

Baptism *For* or *Because* of the Dead ?

By Arthur Barry

Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them?

1 Corinthians 15:29

What exactly is Paul referring to? Nothing in the Bible would support the idea that anyone can be baptized in water and have that baptism wash away the sins of someone else who has died. In making his point that it is foolish to be a Christian and not believe in a future resurrection, he refers to those who are baptized for the dead and asks what the outcome of their faith will be if the dead are not raised.

Obviously, I reject the idea that Paul endorses “proxy baptism” and I usually connect Paul’s argument with the main point: that Jesus was resurrected from the dead and the gospel now calls people to be baptized into His name in order to connect with resurrection power from God (Romans 6:1-5); that would make no sense if He was still dead.

I recently heard another view of this passage which makes sense to me. This interpretation hinges on the meaning of the Greek word “*huper*” which can mean “on behalf of” or it can mean “for the sake of” or “because of”. The English word we use is “for” and it can be used both ways. It occurred to me that we quite often hear an expression in the field of athletics that will help us understand Paul’s words. It is common to hear an athlete say something like, “I ran this race for my dad.” He or she does not mean that Dad gets the medal if he or she wins. Dad might end up with the actual medal as a gift, but history does not recognize Dad as the winner. They simply mean that they are inspired by Dad or that they dedicate this effort to Dad.

I have heard stories of people who are married to members of the Church but who will not be baptized. Yet, when their spouse dies they decide to be baptized. How many people do you know who were baptized because they were influenced by someone else? Some people put it off for various reasons and only God knows their hearts but losing a loved one who was a faithful child of God is about as good a motivation for being baptized as any. I would hope that we all are baptized because of what Christ means to us, but sometimes that only comes home when we see how much He means to someone else. And sometimes we will do anything for a chance to see a loved one again. It seems very likely that Paul may have had someone in mind, himself, who he longed to see again in Heaven. I cherish my baptism because I will get to see Jesus someday. Because of that truth I also cherish my baptism because I will get to see loved ones who have gone on before me. Without the resurrection of Jesus, we would have no such hope.



That meets at 701 South Wilbur, Sayre, PA 18840

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July 15, 2018

WELCOME!

Sunday

Bible Class- 9:30 a.m.

Worship- 10:30 a.m.

Tuesday

Ladies Bible Study- 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Study-6:30pm

All the churches of Christ greet you.

ROMANS 16:16

Today's Sermon: *The Mentality of Christianity*

Sermons are recorded and are available for listening on the church website.

Bulletins are archived on the website.

valleycitieschurchofchrist.org

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Scripture: Matthew 6:25-34

ANNOUNCEMENTS / UPCOMING EVENTS...

- **Ladies Class: Out for the summer! Watch this space! We will resume in September.**
- **Wednesday Evening Bible Class:** July 18th at 7pm. We are studying the book of Judges.
- **5th Sunday Regional Singing @ Ithaca, July 29th @ 4pm.**
- **VBS** with our Kittanning and Camp Hill brethren August 11th and 12th.

Next Potluck: July 15th



- Please remember the fundraising bottles for the Crisis Pregnancy Center. Fill them up with change and bring them in.
- **Athens Street Fair:** July 20th and 21st. **THIS FRIDAY AND SATURDAY!** We will be handing out tracts and Bibles. We will be promoting our upcoming VBS. Please plan on spending some time in our booth to help out.
- Ronnie Jones was laid off from his job in Troy, so has returned to Jacksonville, FL, where he and his wife live.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, RUTHIE! Monday, July 16th.

PRAYERS...

- We pray that our **effort at the Athens Street Fair produces fruit and Bible studies. Let's all invite our friends and neighbors to study the Bible and attend worship.**
- Pray for **Andrea Lentz** – lung cancer.
- Pray for **Lori Kashorek** – lung cancer, recovery from brain tumor.
- Pray for Sandy and Arthur's neighbor, **Erin Beiber** who has metastatic breast cancer.
- **Patty and Ruthie's cousin Cathy's husband Bruce** has kidney cancer.
- **Pray that Dave and Lynne Laton's daughter Natalie** will be able to recover from her cancer (lymphoma).
- Pray for our nation's **healing** and repentance.
- **Darlene** has had low energy and hair loss as well as symptoms of gastric reflux.
- Darlene and Doug are dealing with a sick pet dog, **Hachi**.
- **Emily Barry** is thankful for a better paying job, and they are thankful that **Aidan** found a summer job.
- **Donald** has asked for prayers that he can find a new job and find spiritual direction in his life.
- Please pray for a little girl named Cassia from Utica who has cancer.

If you have any prayers or news that you would like included in the bulletin, please