

*Sermon Notes**(A basic transcription with modifications for style and clarity)***DO YOU REMEMBER THE DAY...?**

Cliff Veal, 14 January 2023

Do you remember the day...???

Do you remember the day that you died? Now of course, physically speaking, you haven't died yet. I'm talking about the symbolic death that we go through which signifies the beginning of a new life. I'm talking about the day of your baptism.

If you are baptized you're at least a young adult, if not older, and you will remember that day well. I do, certainly, and I'm an old guy. I was at the home of a deacon in central California many, many years ago. In his garage he had a horse trough. Most people apart from the Church would never dream of stepping into a horse trough, but I was thrilled to be able to step into that one. I remember thinking as I got out of that tank, dripping with water that had never passed the lips of a horse, thankfully, I thought: "I sure hope that took! Boy, do I've got a lot to do now. I am so glad that God has promised to help me." What was it like on your day? I'm sure it was a joyous one – exhilarating, encouraging, introspective and maybe just a little bit scary. Do you remember the day that you began your new spiritual life?

I would like to read to you now part of the text of the baptism ceremony, the actual ceremony. The words that the minister speaks when the baptism candidate is in the water. Because, if you haven't been baptized you may not have heard this; you may not have read this. And if you have been baptized, it may have been a number of years since you've heard it.

First, the baptismal candidate, got into the water and the minister asks: "Have you repented of your sins and accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?" And that's no small thing. That is life changing. The individual then usually responds, "Yes." I've never had anyone say, "No." That would end the ceremony there.

The minister then states: "Mr. or Mrs. (and then gives the person's full name): As a result of your repentance of your sins, which is the transgression of God's holy, righteous, perfect law, and your acceptance of Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, Your Lord and Master, your High Priest and your soon coming King, I now baptize you, not into any sect or denomination of the world, but I baptize you into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, by and through the authority of Jesus Christ for the remission of all your sins." And that's a prayer and then we say "Amen."

I think it's interesting to note that this has been the ceremony that we have used for as many years as I can possibly remember. Of course, anymore that's not very

many. But you know what I mean. And it says that you're baptized not into a sect or denomination of this world, but into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

After this part of the ceremony, the minister then proceeds with the laying on of hands. Of course, during that portion of the ceremony he asks God to grant His Holy Spirit to that particular person who has been baptized. Most of you hearing me now, frankly, have already participated in that ceremony. But not all of you.

Let's talk a bit about baptism. I hope there will be something for everyone – those of you who are already baptized and those of you who are not yet baptized, but are considering it. My goal is to present the subject so that those of us who have undergone the ceremony, who are baptized, will be reminded. And we need reminders. God gives us reminders every, single year throughout the Holy Days. He reminds of things through His word. We'll be reminded of the very deep meaning of what we did and those of you who haven't will see, hopefully, that deep meaning, gain a better understanding of the true significance of baptism. Once again, it is a life-changing ceremony, a life-changing event and it should be.

For those of us who have undergone baptism, in the remembering and hearing these words we can rekindle a bit of that flame, a flame of dedication to God. That's necessary. That is necessary. And if we're totally honest with ourselves, that flame is not always burning brightly. We need to be reminded and think about it and rekindle that flame of dedication, passion, and love for God's way of life. Because brethren, quite frankly, as we all know, we all live in a society now that...well, there are a lot of people that are passionate about a lot of things, there are a lot of causes out there, but you know what? I think there's a whole lot more apathy than anything else. Apathy! To be quite honest, I think even among us as God's people, I'll have to admit that from time to time I have been overtaken by that. Apathy, a creeping apathy.

Oh, we've been at this for so long. When will Christ ever return? We've been there, we've done that; we've seen so many things. We've heard so many things. Maybe we've even been mistreated. That's possible. Many of us have; many hopefully not. And we've grown a bit, and possibly we're grown a bit apathetic through the years, who knows? "Well, we'll just see what happens". God is not looking for people that say, "Well, we'll just see what happens". He's looking for passion. He's looking for dedication, He's looking for enthusiasm. He's looking for a desire to go His way with passion, with an ardor that many of us have slacked off in, to be quite frank.

Let's talk a little bit about that as we go through this message, talking about the baptism ceremony. Going back to the ceremony right now, we begin, of course, as we heard, by asking the person (who is already in the water) -- we ask the person if they have repented.

Repentance, obviously, is necessary. We know that. We must come to the point

that we realize that our ways are not God's ways. This is when we have repented, and we've seen ourselves as we really are because we've asked God to help us see ourselves as we are. We have a desire with our whole heart to go God's way. Those of us who have been around for a while do we still have that desire? Or has it waned a bit? Or have we fallen into just a routine where we get up and we pray a bit? Maybe we read through a chapter or so of the Bible. But there's not that fire anymore that there should be.

We have to come to the point that we realize that our ways have not been right. This is early on, right before baptism. We realize we're not right and we've got to change. Our ways are not God's ways. And maybe we've to come to the point, and maybe several time in our lives, as followers of God, we've to come to the point that we realize we've slacked off, after we've been baptized. We've let go and we're not as passionate as we need to be. We have to realize that we need instruction in righteousness. That's what it's all about.

Then we have to accept the fact that the sacrifice of God's Son was necessary. Necessary for mankind, certainly, but necessary for us, personally, because of what we were, who we were, how we were, what we did and our lack of following God's way. Jesus Christ our Elder Brother had to die for that because we were sinners. That's a serious thing and it really takes a miracle to realize that. It takes God's intervention in our lives and showing us what's happening. We must personalize that.

It is not enough to say: "Oh, the Bible says that we should keep the Sabbath, so I'll keep the Sabbath and I am okay." How am I keeping the Sabbath? With genuine intent? Not just the letter of the law? Is it with a love and a passion for God's law or is it because it's written and the minister says we should, my parents said we should? I'll tell you one thing young folks if you are listening, it will not please God if you have an attitude that you do it because your parents told you to. I would hope that most of you don't. I hope none of you will. But you will not slide into God's Kingdom on you parents coattails. It is an individual, personalized relationship that all of us, young or old, coming up toward baptism or baptized for twenty or thirty years, a personal relationship that we have to have with God. Maybe you're young and maybe your parents have been a shining example of what they should have been. But it doesn't really matter right now. It's up to you. It's up to each one of us as individuals. What do you do, what do I do, what do we do with what God has shown us?

Are we convinced in our own minds, and do we have an inner desire to go God's way? It's got to be more than just letter of the law, more than "somebody said I should do it."

***Romans 5:8* But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

That is massive! That is hard to believe even but it is true! While we were yet sinners Christ died for us. In the ceremony we read the minister has asked, "Have you repented." "Yes, I have." "Do you accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior

and soon coming King?” And then the person is baptized. In other words, the person is plunged underneath the water, put into, as it were, a watery grave, (there’s symbolism there) which is the symbolic death that we go through, need to go through if we want to be baptized and be in God’s Church. That’s the symbolic death that Jesus Christ, our Elder Brother, and God the Father want us to go through because it is immediately followed by a resurrection to new life.

Romans 6:4 Therefore we were buried with Him (Once again, the symbolism. We were buried in that watery grave, we were put under the water.) **buried with Him through baptism into death...**

Buried with Him in baptism, underlining, emphasizing the fact that it is a burial. The old man must die. Our old ways must die. Sometimes it takes a long, long time for that. It won’t happen immediately but with God’s help we change, we grow to be more like our Elder Brother Jesus Christ and more like God the Father. And when that old man dies, it certainly doesn’t mean that the new man coming up (man or woman, whatever the situation is) that that person will never sin again. Wouldn’t that be wonderful? But the difference is, we have help. We have a help that we did not have before. We have supernatural help. I’ve said that often in the last while in my sermons because it is true. God’s Holy Spirit is supernatural help! We have a source of comfort and support and help that we didn’t have before.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me...

I’ve been put into that watery grave, I’ve been symbolically killed, I came up into newness of life with Jesus Christ. So the symbolism of our “death” here is that of dying and being put into a grave – a watery grave and being “buried” and coming up to newness of life. When did you last think about that, you older folk? I’m speaking to myself too. When did we last think about that symbolism? Probably at Passover, sure. I’m sure it was talked about. Maybe we should have a bit more presence of this idea with us at all times. Maybe it shouldn’t be just once a year at Passover.

Romans 6:4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

I asked earlier, do you remember the day you died? That was a bit theatrical, but do you remember the day that you were reborn, practically? Do you remember the day that you came up out of that watery grave into newness of life, spiritually speaking? Do you remember that? Those of us already baptized after ten, twenty, thirty or more years, do we still feel that we are walking in the newness of life? Granted, after thirty years plus it is no longer “new” in that sense, but you know what I mean. Are we still enthusiastically going God’s way? Do we love it? Or are we kind of tired of everything? I know what it’s like to be tired, believe me. I know what it’s like to be tired. I’m tired a lot. And when you’re tired it’s easy to be tired in all areas of your life. We need God’s help, and we need to ask for God’s help. And

maybe we need to ask for a rekindling of that spirit of enthusiasm, that compassion and that newness of life that we're to be walking in.

Colossians 2:12 ...in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

In other words, God is in this whole picture. God is the one that brought you toward baptism. You had to agree to go God's way. You had to desire to go God's way. But once you are baptized He's there to help you, support you, and carry you along the way practically. In so many instances in my life and I've talked to so many of you over the years God has carried us. When we couldn't go any further, when we couldn't do any more He's carried us. But He will always be there through the power of His Holy Spirit. He will be there to strengthen us and to help us keep going.

God wants us to be alive. He wants us to be walking in that newness of life. He wants us to rise up into that different way where we put the old man behind us, the old ways, the wrong ways, and we're going a different way, exemplifying His way of life. And showing others, giving an example of His way of life. Not that we go on a streetcorner and preach about it. We don't. But does your life preach about it? Does who you are and how you conduct yourself and how you are, does that show someone that there's something different there?

Please realize that when we sit down with a young person or an older person to talk about baptism, we want that person to be baptized. The ministry is there to help. Helpers of your joy. We're there to help and help bring you along. We want that situation to come to fruition such that it will end in baptism and in newness of life. We're not there to try to keep anyone out. I think some people over the years have thought that, especially young people. That's not the way it is. That's not the way it is at all.

All of us must ask God with a genuine heart that He show us what and how we need to change. If we genuinely ask Him that He will do that. This refers to any person before baptism and it refers to all of us after baptism. I'm two tracks here; for young people to think about these things. But for people who have been baptized, for those of us who have been in the Church for a few years or many, many years. We need to think about these things too.

We are in the process of becoming more like our Elder Brother Jesus Christ, more like our Father in righteousness -- understanding better what God wants us to do. Once again, if we go to God with a genuine heart, truly desiring to know what He thinks of us, (and that's important) what He sees in us, what we need to change, He will show us. I always ask Him to do that gently and not be too rough with me and that's fine. But genuinely ask, "Help me to see." And that's what a baptism candidate, a young person or an older person coming toward baptism needs to do, has to do and I'll guarantee you, brethren, that's what we who have been around for a while absolutely have to do regularly, regularly.

1 Corinthians 6:9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the

kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,

10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, (it goes on and on and on with a fairly long list) **will inherit the kingdom of God.** (Pretty plain)

11 And such were some of you. (Such were some of us, all of us in some way. We shouldn't fool ourselves.) **But you were washed, but you were sanctified,** (you were set apart for holy purpose. God intervened your life.) **but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.**

That's a miracle. It's an absolute miracle and it's an ongoing miracle because we repent not just one time previous to baptism. We repent for the rest of our lives when something comes up in our lives that is not right. And we ask God to help us to change. So, whatever we've done, whatever we've been involved in, no matter what it was -- that can be washed away. God can help us to go through with baptism to experience that resurrection into newness of life, spiritual life. God can help any of us do that, pre-baptism, post-baptism, He can help any of us. If we need to get back to that, if we do need to rekindle something, God can help us do that through the power of His Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2:1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

Do we realize what a powerful force Satan is? Satan and all his machinations, broadcasts and thoughts and moods and emotions. Have you experienced that? If you've been around for a while, you have and he's there. Do we realize what a force Satan is? We realize of course, also on the other hand that this world is attractive. It's easy to say, "Well, I don't want anything to do with this world. Yes, the world is evil in so many ways, but there are some attractive things in this evil world. I think, especially for young people, some very attractive things.

I'm not saying that everything in the world is evil, absolutely not! But I'm saying that very, very often things that are very attractive in the world are used to suck you into a lifestyle. You said I want this newness of life. You were baptized. You were raised out of that watery grave into newness of life, spiritual life and there is a being. That's what I was saying earlier. Satan is powerful and he will put things out there that will try to attract you and suck you into a different lifestyle, not a godly lifestyle. We have to be very careful and not just young folk. Anyone in God's Church. If we're baptized we need to be very careful because Satan hates us, I guess, more than anyone because we are representing God's way and he hates God's way. So, we need to be very careful that we don't...

It's kind of like the frog in the pot thing. You put the frog in the cold water and turn the water up and the water gets warmer and warmer and then it starts boiling and the frog boiled because he didn't realize what was happening. That can

happen to us, and we have to be very, very careful.

Ephesians 2.2: in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ...because of His great love with which He loved us,

5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

But once again, we have to recognize our own guilt before God. We have to recognize that we need to change. And at the risk of repeating myself way too much, even after we're baptized we have to ask God to help us to change. We have to ask God to help us to see where we need to change because it's not automatic. Baptized – saved, once saved always saved is not how it works.

In today's very permissive and very tolerant society ("I'm okay, you're okay; we're all okay"), there's nothing that's wrong. You can't do anything that's wrong. That's not true. That is a satanic lie. There is law, God's law. There is right and there is wrong and there is moral and immoral.

This, "everything's okay and there is nothing wrong" that is not a godly principle. That is a satanic principle. There is wrong, there is evil in the world, and we must learn to recognize that. We have to learn where we have been tainted by that eventually, in our lives and then we have to change. And if we have been in God's Church for years and come to realize that we are being tainted by the world – we have to change. Period! But if you're not asking God to help you see where you might become tainted, then you can't expect an answer to a prayer that's not necessarily given. That's a very specific one and God will honor that.

There is no shame in repenting. If you've been in the Church for forty or fifty years, there is no shame in repenting. The shame, brethren, is in not repenting. That's where the shame is.

Here is a very important question that the ministry, very often, will ask anyone in a situation where they are requesting baptism. Probably in the counseling leading up to that. Once again, this is a very important question for all of us. "Am I doing something that I know that I should not be doing?" You say "Well, that couldn't happen. I'm baptized and I have God's Holy Spirit. That wouldn't happen." You know very well that it does happen and sometimes we let it happen. Sometimes we let it happen because, well, we're not as bad as those that are all around us, are we?

It can't be really that bad, whatever this thing that I want to do or want to get involved in. "I'm not as bad as all those around me. I'm okay, you're okay. Let's be tolerant."

That doesn't work with God. That does not work with God. "Am I doing something that I know I shouldn't be doing? Are there things that I know that I should be doing, but I'm not doing?" These are good questions to ask yourself from time to time, if you're coming up to baptism or if you're baptized. Questions that will be asked you by the minister if you're coming to baptism. And once again, questions that we need to ask, all of us, even if we've been around for a while.

But baptism has to do with a 100% dedication of ourselves to God's way. We have to be willing to ask ourselves, "Am I willing to take that step? Am I willing to go 100%. No matter what happens, go God's way." Baptism is a very special ceremony of dedication and with this ceremony we dedicate ourselves completely and entirely to going God's way, to God's way of life. And you know throughout our lives, as followers of God, we will have to be submissive. We have to submit to God and God's way.

James 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

So, as I said earlier, if you want to know what's wrong with yourself, what you need to change -- young person or older person -- ask God. Ask Him. Do your part, you ask, He will act. And here, the same principle, we submit to God, we do our part, we resist the devil, and he will flee from us. He will. God will help us.

8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (Verse 10)

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. (That is a promise. That is a promise.)

We read the scripture that said it's because God loved us so much that even while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Then He called us into His way because He loves us. He wants us to be in His family. So there's no room for any authoritarianism, any harsh "You will do this" from a minister. There has been some of that over the decades. It was wrong. Hopefully all of us have come to realize that. Ministers are here (and we should have known this all along and we did on one level but we're trying really hard to practice as ministers) are helpers of your joy. We, as ministers, are here to counsel and help and we have to do it with love and with compassion. What we're supposed to do. We're trying. We're trying.

We in the ministry strive to have a right approach, an approach that involves love, always, of course, upholding God's way of life, upholding God's law.

1 Corinthians 16:15 I urge you, brethren — you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints —

16 (I urge you) **that you also submit to such, (to that ministry of the saints) and to everyone who works and labors with us.**

This is a proper picture of the ministry and that's what we're trying to do. There again, it is incumbent upon anyone in the ministry, anyone in a leadership position of any kind within God's Church -- it is incumbent upon us to do that with love and compassion. But you know, we are human beings, too. We are human beings too. Sometimes we make mistakes. Sometimes we do things in a way that's, frankly, not right. That's when we need to repent and change. We need to be asking God to help us to see that. And we do because we are human beings. But there are clear instructions that we, as members of the Church, are to love the loving authority when it's properly administered over us or for us and follow the loving example of those who are serving and helping.

The ministry is here to help all of us, me included, my family included, help us to think on a spiritual plane. Do you think that I don't listen to the sermons that the other men give? I certainly do. Sometimes I'm quite stricken by some of the things that are said. Not because the things that are said are not right. No! They're right. It's sometimes, "Uh-oh. I'm not doing too well there in that regard." Once again, we're human beings. We're here to help you and to help each other think and grow on a spiritual plane.

Do I do that perfectly? Not always. But that's part of my job and we're trying. We're all trying. We're working hard at that with renewed zeal and enthusiasm, I might add. Trying to do whatever we do with love, with gentleness, with compassion. That's what God expects of us. And that's what God expects of all of us, members, ministers, all of us.

Back to the subject now of repentance, I think we can all see that it is of extreme importance. We knew that. This changing and being more like God is a renewal of our lives. Not just the letter of the law, as I've said several times now. But a deep desire within us to go God's way because we know that that's what we should be doing, and that God loves us and He's showing us that right way.

Matthew 3:8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,

Acts 26:20 but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.

I guess that's another question that those of us who have been around for a while need to ask ourselves. Are we doing works that are befitting repentance? Are we honest with ourselves? Are we putting into practice what we learn? I have used the example many, many times over the years, if we were hauled before a court of law and accused of being a follower of God, would there be enough evidence to convict us? Good question. We need to think about that. When we look at the basis that God has given us, the foundation that we need to be building upon, how we should be, are we that way? Are we that way?

What are the fruits of repentance in our lives? There must be fruits or acts that will demonstrate that a person is really taking the matter seriously and conversely

there will be fruits that will indicate that he or she is not taking the matter seriously.

Any of us, before being baptized, need to count the cost. It's a biblical principle. And quite frankly, even after we've been baptized, we should sit down now and then and count the cost. Before I was baptized, I was instructed and counseled and shown how to count the cost. Have I done it since then? In many indirect ways but you cannot do that ever again and just hope everything works well.

What is this life that we're involved in? What does it concern? What do I have to do, what do I have to sacrifice? There are sacrifices. There certainly are sacrifices. Are we ready to do that? If I'm so involved with my job and people and friends that I don't have time to seek first the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God (and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

They won't be if you don't. Can't be if you don't. Are we doing that? Are we seeking first the Kingdom of God? Do we continue daily in our lives to seek first the Kingdom of God? Do may not remember exactly where it is but we remember the principle but are we doing that on a regular basis? Are our lives seeking first the Kingdom of God?

Luke 9:24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.

Does that mean that we must be persecuted and killed? That might happen to some. We don't know. There are scriptures that indicate that it will but not to all of us otherwise the Church would be wiped out! And we know that that will not happen. Are we willing to give up our lives?

Luke 9:24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.

In other words, lose the old man, lose that life, and go forward in the newness of life. We need to be prepared to sacrifice but actually to be a living sacrifice.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Are we willing to do that? Are we giving reasonable service to God? There again, this comes back to the subject of submission. Submission to God, submission to God's authority, submission to God's way of life. Are we willing to submit to God's way? We have to be prepared, if necessary, to suffer persecution, yes. Once again, we're talking about counting the cost and we need to take into consideration all of these things, counting the cost, still long after we've been baptized. When persecution does come we will not be alone. We will not be alone because God will be with us.

33 ... In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

That's part of what I'm trying to do today for me, for you, strengthen our souls, remind us that we need to be working on ourselves. Remember back to that time when we were baptized and how we felt then and what we knew we had to do. Are we willing to go through tribulations that are mentioned here? Are we willing to be persecuted in whatever form that may take? Have we counted the cost? Do we continue to have that absolute confidence in God that, cost what it may, He will help us.

Luke 9:23 Then He said to them all, (this is Christ speaking again.) "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself (or herself), and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

It doesn't very sound easy, does it? Well, it's not going to be. It is not going to be! But it's rewarding and it's the right way and it's the right thing to do. So, it should be clear and I'm sure that it is, there's a great deal to be considered before baptism – and a great deal to remember or to be reminded of after baptism. Baptism is a beginning. It's a beginning. Baptism is the beginning of newness of life. We've said that several times.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

This is a part of the process, coming out of that watery grave in a newness of life.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

The Holy Spirit of God is a supernatural power. A power that He gives us access to. We, as either candidates for baptism or those who have already been baptized and maybe for many, many years, must recognize a desperate need for the help of God's Holy Spirit in our lives. We must come to the point that we can say, together with Jesus Christ:

John 5:30 I can of Myself do nothing.

Once again, baptism is a commitment for life, a commitment to being supported and helped and aided by God's Holy Spirit.

Luke 9:62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

It is a lifelong commitment. Because if you commit and then you look back and you say, "Well, I don't really want to do that after all the scripture say:

Hebrews 10:39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

We are not to draw back. We don't put our hand to the plow and then let go. God doesn't want us to do that. We must hang in there, as it were. We have to continue; we have to keep on keeping on. And God will help us to do it.

We've gone through several things today and we've seen that baptism is a beginning, a new beginning, beginning of a new spiritual life. Clearly a symbol a death because the old man is to die. But then comes a newness of life. Then comes that resurrection out of that watery grave. Baptism is a ceremony of dedication as we've said, which is dedicating our lives to God for the duration of our lives, our whole life. Every year at Passover, in a sense, we re-dedicate ourselves to God's way.

Baptism requires repentance. The time of baptism is when one receives God's Holy Spirit, as we said. That is the aid, the comfort, and the support that will make all of this possible. Because without that, it wouldn't be possible. But God is there. He's there for us. He gives us the power of His supernatural Holy Spirit to help us.

I hope that if you are not yet baptized that you are considering it. I hope that some of the things that I have said will be helpful.. And for those of us who are baptized let's take our calling seriously. Let's remember the symbolism of baptism. Let's remind ourselves of the dedication and the effort that has been put into this life in a godly way. That we need to put into this life.

Yes, brethren, we have a cause worth dying for; to be willing to give up our lives for. But more importantly, we have a cause worth living for. We really do. Living a godly life –a life of difficulty at times, yes – but also a life of growing in righteousness, becoming more like our Father and our Elder Brother. A life of spiritual blessing and a life of spiritual joy. Let's roll up our sleeves, let's get to it and let's keep at it!

Do you, will you, remember the day you were baptized?