

“The Great Commission”

By Bob Heitzler

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If Parrish had asked me my testimony about when I got baptized, I would've said, “I remember back in 1978. It was a late night, and I got into some serious trouble with my family, and the authorities. I said, ‘God, if you’re real, I need to know. It’s got to be more than just living, getting married, having kids, and dying.’ Right after that, everything seemed to just fall apart on me. I got kicked out of the house in my junior year of high school. I got my G.E.D., joined the Navy, and the next thing I knew, I was in an open-bay room full of a whole bunch of other people (about 88 of them). I didn’t know anybody in that room at all. Most of them were from this area of the country; I was from Connecticut. The issue that I had that got me kicked out of the house was that I had trouble with alcohol. I drank way too much, started at a young, young age—too young; younger than I care to share. I remember I stayed dry for eight weeks, in boot camp. ‘I can do this! I’ve got the power!’ When I got out of boot camp, I couldn’t. I was out on the strip, and I got invited, by one of the guys running one of the stores, to go up to the Center. I went up to the Center. It was right in the middle of a worship time, so I went in there. What I felt in there was real. I had ever seen this before. What was in there was just a powerful presence of God. I dismissed it, and went back to the club. I kept trying to get drunk, and I couldn’t do it. I kept drinking and drinking, and I just stayed sober. I heard the message over and over in my head, the message of salvation that the preacher had been preaching. If you’ve heard a rumor about somebody that did that, it was me. I remember God spoke to me clearly, and said, ‘I’m answering the prayer that you prayed back in December.’ This was about one in the morning, I was at the Servicemen’s Center at seven in the morning; it wasn’t open yet, but I couldn’t wait for it to open. I was waiting all day long for it to open, not knowing that I could just walk up there and asked to be baptized. The preacher was preaching, and I waited for him to stop so that I could go up in the altar call. When they had the altar call, I ran to the front—boom!—I was there. I got baptized in Jesus’ name the next day. We were using another church’s baptismal tank while we were building ours here. There was a layer of ice on that thing. They were breaking ice up, and I volunteered to go first. There were five of us there to get baptized, and I was so afraid that Jesus was going to come back, and leave me behind; I was scared to death. I wanted to get baptized right away. I got the baptism Bible study a week later. I just knew, you know?” I thought I would share that. It’s had its ups and downs and bumps, but the one thing that’s remained consistent is Jesus. He changed my life. The only consistent thing in my life is Jesus.

In last week’s message, Parrish said, “What’s the Big Deal?” You know, I shared with a lot of people about, “The Big Deal” this week. I opened three doors to share baptism with people at work this week. If people are praying, pray that it brings forth fruit. What’s the big deal? Jesus died on the cross, he shed His blood for us, He put everything away; He was establishing something that was about to happen, the Great Commission was about to happen. He was putting things in place; He knew what had to happen before He actually walked down among us. He had this all figured out, years ago, before He came. The Big Deal was that all of us can enter into Heaven. It wasn’t for the Jews, it was for all of us. He came unto His own, and His own rejected Him, so he turned to the Gentiles, which is us. Of course, any Jews that get baptized in Jesus’ name will make it in, too. It’s for all of us; that’s the big deal.

The message that I have is, “The Great Commission” today, and it has three parts:

1. Why Water?
2. Why Jesus Name?
3. Is This Essential?

The Great Commission!!

Matthew 28:18-20 ...Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them...

He also shared in Mark:

Mark 16:15-16 ...He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...

Another account of it is in Luke:

Luke 24:46-49 ...remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations...

He gave us a commission to go out and teach and baptize people. How do we baptize people? Let's first go to Mark Chapter 1; I learned something about this yesterday. It's about Jesus' baptism.

Mark 1:1-5 ...John did baptize... preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins...

He was already doing this! He was baptizing people in the river already for this! And another account of this:

Matthew 3:13-17 ...Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness...

Here's Jesus, He hasn't done anything wrong, there's no sin in His life at all, and yet He wants John to baptize Him. This is our example, that we can't say, “But Jesus didn't get baptized, why should I?” Jesus did it for an example that we would get baptized. Jesus came straightway out of the water, but He had to be in the water to come out of the water. I know there are certain churches that teach that sprinkling is baptism. Is it really? If I walked up to this brother here (I'm not going to dump the water on you) and did this to him (flicking a few water droplets), is that baptism? What does baptism mean, Red?

(Chris “Red” Ulrich stands and reads the [definition](#) of the Greek word translated as baptism in the New Testament) Immersion, submersion, (I'm just going to read a little bit more) of calamities and afflictions with which one is quite overwhelmed.

So, to be baptized, you must be overwhelmed with a liquid, right? What I did to him was just sprinkling. Why total immersion? Basically, we're talking about water there, right?

1. Why Water?

Water has always been used for cleansing, throughout the entire Old Testament. I have four examples. All of these account that happen because of watergave a fresh start

2 Kings 5:10-14 ... Wash, and be clean...

Elisha told Naaman to dip himself seven times in the Jordan to be cleansed to be cleansed from his leprosy. Elisha didn't even go talk to him, he just sent a messenger and said, "Tell him to go dip himself seven times in the river Jordan and he'll be cleansed." As you read the story, Naaman was kind of upset about it, he thought the prophet would have done something. One of his servants said to him, if the prophet had asked you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? So Naaman decided to do what the man of God said to do. So he dipped himself seven times in the river Jordan. First dip, he came up, and he was still leprosy. Second dip, he came up, still leprosy. Sixth dip, he came up, still leprosy. What do you think was going through his mind? Is this really gonna work? Seventh dip, he came up and his leprosy was gone; he was healed. He got a fresh start coming out of the water. He was free of leprosy, now. Faith got him in the water to clean that away.

Exodus 14:21-31 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea...

Another story that we know about is Moses at the Red Sea. Moses is at the edge of the Red Sea. Anybody know how many people were there that day? About a million. A million people behind Moses. Now they have this body of water. God said, "Raise up your rod," and he did, and it caused a strong East wind to blow, and it separated the waters and the dry land appeared. They passed through on dry land. They got to the other side—now the Red sea is behind them—he raised his rod and closed it. What was in there was the Egyptians, hunting them down. It wiped all the evil out. Once again, water wiped away evil; it wiped away their past, now they've got a fresh start on the other side again.

Genesis 7:1-8:22 ... Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark...

Noah and the Ark. God was pretty upset, and repented that He had made man, but He found Noah and his family, and told him to prepare an arc. It rained forty days and forty nights and the arc was lifted. It's amazing that the water was fifteen cubic feet above the highest point in the world. I don't know what the highest point of the world was, but right now, that's Mount Everest, and that's what? twenty-nine thousand feet? almost six miles high. So, then, another fort-five feet on top of that. That's a lot of water to rain down in forty days. It wiped all the evil away. Then land appeared, and we started fresh again. It seems like every time water was used, it caused a new life to be born; something to start again.

Genesis 1:9-10 ... Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together...

Creation – dry land appeared. God moved upon the face of the deep, and one day let dry land appear. Dry land came out of the water, dry land, and He blessed it, and He had a place for plants and animals and human beings, and so on and so on. Water was always used for the cleansing. So, it's only natural that John the Baptist was baptizing in water unto Christ—not *into* Christ, *unto* Christ—he kept saying that somebody more worthy was coming.

2. Why Jesus Name?

The gentleman in the back with the grey beard—I'm sorry, the white beard—would you come up, please? (pointing to someone else) I need you to count for me, okay? (back to the bearded gentleman) Are you a grandfather? Are you a father? Do you have nephews and nieces? that makes you an uncle. You have parents, so that makes you a son. Do you have any cousins? That's five titles, so far. Are you the owner of a company? That's six. Are you a veteran? Do you have a spirit about you? How many is that now? seven. My question is, "How many people are standing up here?" one. Is his name father, uncle, or veteran? What is his name? Howard. That's what it took for me to understand that Jesus was the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; it took a similar demonstration for me. I'm going to pick on one more person. George, would the young lady sitting next to you stand, please? (Bianca stood up) Are you a student in high school? Are you a senior? What's your title when you're on your sniper team? shooter? Do you have any cousins? Do you have a sister? Are you a daughter? Right there are six titles that she is, but how many are standing right there? one. Her name is? Bianca. We understand that Jesus is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that's referenced in:

John 14:8-11 ...he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?...

Jesus was telling him exactly who He was.

John 14:25-26 ...the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name...

Who's speaking? Jesus. Who's name are we talking about? Jesus. So, if Jesus is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are there any other titles for Jesus that aren't mentioned here? The Great I Am, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Rose of Sharon, Prince of Peace... He had so many different titles, but He has one name, and that name is Jesus. I know I'm talking to a room full of people that have been around, and I know I'm talking to people that have been baptized, but, you know what? we've got to learn to break it down so that we can explain it to other people, too. That's important, you know? If you don't break open the Word, and just study how to prepare to talk to people, you're going to be on the spot like what happened to me—God sent somebody to me, and I wasn't ready. God fried my bacon. I prayed to God to give me a second chance, and the second chance happened, and I got to share.

How Did Peter Baptize?

Acts 2:37-38 ...be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...

Peter had just preached a powerful message, and they were pricked in their heart, and asked what to do. Peter didn't say, let's go to Denny's...Remission means to remember no more; it's a fresh start.

How Did Ananias Baptize?

Acts 9:17-18 ...arose, and was baptized.

Paul was knocked off his horse. Later, in his testimony, Paul shared this:

Acts 22:12-16 ...arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

What's the name of the Lord?

How Did Paul Baptize?

Acts 19:1-5 ...they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Satan has robbed people of their birthright. I showed you how Peter, Ananias, and Paul baptized, because the Bible says, In the mouth of two or three witnesses, let every word be established (2 Corinthians 13:1).

3. Is this essential?

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...

That seems pretty cut and dried, either you believe and get baptized, or you're not saved.

1 Peter 3:20-22 ...The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us...

Peter tells us that baptism saves us.

Romans 6:3 ...so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

When He rose from the dead, he had a different body.

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Colossians 2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him...

This is my closing Scripture:

John 3:1-15 ...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God...

Nicodemus came by night—is that because he didn't want to be seen talking to Jesus? Jesus didn't offer him coffee or a bagel. You have to go through it to see the kingdom of God. Sometimes you come across people that are not going to get it. Pray for them. God needs to wake them up. One of the questions that I keep hearing at work is, "What about the thief?" Galatians and Colossians tell us that the purpose of baptism is to put on the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It seems to me that thief put on the death, burial and resurrection without baptism.

Matthew 28:18-20 ...baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost...

This was not a baptism going on!! This was Jesus telling the disciples hat to do. We have read what the disciples did with what Jesus told them.

Be ready. Seek for people to talk to. Do believe that there is a God. If people don't want to listen, keep praying for them.

