***1 Peter 3:21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ***

Today, we will have a Baptism. This week has worked overtime to try and derail this, but Johnny has been faithful, and we have been faithful, and God’s Will will be done.

This is a joyous time in the church. Baptism is an outward sign of an inward decision. It’s an outward demonstration of an inward change. The water changes nothing other than the moisture content of the clothing unless there has first been a change of heart by the Holy Spirit – a turning of eyes to God and His loving embrace. In Acts 10:47 it says - “*Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”* Conviction must come first, repentance – Belief! Prayer for Salvation – We are changed at that moment and Baptism naturally follows, so others might be emboldened to seek after Jesus. Baptism is a public profession of a personal change.

Once, God used water to destroy all mankind, but for Noah’s family. As wicked men sank below the surface of the water, they were lost. Only the delivered, Noah’s family, floated upon the surface of the water and were saved. Our scripture says - ***There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism.*** Now, in antitype – in the opposite effect if you will – water is used to indicate Salvation. The wicked man sinking below the surface is raised unto Salvation – in Jesus Christ. In Noah’s Day, sinking below the surface meant death. Now, sinking below the surface, in submission to Jesus, means Life and Life more abundantly.

Our scripture continues ***(not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God).*** As the body sinks below the surface of the water, it has nothing to do with cleaning the outer flesh, but the inner soul. I could put a whole box of Tide in the water with us and, without Faith in the cleansing power of the Blood of Jesus, no cleansing takes place! Romans 6:4 says - *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.* Going under the water, we are buried, just as Christ was buried. In the grave, we will leave old self. As we rise above the surface, we rise to newness of life, answering God in good conscience, and following Jesus faithfully.

Our scripture finishes ***through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*** Only through Christ are we saved unto resurrection. Only through His atoning work on the Cross do we find hope of eternal life. Only in His willingness to humble Himself do we receive the ability to stand before an all-righteous God. It is belief in Jesus and Who He is that saves our eternal souls. In John 6:47, Jesus says *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.* Baptism without first believing will come to nothing. Baptism after believing is a testament to our Love of God for all to see. Romans 10:9 says - *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.* Confession and belief are the only way to salvation. Ture then… true now.

Johnny – today is only the beginning. You have entered the classroom of Christ. Study your Bible daily, Pray continuously, Gather in Fellowship as often as possible. Keep Christ’s commandments. Conduct yourself in right relationship with all people. Keep your heart and mind sober towards God. Above all else – Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength – Draw ever nearer to Him and He will draw ever nearer to you.

This week – let’s all examine our walk with Jesus. Are we walking as closely with Him as we were when we walked out of the water on the day of our Baptism? Are we walking even closer? If not, get out of your cars, stand, and pray for that renewal and closeness this morning. You can have it again. Maybe you’ve never been baptized or maybe you’ve not yet accepted Jesus as Savior. Today is the today to make that right. Come as we sing. We’ll pray and plan a time of Baptism. Don’t hesitate in asking Him into your heart – tomorrow may be eternally too late.