baptism doesn't save you. Going through the waters of baptism, doesn't change you, it is Jesus who changes you. But baptism, is a symbol, a picture, a declaration of what Jesus had already done for you, in your life. So it is a picture of several spiritual realities.

1. Funeral

Baptism is like a funeral. I know it doesn't sound very exciting but baptism first and foremost, symbolizes a funeral. It symbolizes a dying. It symbolizes a passing away of the old man. You see, the Bible tells us, when we are baptized, we are baptized into the death of Jesus. This is what we do. There was a baptism conducted at East Coast Park by the beach, we bring a man into the water and we lower him and we totally submerged him into the water. Because this is a picture of a burial, of dying, and of a passing away. Romans chapter 6 tells us,

Rom 6:3,4a

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death:

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Baptism, is a beautiful picture of how a man, when he comes to Jesus Christ, dies. That old man dies with Jesus Christ and when we buried him, even though it's only for that one second or so, it represents the dying off that old man. Now of course, as pastors, we bury him for one second. We don't try to give him longer than that, any longer than that, maybe we would have a real funeral. (Laughter in the congregation). But that temporary that quick picture, tells you that when a man

comes to Jesus, the old man dies. And it is necessary, that the old man dies, why? Because the old man is a slave to sin. The old man can't, the old man meaning the life that is in him, before he came to know Jesus, that old man can't do anything but sin. The Bible says:

Rom 6:6,7

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.

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It is necessary that the old man would die with Jesus Christ because the old man can't do anything but sin. The old man is a slave to sin and so, when Jesus saves us, when we come into a relationship with Jesus Christ, the spiritual reality is that the old man is crucified with Christ upon that cross. You see, Jesus came to save us from our sins and in order for us to really break free from the bondage of sin, there first must be the dying off that old man. And so baptism is a beautiful illustration of a death. It is a beautiful spiritual funeral and when 39 people will enter the waters of baptism later on at 1 PM at our church building, it is a symbol that all 39 had experienced a death. A burial with Jesus Christ.

## 2. New Birth

But another picture about baptism is that not only is it a funeral but it is a new birth. Now, that's the exciting thing, you don't just die and you stay dead. The exciting thing is that you are dead with Jesus in your old man but now you are raised up a new man. The Bible says:

Rom 6:4,5

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up (Added by Pastor : This is Easter Sunday, as Christ was raised up) from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

This speaks of a new birth; the old man is dead and in its place, is the new man, that new creation in Jesus Christ. The Bible speaks of being born again. You have a new life. So, you have the same outer shell but a man who is come to Jesus is now a new man on the inside and baptism symbolizes that.

Again, you see in Romans 6:

Rom 6:4,5

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Dead and alive, the old man gone and the new man comes, that's what baptism is all about. It is telling you, that the man standing in the water, has come to Jesus and Jesus has given me a new life.

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What does it mean, for you to have a new life? Again in Colossians, we are buried with Him in baptism and you are risen with Him.

Col 2:12

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

A beautiful quote, that could summarize this, is this :

“The baptistry (Added by Pastor : The place where we are baptized, the baptistry) is a tomb and a womb (Added by Pastor : Tomb, when we die, womb, when we are born again). It’s a tomb where we’re buried with Christ and a womb where we are born again to new life.”

Now of course, it doesn't mean that the baptistry, is the place where you are literally dead and alive in Jesus, no. The baptistry represents what has happened some time before, when you first place your trust in Jesus Christ. But this is the place to illustrate a death and a resurrection. And now this new life is a different life from what is in the past. The old life could do nothing but sin but the new life is manifested by and obedience to Jesus Christ. You see, Paul tells us in Romans 6

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now, you are alive, and now you serve Jesus Christ, our Lord. In the past, you do not want to serve Christ, in the past, you do not want to know Jesus but when you came

to a life-changing relationship with Christ, He so changes you that now your life is about serving Jesus Christ our Lord and verse 18 tells us:

Because you are now made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness.

Rom 6:11,18

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

A Christian man, is best evidenced by the way he serves righteousness. You know what marks you as a Christian, is not the cross that you wear, is not the T-shirt that says "I belong to Jesus". is not whether you say your grace before your meals. What marks you out as a Christian, what marks you out as a follower of Jesus Christ, is what you serve. The old life serves sin, the new life serves righteousness, serve God, serve Jesus and seeks to obey the Word.

It is so sad that when we think of Christians today, we think of people who said "Oh, I've got a ticket to heaven and now I can sin all I want." You know, that tells me, that maybe you have never had that new life from Jesus Christ because, when you come to Christ, He gives you a new life with new desires, new goals, and a new walk that you are now a servant of righteousness. And so, baptism as we will witness later on, tell us, first of all of a funeral. Secondly, of a new birth and thirdly, it is like a wedding.

### 3. Wedding

So we started quite depressive, funeral but really it is a joyous occasion. Because baptism is like a wedding ceremony of how we declare, we pledge our loyalty, our love for Jesus Christ. You see, the church is the bride of Christ, the church look for our bridegroom, Jesus Christ. Paul says in 2Cor, this is a picture of some happy faces in baptism because it is like a wedding, we pledge our loyalty, our love for our Master.

2Cor 11:2

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

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Mystically, spiritually, if you are a Christian, if you have trusted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, then, you are part of this universal body of believers and this body, the Bible says, is the bride of Christ and when we are baptized, we are probably declaring that I am part of the church and I belong to Jesus. I live for Jesus, I am loyal to Jesus, I submit to my Savior and I keep myself your for Jesus Christ.

Again in another passage Ephesians 5, we are told that the relationship between husbands and wives, men and women, is a parallel, a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church. So, it is an exciting time. I think, all of us who have been married would know that the wedding is an exciting day. And so it is for all our baptismal candidates as you declare your allegiance to Jesus Christ. I hope it would be an exciting remembrance for you all the days of your life.

So this is I think what baptism is all about. It's a funeral, is a new birth and it is a wedding. But it is all a picture. It's all a declaration of what Jesus had already done for you. I wear a wedding band today because I am already married. I wear a band today, to tell the world I am taken, is not that anyone cares (Laughter in the congregation). I am taken, I am married and I want to tell the world that I am already married. But if I get this ring, I can't even take it out now (Laughter in the congregation), if I take this ring and I gave it to a three-year-old boy, and I say "Put on this ring", does it make him married? No it doesn't. It's an inappropriate wearing of the ring. And so it is, when we are baptized, we are saying to the world, "I am married, together with the rest of my brothers and sisters to Jesus Christ."

It is a spiritual reality that is best declared and represented in this public declaration of baptism. So I hope all of us today would understand the significance of baptism. Later on, so we would not be confused nor will we allow the deep significance to pass away from us. So all my brethren, as you enter the waters of baptism, I hope it would remind you to walk in righteousness. That as you declare "Jesus is my Savior", you will be loyal to Him, you will love Him because what marks you out more than that waters of baptism, it's your life of righteousness.

Number two, all my brothers and sisters in Christ, who has been baptized already. Please, each time there is baptism, let it be a helpful reminder to your own life. Has your life changed since the day you trusted Christ or even the day you were baptized that ought to be authentic life change. Let us seek to be servants of righteousness.

Maybe some of you today are already believers but you have not been baptized. Can I remind you that this is an important step, an important ordinance that God has given. God has only given us two ordinances, one, baptism, two, the Lord's supper and it is essential that we obey. You see, the Bible tells us :

Mk 8: 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.

I am proud of my wife and I am proud of my Savior. I would declare and if you have truly believed in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you can be proud to declare by means of baptism, He changed your life.

Someone, a preacher called John MacArthur said

“May I be so bold as to suggest that a failure to be obedient in the matter of baptism... is at the root of some of the immense problems in people's lives and in the church in general

He says, when people are no obedient to the command to be baptized, he becomes kind of a root cause for many other problems in people's life. Why? It allows the church, to fill up with people who are unfaithful to the simplest commands of the Lord and of His Word and that's serious.

John MacArthur

“May I be so bold as to suggest that a failure to be obedient in the matter of baptism...is at the root of some of the immense problems in people's lives and in the church in general because it allows the church to fill up with people who are unfaithful to the simplest commands of the Lord and of His Word and that's serious.”

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So, an encouragement to you if you have not been baptized, you should take that step of obedience because the Bible says "Believe and be baptized." Well, that is the first part of the message, I just want to help you understand, what goes on later on at 360 Dunearn Rd for all our 39 candidates.

But secondly, I want to share with you, the significance of Easter. Some of you, I see many new faces, some of you are not regular worshipers in GLCC and I want to help

you. Because these important facts and realities that the Bible tells us. The Singapore government gives the Christian faith two holidays, one is Christmas, the other one is Easter because they do symbolize great events of human history. Christmas, in a way, remembers the day Jesus is born. Of course, it's not the literal day, we do not know exactly which day but we take Christmas to be a remembrance of the day Christ was born. But Easter is the day that, or Easter is the season, we remember the saving, atoning work of Jesus Christ.

I think these three days of Easter, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, representing the most important days of human history. This is the day that Christ, Friday is the day that Christ went to the cross to die for our sins. On Saturday, it is a day when he was buried in the tomb and on Sunday, the Bible tells us, "He is not here, He is risen." It is the day that Jesus rose from the dead. So these three days, Friday, crucifixion day, Saturday, the day he was buried and Sunday, Resurrection Sunday, represents the three most important days, I think in human history so far. And this is really, what the Bible tells us, it's about the Gospel.

Paul says in 1Cor 15

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the (Added by Pastor : Look at the word) Gospel (Added by Pastor : By the way, this is what our church is called, Gospel Light Christian Church. What is the meaning of the word, "Gospel". The word Gospel means good news, it's great news. Hey, you are here today because we have great news, good news to share with you.

Do you know what is the good news? The good news first begins with bad news because if you do not know you are in trouble, you won't appreciate the goodness of this good news. First thing you need to know is that we are in trouble and I am saying it, really deep trouble because the Bible tells us that man is born in sin and that is a serious problem.

Some people are born with cancer, the genes are already in there and is programmed to manifest sometime in the future. Some men is born handicapped but one thing that is far worse than any cancer or physical illness, is the spiritual illness that all of us are afflicted with. All of us are born as sinners. The Bible says "All have sinned and all have come short of the glory of God, there is none righteous, no, not one." The Bible tells us "We are a people waiting for the condemnation", because we are sinners. As mentioned, we can't do anything but sin, we are incorrigibly sinful. My friends, that's where we need to start. That's why you need the Gospel because we are

a people of sin. Sin is anything that offends God, sin is anything that is on us Him and that's what we are. We live, never, never for the glory of God in the past, never. We are always self seeking, we reject God, we hate Him, we run away from Him and we are sinful.

Some people say, why do I need the Gospel? I am a successful man, I have a great career, I have a wonderful family, but my friends, the judgment of God, awaits you at the final analysis. You are a man or woman in sin and you have to give an account of your sins. The Bible describes the fierceness of God's anger on sinful man. He is a Holy God that cannot tolerate sin and a Holy God, is to pour His wrath upon sinful man and the bad news is that you can do nothing to save yourself. Man today has invented many, many equipment, pieces of wonderful equipment, come up with great inventions, develop new medicines, but there is one thing that no man can solve and that is the problem of sin in our lives and that is horrible. And that's why we need the Gospel and that's why we celebrate the good news. It's Good Friday because when man is helpless and hopeless, God sends His Son who bore the wrath of God upon that cross. God sent His Son that you and I may be saved.

You know what is the Gospel? We often use this word technically and we don't quite understand what the Gospel entails. What is the Gospel? The Gospel according to Paul is found in verses 3 and 4. The Gospel declares: how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

What is the Gospel? It's found in the three days of Easter. First of all, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. You know what your sins deserve?, you know what my sins deserve? you know what our sins deserve? Nothing but spiritual death. Death as the people of the Bible would know it, is a separation from God. We deserve nothing but separation from God. God represents all that is good, God is the source of everything good and when man is cut off from God, he faces a horrible destiny, spiritual death. Hell, the Bible describes it as a place of everlasting torment, a place where your ..... (I can't really hear what pastor is saying),

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A place, where there is fire and brimstone and that is where sin is deserve to go, death. The price of sin is death, but the Bible tells us that when man cannot pay for that price, that debt, Jesus Christ died for us on the cross. My dear friends, He died for you on that cross. When He was suspended between heaven and earth, He took



all the wrath of God for our sins, my sins, every sin I have committed. Every word, every thought, every action that is against God, that I have done and all that I will do in my life here, Jesus took it all on the cross and he took yours. He died for all our sins.

Why does He do that, you say? Why does the Son of God as you have sung just now, the darling of heaven, the beloved, why would the Son of God go to the cross? He had no sins of His own but you see, He loved us. But God commendeth, or demonstrated His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ that for us. Christ is that sacrifice, that substitute that Lamb of God, that sacrifice, that takes away the sins of the world. And my friends, He did not do this as an afterthought, it was not as if God was surprised by the sins of the world and then He scrambled to come up with a plan of salvation, the Bible says, it's all according to the Scriptures its' all according to God's plan, even right there in Genesis 3, God said "I will send the Savior." You see, Jesus is the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world. Jesus had you in mind before the earth and the heavens were created.

It's an amazing thought, "But Christ died for our sins." That's Good Friday. But after Good Friday, it's Saturday and that He was buried. I was with my extended family yesterday and one of my cousins asked me "Hey, aren't you busy during Easter?" I say, yah, we have something on, on Friday and we are going to have something on, on Sunday. She then asked me, "By the way, what you call Saturday for Easter." I scratch my head and said "That's a good question, I don't know." We have a term called Easter Friday, Good Friday, we have Easter Sunday or resurrection Sunday, but there's no special name for Saturday. Anyone knows of a special name? Black Saturday ! Wow, I have learned something today. (Laughter in the congregation) Black Saturday, that's from, where? Philippines. Well that's very creative, Black Saturday. Well, it's a day of, is the day that is in between Friday and Sunday, and if you were to place yourself, in the shoes of the disciples, it is like a Black Saturday. It's dark, it's discouraging. They probably felt cheated. God, you said that you are the Messiah, the Savior but, but, I saw His body on the cross. It's lifeless, it's limp, it's bloody, it's mangled, it's cold, He is dead. I saw, I saw Nicodemus and Joseph took down the body and they embalmed Him, they wrapped Him and I saw that they place Him in a tomb. I saw that Jesus is gone.

It is a very long Saturday, 24 hours but can you imagine what confusion, what despair, what discouragement would come into the minds of those who had followed Jesus Christ? Can you imagine the cheers of the enemies of God?

Hah, we have got him, he is dead, that fraud, that cheat who said he would arise again, he's gone.

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I can imagine the devil and the minions celebrating their temporary victory. Black Saturday, no one would have guessed, no one expected what would happen the very next day. Because the very next day, the Bible tells us, it is the resurrection Sunday and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. Hah, Jesus is alive.

A young boy was looking at a picture of the crucifixion and a man walked by him and says "Son, what is this a picture of." The young boy says, "It is a picture of how Jesus died on the cross." The old man says "Thank you very much." He walks away. The young boy turns and says "But wait, Jesus is not dead anymore, He is alive today."

So often, we get stuck on the crucifixion scene but really the highlight, the foundation of the Christian faith is that of resurrection Sunday. Because if Jesus is still dead, He would be like any other man. He would be like any Tom Dick or Harry, and a man, because all have died. But what makes Him unique is that He rose again, from the dead.

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This is the Gospel, the Gospel that God's Son came to die for our sins and He was not conquered by sin, He was not conquered by death, He was the Conqueror. And when He rose from the dead, He defeated sin, death, hell, the devil, He defeated darkness. That's why we celebrate and my friends, again this is according to Scriptures. It was as God has planned it.

I want to test you; I said I wouldn't and doing the first service but I decided to test you still. Can you tell me, in the Bible, is that a reference in the Old Testament that prophesies about the resurrection of Christ. Now, I know there are many prophecies about the death of Christ, many, plenty, but what about the resurrection? I will like to ask this so that you will remember the verses for the rest of your life. Someone mentions in the book of Jonah. Very good, Jonah. The story of Jonah is a beautiful picture of how Jesus is dead and alive. I think you have done very well, give yourself a round of applause. I guess you give these two ladies a round of applause. Psalm 16 is mentioned. Okay she deserves another round of applause. She is determined to get the applause. Anyway, just kidding. Thank you, Psalm 16:10

Psa 16:10

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Now, this is clearly a reference to the resurrection of Christ, because, Peter in Acts 2, used this verse and preached about the resurrection of Christ.

What about Jonah? It is absolutely right, because Jesus Himself said:

Mat 12:40

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

It preempts the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The resurrection of Christ is so crucial and so vital, it is already prophesied in Scriptures and it is also witnessed by many people. You see, in 1Cor 15, a continuation of verses 1-4 which we have just read. Paul takes pains, takes the effort to write to us that the resurrection of Christ is not a myth, it's not a fairytale, it's not a legend, it is a reality. It is a verifiable fact, why? Because the life of Christ, of the He rose from the dead, was evidence to Cephas, that is, Peter, to the 12, that is the apostles and unto 500. Well, some of them had already died, but a great part, a majority of them are still alive. Then there is James, and then there is myself, apostle Paul and Paul is saying, the resurrection of Christ is an undeniable fact.

You can check with some 500 witnesses. In a court of law, two or three witnesses is enough. Imagine if you have 500 or close to 500 witnesses. Check with them, they're here with you, they are around. Just ask them, did they see the resurrected Christ?

1Cor 15:5-8

And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

The resurrection of Christ is a fact, a reality, Scripture declares it to be so and it is central to the faith of a Christian, it is central to the church of Jesus Christ. That's what Peter preached about on the day of Pentecost, that's what the apostles

emphasized in the Book of Acts. They kept coming back to this theme, that Jesus resurrected from the dead, Jesus resurrected from the dead because it is His death, burial and resurrection that constitute the good news. The Gospel of how a Holy God can reconcile sinful man to Himself.

My friends, it is foundational. If Jesus is not risen from the dead, Jesus is a liar. If Jesus is not risen from the dead, he is a fraud, he's a cheat, he's a con man. If Jesus is not risen from the dead, there is no reason why we should get as a church. If Jesus is not risen from the dead, you might to go throw and burn your Bibles at home. If Jesus is not risen from the dead, you have no hope of salvation. None of us would be able to reach God. If Jesus be not risen, your loved ones who have died before you, those who have trusted in Jesus, they would still be in hell fire today. Because if Jesus is not risen, our faith is vain. He could not be, and He is not the Savior. But the reality is, friends, Jesus is alive. He is risen and that's why, that's why we worship Him. He is God and now He is also our Savior and that's why we want to own Him as our Lord. We honor Him, we serve Him and that's why the church gathers and that's why Christians love the Bible and that's why Christians proclaim the Gospel, because Jesus is alive. That's why we have hope for the future because we serve a risen Savior. That's why we live unto righteousness because Jesus will come again for us. It makes all the difference when you understand Jesus is alive today.

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Some of you today, you do not know Christ as your Savior. I want to encourage you. I want to encourage you because the Bible gives us a beautiful promise. He says in Romans 10:9

Rom 10:9

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

You know what, we often quote this verse and we missed this part, the yellow part (God hath raised him from the dead). We say, if you shalt confess and you shall believe, you shall be saved, but we forget, this is the essence that God had raised Him from the dead. It is the resurrected Christ whom we must believe in.

Believing in the Gospel, means, believing in the Risen, Conquering Savior.

This is resurrection Sunday friends, this is the day of victory. In 1815, when Great Britain was in war with France, they sent a general to lead their troops, General Wellington. They fought for some time and he was battling Napoleon and they were all waiting for General Wellington to send back the message, did they win or did they lose. And in those days, you do not have handphones, signals and so on and what they had to do was to transmit signals via flashings of light. They could decode what it means by the flashings of light. It was a misty, foggy day and when they saw the first signals, it read, "Wellington defeated", and the whole of Great Britain was in sorrow, sadness and disappointment. But soon, the fog dispelled and the skies were clear and now the signals came bright and obvious "Wellington defeated Napoleon." Far from the defeat, it was a victory. On Friday and Saturday, it looks like Jesus defeated but come Sunday, it is a victory cry, "Jesus defeated sin, death, hell, the devil."

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We serve a risen Savior. Friends, would you come and place your trust in Jesus Christ, Who pay for your sins on the cross. He can be your Savior today. If you are His sheep, you will hear His voice. My friends, if you are God's child today already, you have trusted in Christ as your Savior, can I remind you that Jesus has broken the power of sin in your life, that we are crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed and today we can live unto righteousness. You don't have to sin any longer, because Jesus gives you the provision for a righteous life.

Are you today tormented by worries and anxieties and fears? Do you realize, because He lives, I can face tomorrow. What a message, the message of the Bible, the message of the Gospel the Christ is risen today. Let's bow for a word of prayer shall we.

Father we thank you for your Word and we pray that you will bless these words for the hearts of Your people, for salvation, for sanctification, for victorious Christian living. Thank You, You are alive Lord Jesus and because of You, we can face tomorrow. Bless Your Word to the hearts of each one because we ask this in Jesus Name, amen. God bless.