

20201018 ROMANS 3:23/6:23/5:8/ROMANS 10:9 BAPTISM OF BILL LAIRD

**OCTOBER 18, 2020 - BAPTISM OF BILL LAIRD**  
**AT YARBORO LAKE**

"I Have Decided To Follow Jesus"

I have decided to follow Jesus.  
I have decided to follow Jesus.  
I have decided to follow Jesus.  
No turning back, no turning back.

The world behind me, the cross before me  
The world behind me, the cross before me  
The world behind me, the cross before me  
No turning back, no turning back.

Though none go with me, still I will follow.  
Though none go with me, still I will follow.  
Though none go with me, still I will follow.  
No turning back, no turning back.

Bill picked out the song "I have decided to follow Jesus" so I wanted to give you a little homily this morning about this.

**It Starts with a Decision – A Mustard Seed of Faith**

Following Christ all starts with a decision. Bill made a decision when he was a little child to "follow Jesus" as much as he knew how. What we're doing today doesn't invalidate that. It was real. He was then told that he needed to follow that decision by being baptized. He did that.

**On Child Baptism**

You all may have noticed that I am now in my 5th year at Union Grove and I have yet to baptize anyone under probably the age of 14 or 15. I have been asked to do that, but I have never felt led to do that. Each time I was asked to do so, I looked for what we lawyers call "capacity" to understand. I have not yet seen the mental or emotional capacity in a younger person to make a fully-aware decision. I am not saying it is impossible. I just have not seen it.

Children generally do not have the capacity or understanding for example to enter into a contract. They do not have the life experience and capacity to understand the commitment in entering into a marriage with another human being. As children they might feel the need for a Savior and they might feel the desire to follow a Savior, but they don't have a deep understanding of what that means. I suppose this is in part why Bill has asked to be rebaptized this morning as an adult with complete mental and emotional capacity, understanding what he is doing, why he is doing it, and what it means to be identified with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

### **Let's Go Back Over the Basics for a Minute**

Baptism is all about identifying with something. It is saying, "I belong to Jesus". A believer's baptism says,

"I have believed that Jesus was God in the flesh, and I believe that he died on an old rugged cross for me and my sins, and that he was raised again on the third day."

"I want to follow Him in obedience, and the way I begin that obedience is by identifying with His death, burial, and resurrection." "I want to be raised in newness of life."

BAPTISM IS NOT GOING TO CHANGE BILL LAIRD. BAPTISM DOESN'T CHANGE ANY OF US. WE SEEK BAPTISM BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN CHANGED.

### **Newness of Life is a daily choice.**

Following Christ is a daily choice. As we move into the stage of sanctification, we are faced daily with challenges from the pressures of the world, the pressures of our own flesh which is the Old Sin Nature that remains in us, and the devil and his demons. Philippians 1:6 tells us that God is not done with us. It says that we can be confident of this very thing. That He who began a good work in us will continue doing that work until we go to be with the Lord.

### **Baptism in Review**

**Who/why** – believers – it is an act of obedience done by believers. Infants have no capacity to believe or obey. ROMANS 3:23/ 6:23/5:8/ ROMANS 10:9

**What** - It is NOT getting saved. It is publicly identifying that we belong to him. It is like putting on a wedding ring, or having an earring put in to the ear of a bond-slave. It says, "Take note world, I belong to Him."

**Where** – doesn't matter. *Hayim-Mayim* . And what is the "Living Water"? Jesus is!

**How** – immersed in water (this is the biblical way). The texts describing Jesus' baptism all say "and when He had COME UP OUT OF THE WATER". You cannot come up out of the water if you're not down in the water. Of the 69 times in the New Testament that baptism is

mentioned in the context of what we're doing today, every single time the Greek verb **βαπτίζω** is used. This is **baptizo** meaning, "dipped" "submerged" .....put under like a cloth that is being dyed.