***BAPTISM: FAITH IN THE WORKING OF GOD April 25, 2014***

***Gospel Meeting: Real Life For Everyone Northwest Church, New Hope, MN—Max Dawson***

*Introduction:*

1. Would you agree that if you have Jesus, that you have what you need spiritually?

a. If you have Him, you have the *only* Savior of the world, Acts 4:12; John 14:6; John 3:16.

b. The truth about your completeness in Christ is declared in Colossians 2:10.

2. Yet some folks who teach that you must have Christ, would deny you access to Him.

a. Colossians 2:10 says we are complete “in Him.” Outside of Him we are incomplete, Acts 4:12.

b. A successful scheme of the devil is the promotion of a doctrine that denies men access to the salvation which is in Jesus—the doctrine that denies that baptism is essential to salvation! You may hear: “Just pray a prayer…just believe…just accept Jesus…salvation is by faith alone.”

c. Baptism puts us into Christ. No matter what men say about Jesus, when they deny that baptism saves, they deny the very act that puts men into a saving relationship with Jesus.

d. Our text in Colossians is one that answers this faulty doctrine. Read Colossians 2:10-13.

*The Lesson:*

1. **Circumcision made \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Colossians 2:11.**
   1. Circumcision was a practice under the Old Testament Law of Moses.
      1. All male children were circumcised on the eighth day following birth (Genesis 17:12).
      2. Old Testament circumcision was a sign between God and His people (Genesis 17:11).
      3. Circumcision of the male child involved a cutting off of flesh (Genesis 17:11).
      4. It was a circumcision made by the hands of men (Exodus 4:25).
   2. But Paul speaks of a circumcision made without hands, Colossians 2:11.
      1. He calls this “the circumcision of Christ”—a circumcision performed by Christ upon us.
      2. It is a “putting off the body of sins.” “Body” denotes the whole mass of sins we have committed in the flesh. All of our sins are cut off, removed and taken away.
      3. This is circumcision made without hands. It is performed by Christ. Jesus takes away our sins (John 1:29). Without this work that Christ does upon us, we would be without hope.
   3. The question for us is this: When or how does this taking away of our sins take place?
2. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with Him in baptism, Colossians 2:12.**
   1. This is when the removal of our sins takes place. This is the circumcision made without hands.
      1. It happens at the point of baptism. See Romans 6:3-4 for a parallel thought. Note: “buried with Him.” Baptism is a burial into the death of Christ—where His blood was shed.
      2. Sprinkling and pouring of water (as practiced by many religions) do not constitute a burial.
   2. “You also were raised with Him.” We were buried with Him, we were raised with Him.
      1. This describes the action of baptism—a burial followed by rising from the water. It also describes how our baptism pictures what happened to Jesus. Jesus died, was buried and then was raised to life. We die to sin, are buried with Him and are raised to have new life.
      2. Why do we have new life at this point? Because Christ has taken away our sins—cut off and removed. Remember what we saw in verse 11—“the circumcision of Christ.”
   3. But someone says, “That can’t be right because baptism is a work. It is a work of man and cannot have anything to do with our salvation!” Have you ever heard that objection? It is part of a scheme to confuse people about salvation and prevent them from being saved.
      1. Is baptism a work of man? It is claimed that being baptized (in order to be saved) is an attempt by men to work their way into heaven, trying to merit or earn salvation.
      2. While you can’t be saved by your own works, and can’t earn or merit salvation, to say that people are trying to work their way to heaven by baptism completely misrepresents baptism, and shows complete lack of understanding of such texts as Colossians 2:12.
      3. If we ask the question, “Who is at work in baptism?” does our text give us an answer?
         1. It is “the working of God.” In no place in the Bible is baptism called “a work of man.” While it is something man must submit to, it is God at work. Where did preachers ever get the foreign idea that baptism is a work of man? They didn’t get it from the Bible.
         2. Just as God was at work when He raised Christ from the dead, He is likewise at work when He raises us up to have new life. It is God who is at work in baptism.
      4. Someone says, “I never believed baptism was to take away sins. But, I’ve been baptized, so I am OK.” But the text says, “…raised with Him *through faith* in the working of God.”
         1. If you thought baptism was a work of man, then you had no faith in the working of God! Your baptism is not only different from this text, it is opposed to this text!
         2. When you were baptized, did you believe God was going to save you? “No. I believed I was already saved.” Then you were lacking in faith because you were taught wrong! You could not have salvation by faith because you were lacking in faith!
   4. We ask another question: Who really believes in salvation by faith? Is it those who deny the working of God in baptism, or is it those who have faith in the working of God in baptism?
3. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ together with Him, Colossians 2:13.** 
   1. Paul concludes by showing us the consequence of what God did for us as we were baptized.
      1. We were dead in our sins—separated from God. We were dead in the uncircumcision of our flesh; that is, we were still in our sins because our sins were not yet taken away.
      2. We are made alive together with Christ. Again, the action here is attributed to God. “He has made us…” This is God at work! Life is what we need—and what we get in Christ!
      3. God forgives us of *all* our trespasses. Every sin blotted out and truly forgiven!
   2. Sin no longer remains. People who were once dead in sin are now alive in Christ.

*Conclusion:*

1. Can you see now why Paul said in Colossians 2:10 that “you are complete in Him”? You needed salvation; you wanted salvation; you sought salvation. Now you have it!

2. But, do *you* have it? Has God worked in *your* life to take away sin? Or have *you* been deceived?