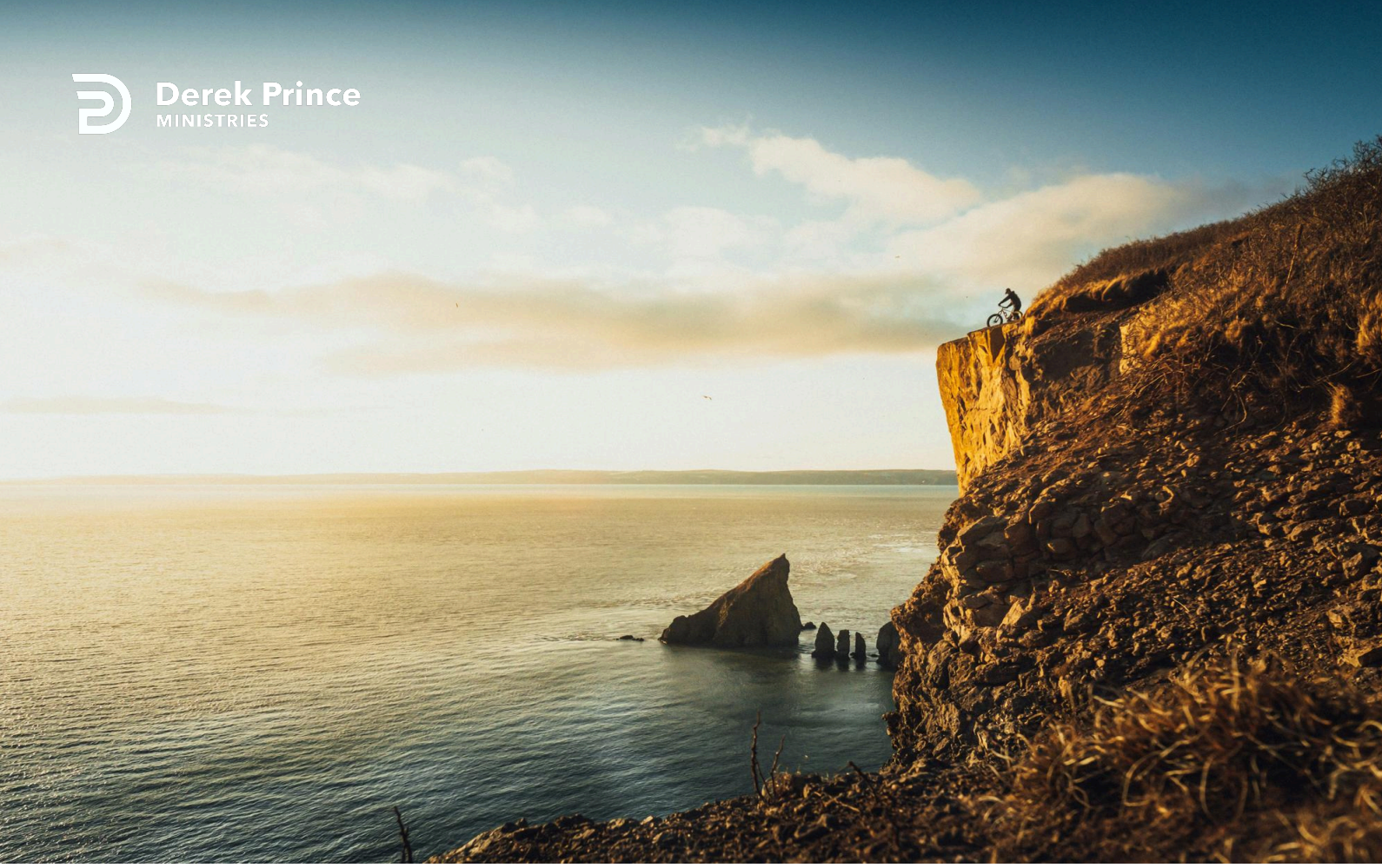

The Spirit Of God: Power For Life And Righteousness



Foundations (Day 134)
by Derek Prince

Yesterday, we've seen there are three other facts about baptism. First, by true Christian baptism we are baptised into Christ Himself – not into any particular church or sect or denomination. Second, the effect of baptism depends upon the personal faith of the one being baptised; it is through faith in the working of God – more simply, "through faith in what God does." Without this faith, the mere ceremony of baptism alone is of no effect or validity whatever.

Third, the believer who is raised up out of the watery grave of baptism to walk in newness of life does this not in his own power but in the power of God's glory, the same power which raised Jesus from the grave. Paul reveals that the power which raised Jesus from the grave was "the Spirit of holiness"; that is, God's own Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:4). Thus the believer, through the waters of baptism, commits himself to a new life to God and to righteousness, which is to be in total dependence upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

This agrees with what Paul says in Romans 8:10b.

> "And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

It is a general principle of educational psychology that children remember approximately 40 percent of what they hear; 60 percent of what they hear and see; 80 percent of what they hear, see and do. In establishing the ordinance of Christian baptism in the Church, God has applied this principle of psychology to the teaching of the great central purpose of Christ's atonement – that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness.

According to the New Testament pattern, each time new believers are added to the Church, they act out, through baptism, their identification by faith with Christ – first, in His death and burial to sin; second, in His resurrection to newness of life. In this way, baptism keeps before the whole Church the great central purpose of Christ's atonement.

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It follows that this vital truth concerning Christ's atonement can never be fully restored in the Christian Church until the true method and meaning of Christian baptism are first restored. Christian baptism must become once again, for each believer individually and for the Church as a whole, a re-enactment of this double truth: death and burial to sin; resurrection and life to righteousness and to God.

To complete this study week, let me point out briefly that true Christian baptism does not produce within the believer this condition of death to sin, but rather it is the outward seal that the believer has already, by faith, entered into this condition. In the verses already quoted from Romans 6, Paul states clearly that we are first dead with Christ to sin; after that we are baptised into Christ's death.

In this respect, Christian baptism is parallel to John's baptism. In John's baptism the person first repented of his sins and afterward was baptised into repentance. In Christian baptism the believer is first, by faith, dead with Christ to sin, and after that he is baptised into Christ's death. In each case the outward act of baptism does not in itself produce the inward spiritual condition; rather it is the seal and affirmation that this inward condition has been produced already, by faith, in the heart of the person baptised.

Devotional

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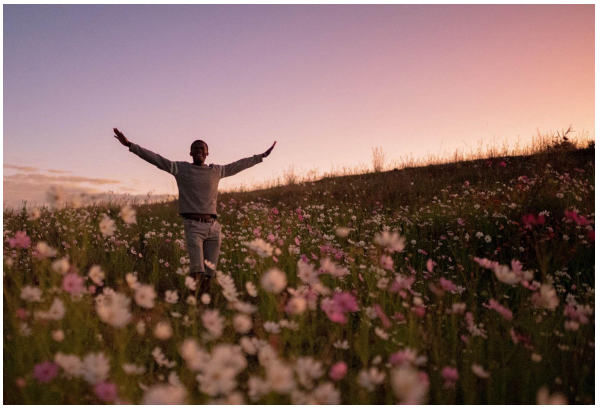

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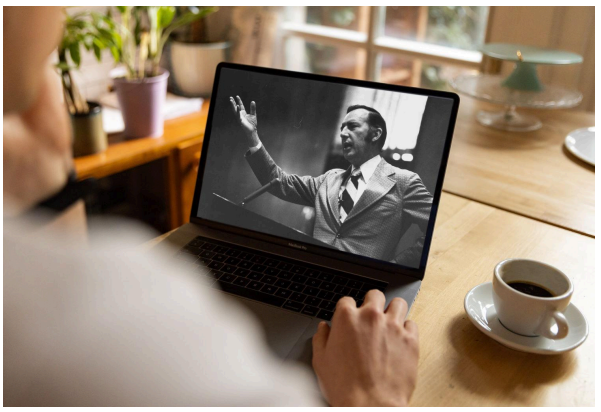

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