

Sermon Series: Extraordinary Resurrection

Sermon Title: Pictures of The Extraordinary Resurrection of Jesus and Us!

Sermon Text: Matthew 3:1-17 & Romans 6:1-14

Sermon Presenter: Pastor Larry

When I pass through death, as I enter rest, I depend on You, I depend on You  
For e - ternal life, to be raised with Christ, I depend on You,  
Would You teach me to a - bide

Folks abiding in Christ is what the extraordinary resurrection of Jesus allows us to do! Let's pray and we are going to look at some pictures of the extraordinary resurrection of Jesus and us! Let's pray!

Introduction: I've told you all many times that I'm not much of an artist. That's why I take pictures with my camera and try to see things with an artist's eye, because I certainly don't have the artist's hand! My wife does, she's a watercolor artist and paints amazing pictures of wildlife. However, years ago, when I was a young man, I did paint one masterpiece! It was when I stepped down into the baptismal waters and painted a picture of the event that changed my life and my eternity: the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ! When I was baptized I painted the picture of how I had been extraordinarily resurrected to new life through Jesus' death, burial and resurrection! Today we're going to talk about the extraordinary pictures of the resurrection that are painted through the act of baptism, which we will witness this morning! And we're going to see how those pictures continue to be painted through our lives. This message has two parts and two texts!

### **Part 1 - John the Baptist paints pictures of the Extraordinary Resurrection of Jesus and us through baptism. Matthew 3:1-17**

Matthew 3:1 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea  
Matthew 3:2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

Matthew 3:3 This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.' "

Matthew 3:4 John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.

Matthew 3:5 People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan.

Matthew 3:6 Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

Ceremonial washing with water had long been a part of religious expression in Judaism, but John takes it to a whole new level. A form of baptism was even used in Judaism as an initiate rite for converts to Judaism. John the Baptist, was not only Jesus' first cousin, but was also the prophet of God called to prepare the way for Jesus' ministry. He was baptizing those who were already Jews and it was before Jesus had died on the Cross. So what was he doing? What

picture was he trying to paint? We're going to find out and it will help us better understand the meaning of baptism.

## **Baptism Pictures a Decision Made!**

Matthew 3:2 ... "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

John the Baptist was a bit of a fiery prophet, but he had good reasons for everything he said. He was trying to paint a picture for the Jewish people of his day. It really was a matter of life and death, spiritually speaking for his people. He will get more animated in just a minute but let's see what he's trying to say here. The NIV Study Bible states this:

"In John's ministry, baptism was a visible sign that a person had decided to change his or her life, giving up a sinful and selfish way of living and turning to God. John took a known custom and gave it new meaning. The Jews often baptized non-Jews who had converted to Judaism. But to baptize a Jew as a sign of repentance was a radical departure from Jewish custom."

John wanted the Jewish people to understand that while they were a part of the nation of Israel, they needed to make a personal decision to be a part of the Kingdom of God. As we will see, John would not baptize some of the religious leaders because they had not made a genuine decision. Before Baptism can have meaning beyond religious ritual there has to be a decision. John told the people they needed to make the decision to repent. Repentance is two sides of one coin. There's the change of mind in belief and there's the change of life in behavior. The word repent means "to change one's mind." It also means to feel sadness over wrongdoing, and it also means to stop going in one direction and go in another direction. John was speaking to people who had things in their lives that were killing them spiritually and they needed to turn from those things. Baptism was a symbol of repentance, it did not have magical powers to wash away sin. Only the Blood of Jesus can do that and that happens when we decide to believe in Jesus! John was also using Baptism to point to the Cross. We'll see this in a minute.

And now you know why we dedicate babies rather than baptize them. The Biblical practice of baptism is only seen after someone makes a decision! People often ask me whether or not they should get baptized if they were baptized as an infant. I simply ask this question: When you were baptized as an infant, whose decision was it? They say, "my parents!" To which I reply: "that's right, but now you've made a decision to follow Jesus and allow Him to be your Savior. He's come into your heart and life! You now have a beautiful picture to paint through baptism!" Baptism doesn't save you, infant or adult, Jesus does! Baptism is based on a decision! We want children to get old enough to make the decision to follow Christ and then paint the beautiful picture of their faith through baptism. Then it's their faith and not their parent's faith and that's so vitally important!

Paul puts it this way in 2 Corinthians 7:10-11...

2 Corinthians 7:10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

2 Corinthians 7:11 See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done...

You see, when a person is truly repentant of wrong done, they make a decision to live a different kind of life with God's help. This doesn't mean they become perfect and never sin again, but they begin a precious process of becoming more like Jesus a little more every day! Those who decide to follow Jesus understand they need His help to live a new life! They understand they could never cleanse themselves from past wrongs, or have the power to overcome temptation without God's divine intervention. This understanding leads a person to call upon the Name of the Lord for His forgiveness, His help, His strength, His salvation and His sanctification, which simply means becoming more like Jesus every day! This is called Godly sorrow and people who have made this decision do not regret it! But Paul says worldly sorrow only brings about death. Why is this? Because worldly sorrow is only sorry it got caught and there is no change of heart, therefore they continue down the path of destruction. But a person who has godly sorrow has an earnestness, an eagerness to become clean! They have indignation and alarm at their past foolishness. They have a longing, a concern and a readiness to begin doing the right things for the right reasons! Not to earn or work for their salvation, but because they've been given the gift of salvation. And they want to paint a picture of the cleansing God has done in their heart to show others.

### **Baptism Pictures God's Initiative!**

Matthew 3:3 This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.' "

God had prophesied through Isaiah that He was going to send a Savior and He had also prophesied that He would send someone to prepare the hearts of the people to receive that Savior! God has always been the one taking the initiative when it comes to humankind. He created us and revealed Himself to us, yet we rejected Him. But that didn't stop His love, so He had a very detailed plan to save us! In fact, let me let you in on a little secret...God knew when He gave Adam and Eve a choice, and you and me a choice, that if we made a bad choice there would only be one way to give us another chance to make the right choice. And it would be an initiative of God! Listen to what Peter wrote in his letter...

1 Peter 1:18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors,

1 Peter 1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

1 Peter 1:20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

1 Peter 1:21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

So God has taken the initiative to establish a relationship with you and it was not an easy step for God to take. It cost Him dearly, but that's how much He loves you and me. God has chosen to love you, will you choose to receive that love and then paint the picture of that experience through Baptism?

John 1:11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

John 1:12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

John 1:13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

And speaking of pictures, John the Apostle paints a vivid picture for us of John the Baptist and then gives us another picture Baptism paints.

### **Baptism Pictures Cleansing!**

Matthew 3:4 John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.

Matthew 3:5 People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan.

Matthew 3:6 Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

John the Baptist was evidently very effective in his preaching. People were coming from everywhere and after hearing him speak many were confessing their sins and being baptized. The word baptize literally means to "dip under." Back in Bible times and still today in many developing countries, where you find a body of water, you will find a crowd of people. Washing clothes, bathing, filling up buckets with water to take home. Much of the time they were dipping things under the water to clean them. Baptism symbolized this cleansing. It was a powerful picture, but only a picture. Water can't wash away sin, because sin is not on the outside, it's on the inside. It affects the outside, but it is a spiritual issue of the heart and human will. If a person has not made the decision to repent by responding to God's offer to forgive and to cleanse them on the inside, then no matter how many times they are dipped in the water, there will be no change, no cleansing. Listen to what happens next...

### **Baptism Pictures Change!**

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"

Matthew 3:8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

Matthew 3:9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

Matthew 3:10 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

Here's the deal: If you could be saved by being baptized, then John would have said, "Okay, come on in the water and I'll baptize you and wash away your injustice, your hypocrisy, your dishonesty, and your unfaithfulness!" But he didn't say that! He wouldn't baptize them because they had not made the decision to repent, to change, to turn away from evil. And John knew them pretty well. He knew they would claim salvation because of their bloodline through Abraham. But John lets them know God could raise up children for Abraham out of stones. Salvation isn't something you inherit because your father was Abraham, Moses, or a preacher! It's a choice you must make to let Jesus cleanse you from the inside out!

Jesus would later confront the Pharisees in a similar way...

Matthew 23:25 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

Matthew 23:26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

Neither Jesus nor John held back on the hard truth these people needed to hear. John continues...

### **Baptism Pictures the Work of The Holy Spirit!**

Matthew 3:11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Matthew 3:12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

When a person accepts Jesus Christ as their Savior He comes into their heart and life by way of His Holy Spirit! The way the blood of Christ washes away our sin is when the Holy Spirit of God comes in and applies the perfect life of Christ to our imperfect lives! How that all happens is a divine mystery, but we know this: The Blood of Jesus cleanses us from the penalty of our sin and The Holy Spirit gives us victory over the power of sin! Water baptism is a picture of being covered, filled, and led by The Spirit of Jesus! In fact we read this in the book of Acts...

Acts 2:36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

Acts 2:37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The actual Greek language says repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ because your sins were remitted or forgiven. So when we repent, and call upon the Name of the Lord we are baptized in His blood, our sins are forgiven and at that point we receive the Holy Spirit! Water Baptism paints the picture of this spiritual Baptism. I love the way the writer of Hebrews puts this...

Hebrews 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Speaking of acts that lead to death, John speaks of the judgment of God that will come someday on those who reject the gracious gift Jesus would die to give! A winnowing fork was a tool used to toss wheat up into the air. The lighter chaff floated over to the side and the heavier grain fell to the ground. The chaff was worthless and burned. John was speaking of the Judgment of God that would someday happen. These people needed to know that neither their good works, nor their bloodline would be enough to save them. The unforgivable sin is to outright and finally reject what Jesus did on the Cross and leave this world having never repented of that rejection! Jesus made a way for you, but He won't force you to accept that way! John and Jesus team up to paint the next picture.

### **Baptism Pictures What Jesus Did for Us**

Matthew 3:13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.

Matthew 3:14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

Matthew 3:15 Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

Matthew 3:16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.

Matthew 3:17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Why did Jesus compel John to Baptize Him when He had no sin to repent of? What picture was Jesus asking John to help Him paint? Jesus was identifying with the sinners He had come to save! Jesus was going to be baptized at the Cross with judgment for the sins of those He came to save. Jesus was painting a picture of His coming death, burial and resurrection and was publicly committing to fulfill His mission even though the disciples nor John the Baptist understood fully what Jesus would soon face. And what was the response of God the Father?

Matthew 3:17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

And did you know this aspect of Jesus' life and ministry was also prophesied in the book of Isaiah? Check this out...

Isaiah 42:1 "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.

Here's a question for you today...Have you ever made the decision to allow Jesus to Baptize you with His justice, His forgiveness, His mercy, His compassion, His power, and His presence through His Holy Spirit. A question I ask is why would anyone not want to be baptized with God's amazing grace? And if you have accepted Jesus into your heart and have allowed Him to baptize you spiritually by washing you clean by the precious blood of the Lamb, have you painted the picture of that inward experience through the outward act of immersion baptism? If you've been baptized in His love, why wouldn't you want to paint a masterpiece by reenacting His death, burial and resurrection through baptism? Water Baptism won't save you, but if you've accepted what Jesus did for you on the cross, He's asked you to paint a picture for the world to see. Baptism paints a lot of pictures, but every picture it paints is because of God's Amazing Grace! Amen? Unmerited, undeserved mercy is poured out upon every person who is willing to repent of their sin, admitting they need a Savior and calling upon the Name of The Lord! How could we ever thank God enough for all He's been willing to do on our behalf? A beautiful way to say thank you is through baptism. But there's another way to say thank you and to paint a picture of the extraordinary resurrection of Jesus.

## **Part 2 - We Paint Pictures of the Extraordinary Resurrection of Jesus and Us by the Way We Live! Romans 6:1-14**

John the Baptist came baptizing people before Jesus began His ministry. Through this John was using the physical act of baptism to paint pictures of very important spiritual principles such as a person's decision to repent, God's initiative in salvation, the cleansing power of God's forgiveness, the filling of the Holy Spirit and the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus!

Now we're going to look at the picture Baptism paints of Jesus's death, burial and resurrection and the impact that has on the lives we live! Some people think that once they've accepted Jesus, and been baptized, they're done. Well, yes and no! Yes your salvation is a gift from God you don't work for, you don't earn, and you don't deserve, but when you sincerely ask for it you get it! That's God's amazing grace to you through what Jesus did for you on the Cross. Yes your soul's salvation is secure! But salvation is not just about your soul and your eternity and what a tragic mistake you make if you believe that! Salvation is also about the here and now, this world, and how you live your life, and what you do with your life and how you touch God and others with your life! Some think since they are saved by grace then it doesn't matter what they do because they're covered by grace so they use that as an excuse to live in the ways of the world like it doesn't matter! Why would you want God to save your soul for heaven and not save your life here on earth? That makes no sense at all! God promises to help you change as a part of your gift of salvation. Salvation is not just for heaven, but for here and now!!!)

Let's see what our text has to say about this subject...

## **Baptism Pictures Two Deaths**

Romans 6:1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?

Romans 6:2 By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

Romans 6:3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

### **The Death of Jesus**

When a person stands in the waters of Baptism they are painting a picture of the death of Jesus upon the Cross. They are acknowledging the sacrifice He paid to make their forgiveness and salvation possible.

Hebrews 2:9 But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

Jesus tasted death for everyone, but only those who are willing to receive the grace He died to give them will experience the benefits of that gift! Those who do, come to understand that when Jesus died, He took their place and because of this they understand they deserved the death He died. In other words, they realize the debt Jesus paid was not his debt but theirs. Our sin cost God so much and Jesus suffered so much because of it, and we suffer when we stay in it, so the question is why would anyone want to? The overwhelming gratitude a saved person feels towards Christ is why they want to paint the picture of His death through baptism, and why they want to paint the picture of being baptized into His death to live a new life!

### **The Death of Me**

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

I was crucified with Christ! When Jesus died for me, He died so that I could die to the old ways, the old man, the old code, the old law, and allow the very nature and Spirit of Christ Jesus to live in me. When a person accepts the grace of God through Jesus' death on the cross they begin living by faith in the Son of God who loved them and gave Himself for them! And how do we stay consistent in this new life? How do we let Christ truly live through us? How do we overcome the old selfish nature that wants to be in control? The secret is found in this picture that Baptism paints. We die to our old ways and we bury them. We know the Blood of Jesus has washed away the guilt, shame and penalty of our sin. We paint that picture in baptism. But how do we stay faithful and consistent in our walk with God? Good question!! Jesus gave us the answer in Luke's gospel...

Luke 9:23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

We don't just wear a cross, we bear the cross daily! How do we take up the cross daily? We remember that old rugged cross that Jesus died upon for us! We were crucified with Him and have buried the old man, the old ways. In fact our text in Romans goes on to say it beautifully...

### **Baptism Pictures New Life**

Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Talk about exciting! When I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior and allowed Him to begin the process of becoming Lord of my life, things began to change. Oh, don't think for a moment I became perfect in my actions and no longer sinned, but the penalty of my sins was gone and I knew I had been given a second chance at life. A chance to live a life worth living! A life I could be excited about! And slowly but surely my actions began to change! My attitudes began to change! My desires began to change! My goals, my purpose, what I treasured, all of this began to take on new meaning!! You see, Jesus took care of the penalty of my sin, but He also overcame the power of my sin! I'll never be perfect in this life, but by God's grace I'll never be the same! And if you were looking for a passage of scripture that clearly speaks of this aspect of the picture baptism paints, I've got it for you, and please excuse me if I get a little excited when I read it...Colossians 2:9-15

Colossians 2:9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,

Colossians 2:10 and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.

Colossians 2:11 In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, Colossians 2:12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,

Colossians 2:14 having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

Colossians 2:15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

If that doesn't get you excited, then my heart breaks for you! Look at the details in the picture. Have you ever seen a piece of art or a picture and been amazed at the detail. Baptism is a picture with lots of really amazing details. According to this passage of Scripture...

In Christ all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form! You have been given fullness in Christ!

Christ is the head over every power and authority! In Christ the sinful nature has been circumcised, cut away, put off!

We've been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through our faith in the power of God!

We were dead in our sins and sinful nature but we've been made alive in Christ and forgiven of all our sins!

The written code with its regulations, that we couldn't live up to, was taken away when Jesus was nailed to the Cross!

Jesus disarmed the powers and authorities that were opposed to us by overcoming them on the Cross and the law was changed to grace!

These details are so beautiful that Paul said this in Galatians 6:14...

Galatians 6:14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Water baptism paints a picture of our baptism into Christ's death, burial and listen to what our text says next. Get ready because these are words to get excited about...

### **Baptism Pictures Two Resurrections**

Romans 6:5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

Not only does baptism paint a picture of the resurrection of Jesus, it also paints a picture of our resurrection! And our resurrection is past, present and future!

We were resurrected from the penalty of sin, are resurrected from the power of sin, and will be resurrected from the deadly consequence of sin! We are no longer held captive or entombed by the power of sin past, present or future!

Romans 6:6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—

Romans 6:7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

Romans 6:8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Romans 6:9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

Romans 6:10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Romans 6:11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

Romans 6:13 Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.

Romans 6:14 For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

Would you like to see a picture of this? Not a problem!