

# Bedford Bulletin

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## Times of Our Services

Sunday Morning Bible Study -----	9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship -----	9:50 AM
Sunday Evening Worship -----	6:00 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study-----	7:30 PM



## Appointed for the Defense of the Gospel (Part 1)

Paul said, *“Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: 16 The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; 17 but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. 18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice”* (Phil. 1:16-18).

In this series called “Appointed for the Defense of the Gospel”, we’ll address a number of issues that every Christian must be ready to give an answer to in defense of the truth. There are good reasons for the need for each child of God to be ready. Reason 1. If you are not ready, you will end up cowering in fear at the thought that someone might ask you a question. Reason 2. You’ll be that person whose answer is, “you need to talk with my preacher, he knows everything”. Reason 3. The problem gets worse: When we ourselves can’t defend the truth—we can’t defend good men who are assaulted for the truth they do preach. This is terrible because young people growing up in the church will walk away from the battle being discouraged from preaching and teaching. I was positively influenced to preach by preachers like Bob Dickey, Lewis Willis, Steve Harden, Don Wright, or John Isaac Edwards who stood in defense of the gospel. But what if they were constantly beaten up for holding fast to the truth and no one stood with them? Why would I have walked in their footsteps? When we are not “ready” then we become a tool used by the devil to destroy the influence of those who fight, and the spread of false doctrine will flourish. When we don’t prepare ourselves, we tend to bury our head in the sand, and the false doctrine

# Knowing & Doing God's Will

Proverbs 11:14

spreads, then the things you believe as fundamentals of the faith will soon become ancient relics of a bygone faith.

To restate this more simply, if we are unable ourselves to defend our beliefs, we'll never be able to defend those being disparaged and they'll die off one by one till there is no one to replace them.

What is the needed course? What must we all do? Peter tells us clearly, "*15 But [a]sanctify [b]the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed*" (1 Peter 3:15-16).

By the careful study of God's word (2 Tim. 2:15) over time you'll fill your heart with the powerful word of God, thus setting Jesus into your heart, giving Him a place of residence if you will, that He can work through you to reach many souls, and effectively support the church and her ministry.

So, first in this series of lessons is the argument some make against the necessity of water baptism. Some will say, "Baptism is just a symbol of the new birth; hence, to teach essentiality is to make a symbol necessary".

My humble response: First, it is a practice of our Lord, to ask questions that redirect thinking. In the case of "symbolism" and baptism, you might ask; I do agree that there is a symbolic meaning associated with baptism, would you be able to tell me what that is according to the scriptures? You might just hear them answer; baptism is a symbol of our salvation which is by faith alone. Or, one is baptized after salvation to identify with Christ, or the redundant, baptism is for born again Christians. Now, regardless of their answer, you can begin with the following statement: There is symbolism in baptism; however, there is also reality let's look at the scripture together.

Romans 6:3-4: "*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*" The symbolism here is those, "*baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death*". Christ was literally physically dead before He was buried in the tomb. Ask, do you bury the living or the dead? They will always answer, the dead, but we don't physically die. But, you must also die to something, what is that something? Your sins! (Romans 6:2; 1 Peter 2:24). How do we die to sin? Repentance is the only way. Jesus taught, "*I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.*" (Luke 13:3, 5). Ask another question. What happens after baptism according to the inspired apostle Paul? "*knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be [a]done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin*" (Romans 6:6). Ask, can you see the progression, and the reality? See that "before baptism, the old man existed", the reality is that old man is "*done away with*" and now no longer "*slaves of sin*". In verses 17 and 18 Paul

TODAY WE CHOOSE TO REJOICE

Mark 16:15-16

Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned"

exclaimed, "But God be thanked that though you

were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were [a]delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness". By obeying "from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were [a]delivered" you have been "set free from sin". Reality is that baptism is the point in God's plan teaching when a penitent soul comes in contact with the blood that was shed in death, that is to say the blood of Christ that was shed, not because of but, "for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). The Greek word used here "for" is [εἰς], a preposition governing the accusative, and denoting entrance into, or direction and limit: into, to, toward, for, among; Thayer's. It is not "because" as some might and do suggest, for that word is [ὅτι] translated 212 times as such. You don't have to be a scholar to know that [εἰς] and [ὅτι] are two different words. Now again, to the reality of the matter. When Peter first preached Jesus, and those who were cut to the heart asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37), what was Peter's answer? He didn't say, be baptized because your faith has washed away your sins. He did say, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the [a]remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). The phrase, "remission of sins" comes from two words, [ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν] meaning: "forgiveness, pardon, of sins...the letting them go, as if they had not been committed...remission of their penalty; Thayer's. See: Matthew 26:28; Mark 1:4; Luke 1:77; Luke 3:3; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; Acts 5:31; Acts 10:43; Acts 13:38; Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:14. Ask, what does the Bible say baptism does? Together read, Acts 22:16, 1 Peter 3:20-12, and discuss the text with them. You can turn to Acts 8:35-36, Matthew 3:16, and Acts 16:32-33 to point out that water was involved.

In Love  
Dave Scarpino

"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and [a]conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption [b]through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14)