

Two Megatrends Shape Our Christian Life **HOW DO WE LIVE IN OUR BAPTISM?**

By George Miley

When I was in my mid-40s I went through a time of deep personal crisis. It is actually a story about the influence that unhealed places within us have in our adult lives.

Unhealed childhood wounding has the danger of being carried into adulthood and acted out in adult dysfunctions—in ways we don't fully understand.

Why am I telling you this? Our subject this morning is baptism. The process the Lord took me through in responding to this crisis was a process of working through, on a deeper level, my baptism.

Baptism provides the foundation for the rest of our Christian life. The victorious Christian life is living in our baptism.

How Do I Learn How to Live in My Baptism?

1 - The Christian life is composed of two megatrends. These permeate the totality of the Christian life.

These two megatrends are 1) death and 2) life. I allow the death of Christ to work in me so that the life of Christ might be further formed within me.

2 - The Christian life is all of grace; but I must choose it.

God is a gentleman. He comes to us in the person of Jesus and offers us salvation in all its fullness. And then he waits. We respond in the wrong ways. And he waits. The process continues for years. Slowly, aided by his Presence and grace, we learn how to respond correctly. We submit to his death in order to receive his life.

The teaching of Jesus is full of this; the teaching of Paul is full of this.

Our first parents were created to live in the Presence of God. They were experiencing eternal life—God's life—life in all its fullness and beauty. But then they made a disastrous decision; they chose to go away from God. They thought they knew better. So did we.

The capacity to choose is at the core of our humanity. It resides in the heart. Christian formation begins in the heart. It must be freely chosen.

Self-will is the root of all other sins. It is the choice of the heart to rely on self. Self-will—self-reliance—self-confidence—is toxic. It is like having an IV pumping poison into our system.

The Christian life is about taking the power and consequences of self-will to the cross of Jesus. There he transforms it to God-reliance.

When it comes to the cross, we don't have to manufacture it; we must only submit to it. Why does God allow crises in our lives? There is no easy answer to this. But the key issue in any crisis is "How am I going to choose to respond?"

When I choose to respond by allowing the death of Christ to work in me, then I open the door for God to work the resurrected life of Christ in me. The two megatrends, put in place in baptism, now become functional.

There is a mystery about all this.

Key passage: Romans 6

No theology can exist only in the mind. It must be applied in our lives, our choices.

When I think about mystery, I think about the kingdom of God. What is the kingdom of God?

May I tell you another story from Germany?

To walk with Christ, the unseen world must be real to us.

3 - As I mature, I learn increasingly to rely on the Holy Spirit.

The apostolic pattern—Acts 2:38: 1) repent 2) be baptized 3) receive the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is here. He stands before us as the Healer. Christ does indeed remove our guilt. But he does so much more. What is the trauma? The wounding? Anger? Broken relationships? Self-will? What is it? Come to Jesus. Let him heal us, and teach us how to live the resurrected life he came to give us.