

# One baptism (Quality: Good)

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[ 0 : 00 ] As the Lord may be pleased to direct me, continuing upon the subject in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, I will speak this morning upon the last part of the fifth verse.

One baptism. The fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, the fifth verse, which reads, One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

But as I have, it will be remembered, spoken at some length upon the one Lord and the one faith, I come this morning to speak upon the one baptism.

And this one baptism, as you see, is the sixth of the seven features of spiritual unity.

The unity of the Spirit. There are, as I pointed out before, in this context, seven features of that holy unity.

[ 1 : 24 ] There are three in this fifth verse. One Lord, who is the head of the body, the church. One Lord Jesus Christ, who has redeemed the church with his own most precious blood, and will sanctify it by his own spirit and holiness and love, and glorify it in his own eternal glory at the last.

There is one Lord. And to that one Lord, all who are in the unity of the Spirit, look believingly, prayerfully, for everything they need.

To him their hearts submit in willing, tender, loving obedience. His example they follow.

Then there is one faith, which, as I have said, means both the truth of the gospel, which is the faith of God's elect, and the principle of faith, whereby the truth is received in a believing way into our heart.

For there is no receiving the one faith, except by believing. And it is this one faith, as it is received believingly and feelingly, in our hearts, and is made effectual in us, by the Holy Spirit, we are united to the one Lord, and brought into the true unity of the Spirit.

[ 3 : 21 ] For all who are in the unity of the Spirit, have received one faith into their hearts. And, all who have received that one faith, are in the true unity of the Spirit.

Then, there is one baptism. baptism. And that one baptism, is the outward profession, of that one faith, in that one Lord.

And so you see how these, are really uniting principles in themselves. I'm thankful in one way, that this expression, one baptism, comes in the course, of this subject.

Because, I feel, that, a baptism is not, often, if hardly at all, brought forward, in the ministry, and brought before your consideration, otherwise, and when there are occasions, for its administration.

But it may be, helpful today, if we are enabled, to consider this, without having, an actual administration, of it, to attend to.

[ 4 : 47 ] For, baptism, is a very solemn, a very blessed, ordinance of Jesus Christ. And, it should have, that careful, prayerful consideration, from us, that such an appointment, calls for.

For the Lord Jesus Christ, has not appointed, ordinances, for his people, to be indifferent about. That's one reason, why I feel, thankful, that opportunity, is given to me, to bring this, solemn subject, before your consideration.

and, as I have said, because, it is not often, mentioned, and because, it is such, an important subject, I, hope, that you will hear me, today, with, careful, consideration, and attention.

I will say, like the apostle did, I beseech you, brethren, to hear me, patiently, on this important matter, and all the more so, because, it is, a somewhat, difficult, and, in some sense, controverted, subject.

Now, I'm hoping, the Lord, will enable me, to speak, properly upon it, quite, realising, that there are, and always have been, many, godly people, who do not, see as we do, on this, matter.

[ 6 : 26 ] But then, brethren, we who preach, must be faithful, to our consciences, to the word of God, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to our hearers.

We must not keep back, anything that we feel, might not be acceptable, because, we feel it, might not be received, because that is, to please men.

And the apostle said, if I pleased men, I should not be, the servant, of the Lord. But there's another thing, brethren, I want carefully, to mention, on this matter, I'm, in a way, glad, for another reason, about this, point, of spiritual unity, the one baptism, comes in our way, at this particular time, to consider, and, that reason is this, there seems to be, a movement, in our denomination, to put the Lord's table, to put the Lord's table, first, and make that everything, and, to neglect, and set aside, the ordinance, of believers, baptism, and I, view that, with much, much concern,

Now, I don't think, I've ever, made public reference, directly, to anything, in our denominational, magazines, because, I, very much, dislike controversy, very much.

I've known very little profit ever come out of controversy and I'm afraid there's been too much of it in our denomination but nevertheless what needs to be said must be said now the question is raised with regard to the Lord's table that that is the intimate and supreme expression of the unity of the body of Christ and from that position is drawn this inference that it is schismatic to deny the Lord's Supper to any believer now I must make a stand about this because I observe this that in this contention there's an entire ignoring of baptism there's not one mention made of it now it cannot be scriptural it cannot be according to the mind of the Lord it cannot have his blessing upon it to set aside one ordinance in favour of another the question is asked is Christ divided the answer is no then why divide the ordinances

[ 10 : 10 ] Christ appointed one as much as he appointed the other and is not given to anyone minister or people or editor to set aside one ordinance and make the other all important now it is remarkable in this context of spiritual unity in this part of the chapter to the Ephesians that the apostle has not brought the Lord's Supper into it at all there is one baptism and that one baptism is set forth as one of the seven features that characterise true spiritual unity that being so it does seem to me that this follows to set aside baptism is a breach of spiritual unity because it is one of the seven features that characterise it one Lord one faith one baptism now

I won't labour this I only feel that it has come before me this morning without my seeking it or going out of the way to find a text about it it's come before me in the course of this chapter at a time when I feel this needs to be emphasised one Lord one faith one baptism now having mentioned this I won't say any more about it but as the Lord might help me come to speak of this one baptism and the place that it has in the spiritual unity of the body of Christ and before I enter into that two questions will arise in every thoughtful mind about this matter of the one baptism baptism and the first is exactly what baptism is meant for that has been controverted what is the one baptism and then secondly if we take it as I feel we must do that it means literal baptism by immersion how is it then that one baptism this one baptism is a feature of spiritual unity when so many who are in that spiritual unity by faith in Jesus

Christ have not been baptised how can it be a feature of spiritual unity now I must touch if I'm able clear these two points because I want to make this difficult and delicate matter as clear as I can now what exactly are we to understand this expression one baptism to mean perhaps some might say well where is there any difficulty about it of course it means baptism in the ordinary sense of the word but then some think not some think it might mean the baptism of the Holy Spirit well I wouldn't say that that does not enter into this but it seems quite clear to me that the one baptism of my text means literal actual water baptism and for this reason when the

Holy Spirit intends us to understand some other kind of baptism other than baptism as an ordinance it's expressly said so I've considered this carefully wherever the baptism of the Holy Spirit is intended baptism is expressed it is said to be the baptism of the Spirit or by one Spirit are you all baptized into one body although I think there it means that we are baptized by immersion through the Holy Spirit's teaching and grace in our hearts baptism but where any other baptism than baptism in water is intended it is expressly said that when you just read baptism especially in a context like this

I think it must be understood to mean baptism as an appointed ordinance but what can we say on the other point if there is one baptism and that is a feature of spiritual unity and spiritual unity embraces all who really and truly believe in Jesus Christ how is it that there is such a difference about it now it cannot be denied and I will be the last to deny that many truly godly gracious people have never passed through that ordinance and yet they've been in the unity of the spirit but my friends we must understand it such a case as that there are godly people true believers who have not been baptized by this one baptism is a condition that never arose in the apostles days it never arose at all it is as evident as anything can be evident that when any being called by the grace of

[ 17 : 08 ] God to repentance and were brought to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ they were baptized for the Lord's commission to the disciples was so plain going into all the world and preach the gospel baptizing them it means make disciples of all nations baptizing them and all the instances we read in the Acts of the Apostles which is our best guide with regard to apostolic practice always show or at least in so many instances as to establish it to be the general practice that when any were brought to believe in Jesus Christ they accepted the Lord's appointment and never questioned it it comes to my mind that occasion when the apostle found certain disciples and said to them have you received the Holy

Ghost since you believed by that I understand with regard to those supernatural gifts which at that time at any rate marked the Holy Spirit's presence and power or at least in many instances well now have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed and they said we have not so much as heard that there be any Holy Ghost what what unto what then were ye baptized they said unto John's baptism now the apostle obviously took it for granted that if they had been disciples they had been baptized he never asked them if they had been unto what then were ye baptized he took it for granted and quite rightly only their baptism had not been a complete baptism of faith in the

Lord Jesus Christ but only repentance as John preached it and I need not take my time this morning in going through the Acts of the Apostles to make it clear that it was accepted by all believers and so there was one baptism because they were all baptized that seems very clear there was no breach in the union of the Spirit at all on that matter I know how well it would have been if that had never been departed from if that plain simple command of Jesus Christ and the practice of the Apostles had never been departed from it would have saved no end of contention and confusion but any sort of departure from the word of God and the command of the Lord Jesus

Christ and the practice of the Apostles is bound to cause dissension and division I could heartily wish which I'm afraid will never be at least in my time that there might be a return to the simple practice of the Apostles as the Lord appointed it without any questioning but still if we may read it into it although in my feelings it is not directly intended but if we may read into it the baptism of the Holy Spirit well then of course all who are in the unity of the faith have been in that sense partakers of the baptism of the Holy Spirit well that's how I consider that question but now you may remember that when

I've been speaking on this subject of spiritual union the unity of the Spirit I've said it is to be regarded in two ways as the unity of the Spirit in all believers everywhere in all the world and in every generation the one spiritual body of Christ but that the unity of the Spirit is also to be seen in the unity of believers gathered together personally and joined together in the churches of God and this one baptism certainly I feel may apply to us we who are members of this church are joined together in the faith of Jesus Christ and in love to his name well we've all been baptized every member of this church has been baptized and we may truly say with regard to our church unity our one baptism is the expression of it we've all been baptized and therefore we're all in the unity of the one baptism we have all been brought to submit ourselves to it believing that it is the Lord's appointment and that it becomes us as followers of Jesus

[ 23 : 08 ] Christ to follow him in this appointed way so that with regard to our case as a church here there is one baptism to us and we've all submitted to it one Lord one faith one baptism and if ever that becomes a disputed matter in our church there will be division directly there's sure to be now I've been rather known this morning on my opening observations I hope I haven't said anything that has struck your feelings at all as being hard or dogmatic or positive I can only say I hold these principles as convictions in my mind but not to be bigoted with regard to them and not to say why no one's right spiritually who doesn't see with us in this particular

God forbid that I or you should be so bigoted in our views as that but the one baptism is the one baptism and there it stands in the scripture there it stands doesn't it one baptism now is it necessary for me to say again that the question of baptism does not in itself affect the salvation of the soul no believer in Jesus Christ is ever kept out of heaven because they haven't been baptized and it doesn't follow that everyone that has been baptized will ever be found in that glorious and holy state of God with regard to that it's entirely a question of whether we've been born again of the Holy

Spirit because we know that without that no one can see the kingdom of God God whether we've been brought to repent of sin and to believe in Jesus Christ and to receive the truth of the gospel into our hearts it all depends on that whether we reach heaven at the last or not it all depends on that well now if I put these things in their right place the Lord help me to develop the subject a little more fully taking then that baptism as we have it in this text and this context means believers baptism we may consider it a little its nature its purpose and the spirit and motive in which it should be attended to these are important considerations for us especially for all of you who are spiritually minded who feel these things for yourselves and who desire to do that which is right in the Lord's sight and that which will honour and glorify his name here are the considerations for me to lay humbly and sincerely and tenderly before you today and first of all baptism is intended to be a public and open profession of our faith for the

Lord has joined together faith in the heart which is a secret thing with the profession of faith which is a public and an open thing now faith itself as the Lord is pleased to communicate it to our hearts or to bring it forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit through the word is a secret thing especially in its commencing no one can see when the word of truth comes home with power to the heart in such a way as to bring that heart to believe it is a secret work of the Holy Spirit and although in some cases of course the evidences of it fairly soon begin to show themselves that the work itself is entirely secret in the soul there is always that feature of the work of the

Holy Spirit it's so secret and often when that gracious work is begun it seems to cause one to shut up to others with regard to it we ought to be very tender with regard to the commencement of the work and teaching of the Holy Ghost in the soul it's something cannot be forced it cannot be forced it is best left prayerfully to develop in its own quiet secret inward healing way it will come to light in due course you'll know to use a very simple idea at this point if you sow a seed in the ground you hope it will germinate and in due course will begin to grow up above the surface and develop but it wouldn't be any good if you kept digging it up again to see whether it was growing or not you must nourish it and wait and so it is with faith in the heart it's an incorruptible seed of eternal life and it begins to work in different ways spiritual feelings begin to spring up in the soul and no one knows do they they may be listening to me this morning

[ 30 : 11 ] I very believe there are some who have never said a word about what they feel in their souls and what effect what they hear or what they're taught has had upon their feelings you know you haven't said a word about it have you and that is just how the work of God begins in the soul it doesn't begin in the tongue it begins in the heart it doesn't begin with words it begins with silent secret deep feelings and as a rule the deeper the feelings the slower we are to say much about them it was a feature in the parable of the sower that those who receive the seed into very shallow ground for that's what it meant when it said that there was not much earth very shallow ground immediately it sprung up immediately and as soon it withered away as it sprung up as soon as it was scorched now it isn't a feature of living faith in the heart if there's any depth to it that it springs up immediately into words but then is it always to be a secret in the heart is the work of the Holy

Spirit always to be kept so silent not a word to be spoken about it no my friends no you must remember that word in the Romans with the heart man believeth unto righteousness that is to say he is justified in the righteousness of Jesus Christ upon his believing with the heart with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and then what and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation yes well it ought to announce the same thing for baptism is a public profession open to all of our faith in Jesus Christ whether we use any words or not it amounts to this

I'm a follower of Jesus Christ by his grace in my soul and in love to him in my heart he has brought me to be a follower of him he has gone before me in this matter and he directs me to follow him believingly and humbly and this I desire to do and my baptism is my following of Jesus Christ it is the profession of my faith and my love to him in that appointed way the way that he himself has appointed now it's time for me to close baptism is a public open profession of an inward faith in our hearts in Jesus Christ it all comes to this doesn't it if thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest and the expression with all thy heart means that it's a real believing in the heart itself it's not just a mental matter not just an agreement with certain truths concerning

Jesus Christ that they are true it's a heart believing deep real sincere with desire with affection with feeling now if thou believest with all thine heart there's one baptism for you there's one baptism for you and this should be considered that the Lord's honour and the Lord's glory is involved in this shouldn't it it is to his honour that we should follow him profess that faith in his name that he has so graciously imparted to our hearts through his good spirit after all breath in what has the

Lord Jesus Christ done for us if you have hope in him faith in him what has he done for you well you know what he has done for you he has poured out his very soul unto death for you he has shed his heart's blood for you he has borne every one of your sins in his own dear body on the tree to put them away from you and from the sight of God remember that his precious body was rent in death to make a way to God and to heaven for you think of the cross he carried oh how weighty how bitter how dreadful think of the cross he carried and who did he carry it for but for you there should not these things weigh upon our hearts they should and if then you would honor him if you would follow him if you would glorify him then there is one baptism as an expression of that faith and love one Lord one faith one baptism amen one baptism amen big you