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Presentation Transcript
The New You
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Bill here for LifeResource Ministries.

We're continuing on today with our series on *Baptism*. This is the fourth and final one. The title is *The New You*.

Okay, so you've just been baptized. What next? Are you saved yet? Are you a mortal yet? What's the difference between pre- and post-baptism? We'll let's start with the easiest one first.

Pinch yourself. What did you get? Did you feel it? If you did, then you're still mortal, human, physical. That means you haven't been resurrected to a new immortal life yet. You're still subject to the human organism and all its pulls. So you can still sin. Consequently, you can also still blow it and lose out on eternal life. Some people say they were saved when they were baptized, but from my perspective, that *is* and *isn't* true. It just depends on what you mean by *saved*. So let's clear away the confusion by reading the Book.

Matthew 1:21 – *She will bear a Son and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.* Do you know who said that? Well, it was the angel who told Joseph that his wife, Mary, was pregnant by the Holy Spirit.

So it comes on pretty high authority that Jesus came to save us from our sins. How does He do that? Well, He died in our place and paid the death penalty for our sins. That's called *grace* – undeserved pardon. We're somehow saved from the penalty of our sins, even though we don't deserve it. Undeserved forgiveness is *not* an excuse to commit more sins. If we do that – and we all do – then our eternal life is not in the bag after baptism. Read the Book with me some more.

Hebrews 10:26 – *For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.*

Once baptized, then, it's possible to lose salvation. It's right there in the Bible. How did Paul say we could lose salvation? "For if we go on sinning deliberately." You know, we all sin. And those of us who have been baptized and made a commitment not to, usually we sin out of weakness or inadvertently. We can be forgiven for those sins. But to go on living a sinning lifestyle when we know better.... Remember that the Bible definition of a sin is the violation of God's law. If we willfully violate it freely, we can still lose out. I don't think many people who have been committed to Jesus Christ have done that, but baptism is an agreement to become a bondsman of Jesus Christ, and, if we don't live up to our end of the deal, God isn't obligated to live up to His end either.

Now, am I saying that we earn salvation by our own efforts? Well, for starters, there is nothing we can do to be forgiven of past sins. You can't unring a bell. If a person commits a sin, there's a penalty that must be paid. Once forgiven, however, we're to strive to live sin-free, like Christ lived. And we *can* be forgiven because of what Christ did. But after that forgiveness, then we need to strive to live sin-free. To do anything else is to disrespect the sacrifice Christ made – to cheapen it.

God expects us to do what we can, however weak and imperfect we are, to live like Christ lived. Let's read more about that in the Book. Paul wrote an amazing discourse in Colossians 3 about the salvation process works. Here it goes – Colossians 3:1:

Colossians 3:1 – *If, then, you have been raised with Christ – and you were when you were baptized, if you knew enough about what it meant to make it meaningful to God – seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth.* What does that mean? What are the things that are above? Well, the values of God, God's way of life, His character, the example set by Jesus, the goal God has set before all of us – to live eternally with Him as His children. Those are things above. Then continuing in verse 3:

V-3 – *For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.* What's Paul saying there? Well, at baptism, you gave up your ways. You died to them to serve God. Now your life belongs to God. He's going to work a quiet miracle in your life – kind of like planting a seed. We plant it and out of sight a little miracle happens underground. And what happens after that then in our baptismal process? Well, let's read on – verse 4:

V-4 – *When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.* God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, which is Christ's mind and attitude implanted in us at baptism, will begin a perfect process in us. And one day – not now, but when Christ returns – when those who have given their lives over to God are resurrected from the dead, then

there will be no more hiding the secret. What God is doing in your life will be seen and you'll be transformed in body, just like you were transformed in attitude at baptism. He tells us that Jesus is the architect of our salvation, and that He will perfect each one of us, and, when the time is right, will present us faultless before God the Father. Are we a part of that process? Is there anything we have to do? Well, Paul tells us. Let's keep reading – Colossians 3:5:

V-5 – *Put to death, therefore* – that's something we have to do – we have to put something to death – *what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, covetousness, which is idolatry.* Recognize any of these? Covetousness, sexual immorality? Yes! They're two of the Ten Commandments. They're the laws of God. Colossians 3:6:

V- 6 – *On account of these, the wrath of God is coming. In these, you, too, once walked when you were living in them, but now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge, after the image of its Creator.* There it is: the new you. When God talks about what happens to us after baptism, He says that we're converted – changed from one thing to another. We enter a *process* of change. He tells us to stop doing the things we just read about – the ways of this world and life. And He tells us to start doing the things we're going to read about next, in verse 12:

V-12 – *Put on, then, as God's chosen ones – holy and beloved – compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, bearing with one another, and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you – so you also must forgive. But above all these things, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts – to which you were called in one body – and be thankful.* That's what the new you is like. That's what we're striving to become. All those things that are mentioned there are, actually, an extension of the Ten Commandments – how to love God and how to love fellow man.

Notice that he says “love is the greatest of all.” What is love again? Well, we read this in our last presentation. What are the two greatest loves? Love God and love God's children. And how are those two loves elaborated? The first four of the Ten Commandments define our baptismal agreement to love God. And the last six of the Ten Commandment define our baptismal agreement to love neighbor. And beyond just the letter of those commandments, we're to observe them in the Spirit. For example, no longer is it good enough to avoid perjury in court, but now we must not lie under any circumstances. People tell me, “The law is done away.” Sorry, but no! The requirements under Christ's administration are just much more exacting of us than under the administration of Moses, because we have the Holy Spirit. But the laws are still the same laws! Jesus just *amplified* them, rather than doing away with them.

Is that true? Well, let's read about that in Matthew 5:17:

Matthew 5:17 – *Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. Do you think that? Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them.* You know, people have told me before that, when Christ fulfilled the law, that meant that we don't have to do them any longer. Now that's an example of selective comprehension. In the very same sentence, He says that He didn't abolish the law. It's still there. It's still in effect. "Fulfilling the law" means that He kept it perfectly. He fulfilled every obligation of it. Let's read on – verse 8:

V-18 – *For truly I say to you, "Until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."* Does that sound to you like the law is no longer in effect? Let's read verses 21 and 22:

V-21-22 – *You've heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not murder," and "Whoever murders will be liable of the judgment," but I say to you, "Everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment. Whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council. Whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to the hell of fire."* There it is again – and even more in verse 27:

V-27 – *You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery" – you know, our society is completely taken with sexual immorality – but I say to you, "Everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart." If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away, for it will be better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away, for it would be better that you lose one of your members than your whole body go into hell.* I hope you can see that He's not saying that we have to cut off parts of our body. It's an analogy. He means that it takes desperate measures to be a slave of God. There has to be sacrifice. If we want to be in the Kingdom of God, we have to become slaves of God, rather than slaves to our own bodies, or to society, or to the pulls of our minds. If we're entangled in sin, we must do what it takes to extricate ourselves from it.

I hope I've spent enough time reading the Book to demonstrate that we have to make a serious commitment when we're baptized. We have to align ourselves with the law of God like Christ did. But there's more.

I'd like to draw your attention back to that statement Paul made in Colossians, where he said our life is hidden in Christ. We said it was like a quiet miracle going on between us and God. We're striving to be different. And God, through the power of the Holy Spirit,

working with us, and teaching us, molding us into His own image, does His work. What can we do to more fully become a part of that process?

Well, I'm going to take a turn here. I'm going to talk to you about something that we don't often hear. It has to do with the miracle God is working in us. It's really important, if we're aware, that we're aware of what He's doing and has done in our lives. I have to tell you, "I didn't learn it from the Bible, even though it was there for me to learn it." I learned it from my studies in psychology. What I learned is this: there are four ways humans tend to attach to parents and to caregivers. One of those ways is the same way God wants us to attach to Him. The attachment people call this *secure attachment*. It has to do with trust and, as expressed to God, faith. Three of the four, also, are called *insecure*. And I observe these three – unhealthy forms of attachment – lead to sin, pain, suffering, depression, anxiety and isolation from others and from God.

We tend to relate to God the same way we relate to people because our attachment to caregivers early in life becomes our way of attaching to others. It's a style that we have learned. And the attachment people tell us that these three insecure attachment styles can be overcome – changed – converted, if you will. And here's the important part. The predictor of this change is the ability to tell a rich story about one's life.

Think about the implications here. Developing the story is changing the storyteller. When clients come to my counseling office, they want to make some changes in the way they're living their lives. So we enter into an agreement – a covenant, so to speak. My part is to help them change and their part is to apply the things they learn. Together, we craft a plan to help them overcome the problematic issues. While I'm helping them, it's their plan. If they know where they're going, it's much more likely that they will get there. And when they can articulate the plan, they're telling that rich story. I'll give you an example.

Some time back I was talking to a guy who could not feel any of his feelings. When I would try to help him work on his past traumas, it would go nowhere. So I explained to him that, when he was a child, he couldn't stop the abuse and, to keep from going insane, he would avoid the feelings about it. And that's all kids can usually do. Now that he's an adult, he can't feel anything – good or bad. And this is robbing him of his life literally. He's just so deadpan and flat. So the strategy he learned as a kid isn't working for him any longer. The self-defense itself has become a problem. And I suggested that we target the defense as a change in the strategy that we had originally agreed on, and he replied, "That makes a lot of sense to me. I've always avoided my feelings. I say things like, 'I don't want to think about it.' I tell myself that I shouldn't cry about it, because much worse has happened to others. I tell myself, 'Suck it up and get over it.' And then I drink to avoid it. All my life I've hidden my feelings from myself."

So do you see what he's now starting to do? Because we approach the defenses directly with him, he's now including them in his story. After we *targeted* the defenses, he went

right into his feelings about his abuse and re-encoded them relatively easily. That word *re-encoded*, by the way, is a word we use in EMDR. If you want to know more about EMDR, and how to re-encode negative memory, we have three presentations explaining it. Look for it on our Website, liferesource.org or our YouTube channel, LifeResource Videos. After he finished the desensitization portion of the session, He said, “Amazing! I’ve never been able to do that before. I feel like a gigantic weight is off my shoulders – like I am free.” So now that’s a part of his story, too, isn’t it? He also said, “I was mistreated by a father who was an alcoholic. That was causing me to become an alcoholic, too, but now I don’t need to medicate the feelings, so I’m breaking the generational chain. I won’t pass on that legacy to my children.” See how he’s adding to his story? It’s all autobiographical and some future stuff, too.

How could this kind of storytelling affect our relationship with God? Well, think about how many stories we see in the Bible. All stories that are told in the Bible are stories told by people about what was going on and what had happened in the past. Moses, when he came along in 1500 BC, or there about, was living in the infancy of the written word. When he wrote down the first book of the Bible, Genesis, he was remembering stories passed down from the very beginning about how God engaged people and how it changed their lives. I somehow imagine God might have augmented his memory there, but he didn’t have anything written to go on. The five books he wrote are the story of how life began and how God related to people in the beginning. Until we get to the prophets, all the books are also stories of the history of the time God worked with a single family to advance His plan – the family of Abraham.

In the Old Testament – further into it – Daniel prayed a prayer where he tells God the story of how Judah came to captivity. I’m sure God knew that story already, but it was very important to Daniel to recount that – to put himself in the context and to spell it out in the scriptures so that *we* would all know that story, too. That helps us understand where *we* came from.

When the disciples wrote the Gospels, they were recounting their stories of Jesus’ life. When Luke wrote the book of Acts, he was telling a story, also – the story about how Jesus, from heaven, directed the New Testament church, how God was active in their lives, and how their lives went, how they lived their lives, and how we should live ours.

Paul tells the story of his conversion – how God worked with him and how that changed him. Or think of the man from Gadara, who was possessed by demons. After Jesus cast the demons out of him, he wanted to go with Jesus, but Jesus told him, “You go back home and tell everybody what God has done for you.”

So [there are] lots of stories about God’s efforts to relate to us in scripture. And that all touches on *our* story with God.

Now consider some things that the apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15, beginning in verse 17.

1 Corinthians 15:17 – *And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you're still in your sins. Then, those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If, in Christ, we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead – the Firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For if by a man came death, by a Man has come, also, the resurrection from the dead.*

Since Christ has risen from the dead, there lies a bright future for those who covenant with Him. He's going to use *you* to do His work in others – on your way to becoming an immortal member of His family. God is going to use the *new* you to do His work.

And how does He do that? Well, think about it. How did He start with you? Can you remember back to your childhood? Have you ever thought about that? What was God doing in your life to cultivate a relationship with you? How was He working with you? What was your first recollection of learning about Him? What happened next? How did you come to baptism? Which people were influential? Did God influence you through one of His bondslaves – someone you knew or someone that you didn't? Did one of them tell you his or her story? Or did God work with you directly? What did He do? How are you taking it in? How did God come to you first? What has God done to perfect you? What blessings and what trials? How has God influenced you through them? If you know what God has done and is doing – where He's directing you – it's much more likely that you'll get where He wants you to go. And, in the process, your story can help others, if you tell it to them at the right time.

I worked with a woman once, who came out of a cult – very strict, very controlled – isolated socially from people who thought differently. She came into this cult as a young woman. When she found her way out twenty years later, she became very bitter about the loss of time – twenty years of her life. I asked her if she would ever have become a Christian without that experience, and she said, thinking about it, “Probably not. Oh, I see. That was just a vehicle God used to get me where I am today.”

What vehicles has God used to get you where you needed to be? If you don't know what God is doing, it's hard to play your part. So you see, after we're baptized and committed, we need to start building our rich, coherent faith story – the story of how *you* came to be the new you and how God is using you to His glory and, eventually, to yours. It will help us be better servants of God and draw us closer to Him.

Well, that's about it for this time. We publish every two weeks, so check back. Until then, keep an eye out for God's work in your life. Wonder what will happen next and add it all to the story of the new you. It will help you see God at work in your life and *know* what He wants you to do.