

August 16, 2026 - Theology of Baptism

Dr. Scott Redd: Our gospel word of salvation this morning comes from Ephesians chapter one, and we're just going to read the beginning there. Ephesians one, verse three through six. Okay. Ephesians one three through six. Paul is greeting the Ephesians in this letter, and notice how Paul does greetings. He puts a lot of theology into the greeting. So notice what he says. He's saying, blessed be to you. So he's basically just saying, "hey, how are you doing?" But listen to how he unpacks it. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has. He has blessed us in the beloved. That is Christ. Okay. Do you notice that gospel word of salvation there? It's saying that Your story of salvation did not begin when you became aware of God and Jesus and the gospel. That's not when the story of your salvation began. But did you hear when the story of your salvation began? Even before the foundations of the earth were laid, God was already thinking of you, even when you did not have capacity to think of him. That's our gospel word of salvation this morning, and it helps us understand what we're about to do here in the act of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, because Holy Baptism is a great way for us to show and proclaim to the world that the story of our salvation does not begin when I start thinking about God. Okay? As a matter of fact, throughout all of redemptive history, God has set aside a people to himself, and he brings those people to himself in a variety of ways. One of them is through the preaching of the gospel. And a person hears it and their eyes are awoken to faith. They wake up. They come to life in the Holy Spirit. And they have faith, which is a justifying faith by which they get the salvation of God. Another way that the story of salvation is worked out is that a child is born to believing family members, and those parents in that community raise him or her in the gospel, and they hear the gospel and they know it. And there's never a time in their life when they don't know and love Jesus as Savior. Now let's be clear. In both cases, you are saved by faith. You are justified by faith alone in both of those cases. And yet we acknowledge that with the children of believers, God has chosen to give us this mark, this signpost on the way to salvation, which is a sign and seal which both proclaims and lays claim to his promises, not only to us but to our children. That goes back to the Old Testament in the act of circumcision and in the New Testament, as we read in Acts Two, in the mouth of Peter, he says, "this is now also for you and for your children," and it is marked by baptism.