

“One Baptism”  
Ephesians 4:1-6  
(Preached at Trinity, January 4, 2015)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As I've pointed out, one of the great themes of the Book of Ephesians is the unity of the body of Christ. In **Verses 2-6** Paul describes the substance of our unity. Paul maintains in these verses that unity is something we DO have. It is of the essence of being the body of Christ. Unity is something we share but it is also something we have to preserve.  
**Eph 4:3** - "being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
2. In these verses Paul sets forth the foundations of our unity using a seven-fold expression of the word "One." They are not exhortations but declarations. They describe what we are, what we share. He is not saying, "Let us be united as one body" but "There is one body, one Spirit, etc." Our duty is to preserve the unity we have.
3. So far we've examined the first five of these. We are one body and one Spirit. And we share one glorious hope. Paul then adds to these, "One Lord and one faith"  
This morning I want to direct your attention to the sixth, "one baptism."
4. First of all, I don't think this is referring to our spiritual baptism, the baptism by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. It is true that by this baptism the body of Christ is united. We need to understand that water baptism points to our baptism into Christ. We are united in one baptism.
5. This may seem very strange to us seeing how the church is so fragmented today on this topic. Many reformed churches insist that infant baptism is essential to the reformed faith and don't consider Baptist churches reformed at all.
6. How is it we can say the church is united under "one baptism?"  
Let me say this carefully.
  - A. This side of heaven the church will never be fully united. The local church of Jerusalem experienced wonderful unity and oneness.  
**Acts 2:41-47 NAU** - "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. <sup>42</sup> They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup> and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. <sup>46</sup> Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved."

- B. But by **Acts 15** we find that the church at large was already experiencing division and controversy. The first century church struggled long and hard to find unity among Jews and Gentiles. When we come to Paul's letter to the Church of Corinth we find a congregation plagued by division on many fronts.
- C. We have to labor to preserve the unity God gave us -  
**Ephesians 4:3 NAU** - "being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
7. Paul gives seven sure foundations of unity – One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father.
8. Of all of these baptism is most difficult.
- A. There is truly one and only one baptism just as there is only one Lord and one faith. Some have changed the Biblical essence of Christ but they haven't changed the one Christ. He is unchangeable. Any other Christ is a false Christ—though there are many today.
- B. There is truly and only one faith. Some have perverted the essence of the Gospel but that doesn't change the Gospel. Paul wrote in Galatians 1  
**Galatians 1:6-8 NAU** - " I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; <sup>7</sup> which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!"  
 There is but one Gospel – one faith, one way of being justified before God.
- C. And there is only one baptism. The Bible doesn't give us several options and then allows us to choose our preference. There is one baptism.
9. Thankfully, we are united in many aspects of this one baptism.  
**Charles Hodge**, a Presbyterian, writes: "Under the *New Covenant* the baptized are men bound together in covenant with Christ and with each other. There is but one baptism. All the baptized make the same profession, accept the same covenant, and are consecrated to the same Lord and Redeemer. They are therefore one body."  
 A. To all of these words we say, amen. But not in the same way Hodge meant them. Hodge was a Presbyterian who believed that our infant children are to be baptized into this covenant. This is not the one baptism Paul was speaking of.  
 B. Baptism does not testify to the unity in covenant of believers and their children. Baptism testifies to the unity of those joined to Christ. This one baptism must be for believers alone – those who are a part of the New Covenant.  
**Jeremiah 31:34 NAU** - "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."
10. I believe the "one baptism" Paul was referring to is believers baptism for I believe this is the Baptism clearly taught in Scripture.  
 As we find clearly in Hodges words, which he inconsistently practiced, Christians are indeed united in one baptism, making the same profession, accepting the same covenant, and consecrated to the same Lord and Redeemer.
11. This morning I'm going to show the unity we share in this one baptism.

- I. Baptism symbolizes several aspects of that unity we share with other believers
- A. First of all, it is the outward testimony of our faith  
 “One Lord, one faith, one baptism”
1. Baptism is an ordinance, a command of Christ  
**Matthew 28:19-20 NAU** - "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
  2. It is the outward expression of the inward work of the Holy Spirit.  
 It is an experience shared by all who profess Christ
  3. The Great Commission commands baptism for disciples alone.
- B. Baptism symbolizes our union with Christ in His death and resurrection being buried and rising again with Christ – (describe symbols)  
**Romans 6:3-6 NAU** - "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, <sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;"  
**Colossians 2:12 NAU** - "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."
1. Jesus redeemed us from the curse of sin. He took our place upon the cross.  
 Those who are believe upon Him are united with Him. We become one with Him. This means the redeemed participate in His crucifixion. When He died we died with Him. When He arose we arose with Him.
  2. Only immersion offers an adequate picture of this symbol – (explain)
  3. All believers share in this work of Christ
- C. Baptism symbolizes our being engrafted into Christ. We are a part of His body.  
**Galatians 3:27-28 NAU** - " For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
1. Paul is speaking of our union with Christ that our baptism symbolizes.  
 Paul links our union with one another to our union with Christ.
  2. Baptism symbolizes the baptism that the Holy Spirit has accomplished in uniting us to the body of Christ.  
**1 Corinthians 12:13 NAU** - "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."  
**Galatians 3:27-28 NAU** - "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

3. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the work of uniting us to Christ. The Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ. Water baptism symbolizes this spiritual baptism. As we read about baptism in the NT it is often difficult to discern if it is referring to water baptism or spiritual baptism—or more likely, to both.
- D. Baptism symbolizes the cleansing and purifying work of Christ
1. It is the outward symbol of the inward washing. This is the experience of every believer.  
**Acts 22:16 NAU** - "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name."  
**Titus 3:5-6 NAU** - "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,"  
**Hebrews 10:21-22 NAU** - "and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."
  2. All believers share in this outward demonstration of the inward change
  3. As Christians we have a unity in holiness  
Peter wrote of this unified experience:  
**1 Peter 3:20-21 NAU** - "who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the water*. <sup>21</sup> Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you-- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,"
- II. There is a unity in the church ordinances. We share together at the Lord's Table. We also share together in baptism. As each new convert is baptized we all participate in their baptism
- A. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are means of grace
1. God uses them as a means of strengthening our faith when we are baptized. We are reminded of what Christ has done for us.
  2. Every time we witness a baptism we share in this grace. We too are reminded of what Christ has done for us. We are united together in this shared experience.
  3. Baptism serves as a lifelong reminder of our death in Christ. Sin no longer has dominion over us  
**Romans 6:1-4 NAU** - "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup> May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."

**Colossians 2:10-12 NAU** - "in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; <sup>11</sup> and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; <sup>12</sup> having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."

4. When we by faith follow the Lord in baptism we are saying that we believe in Christ's atoning death and in His bodily resurrection. We are also saying that having believed the gospel, we have died to our old manner of life. No longer do we serve sin, self, and the world, but we are now alive to Christ. The old self is "buried."
5. We make this profession in the presence of the covenant community—the church. Baptism is a reminder of the unity of the Body of Christ  
Baptism is a reminder of our fellowship with Christ and with each other

**Conclusion:**

1. Baptism, like the Lord's Supper, is a visual demonstration of the Gospel to sinners
  - a. Our two ordinances symbolize the three elements of the Gospel –  
That Jesus died, was buried, and that He rose again
  - b. Baptism be a demonstration of the saving grace of God
    - You must die to sin, to self
    - You must be raised anew – you must be born again
    - You must be washed of the pollution of sin.
  - c. Baptism does not do this – Only Christ can do this!
2. Baptism is the embodiment of the Gospel. We are united together through faith in Christ. One Lord and one faith.