

Baptism of Anne Voinikova

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[0 : 00] We come to the baptism of Annie Voinikov. We baptise the children of believers not because! and not because of tradition, but because we believe the Bible directly commands it.

! And we believe that God, in the way that He deals with people, always deals with people! by a covenant. He always deals with people by His promises. We've seen that haven't we with Adam and Eve?

He deals with them by a covenant. And we also see that throughout the Bible, people are not just individuals. God deals with us as families, as covenant people. So the great promise to Abraham is, I will be your God, and you will be my people, and I will be the God of your children also. And so in the Old Testament, the covenant sign was given to baby boys.

It was given to baby boys, circumcision. And it was a cutting away. Now that didn't mean that those children didn't need to be born again. Of course they did. The Bible talks again and again, doesn't it, about our hearts being circumcised. They needed to be born again.

They needed to have a right relationship with God. But they were part of the covenant people of God. They haven't believed the promises for themselves, but they belong to the people.

[1 : 26] And so as you come to the New Testament, we see that the Passover is replaced by the Lord's Supper. We see that circumcision is replaced by baptism. Let me just read to you from the book of Colossians. These verses. It says, in Him you were also circumcised. That is in Christ. In the putting off of the sinful nature. That is what circumcision pointed them to.

Not with the circumcision done by the hands of men, but with the circumcision done by baptism. Done by Christ. Having been buried with Him in baptism. And raised with Him through your faith. In the power of God who raised Him from the dead.

It's saying that what circumcision meant and what baptism means are the same thing. And God still deals with people, doesn't he, by nature of a covenant. And the covenant is, this promise is for you, and for your children, and for all who are far off. That is Acts chapter 2.

God dealt with His people and their children by a covenant in the Old Testament. So when you come to the New Testament, children are not worse off, are they? They are still part of the people of God. So what does it mean for Annie? Little Annie Voinichoff this morning. Well, I found this book when I was up in Aberdeen. And lots of books on baptism are absolutely awful.

But this book is very, very helpful. So let me say to you what your baptism means. At your baptism, God tells you that for you, Jesus Christ came into the world. You are baptized because you belong to God. It is God's sign of covenant ownership. And you are part of God's family. For you, Jesus Christ came into the world. You children here. For you. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sin. God sent His Son Jesus into the world to become human like us without sin. For you, Jesus lived and showed God's love. While He lived on earth, Jesus was a healer, a teacher, a friend and so much more. For you, He suffered the darkness of Calvary and cried at the last, it is finished. Jesus showed His great love for us by dying on the cross. The Bible tells us that Jesus' death takes away the sin of the world. For you, Jesus triumphed over death and rose in newness of life. But death was not the end. Jesus came back to life. Now we can live each day with God's power. And when we die, we can live with God forever. For you, He ascended to reign at God's right hand. When Jesus left earth, He returned to heaven. He talks to God, the Father, about us and sent the Holy Spirit with us all the time. And this He did for you before you knew anything of it. Jesus lived, died and rose for us because He loves us. And we don't have to do anything to earn His love. And so the word of Scripture is fulfilled.

[4 : 35] We love because God loved us first. And we see God's love for us through Jesus. Jesus shows us how to love so that we can love God and other people. And when you think about your baptism, all of us, remember that God loves you. Remember that you are part of God's worldwide

family.

And no one can take these promises away from you. These promises are for you. They are for you. Each one of you has been baptized. And so believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Love those promises and believe them. Bristol, Paul, Maria and Annie do come to the front. If you bought one of these books, if you're a child who's been baptized, come on, I'll give you one. If you're an adult, you can buy it. Come on.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

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we praise you that you are the God of the covenant that you have made promises that you will be our God and we will be your people and you will be the God of our children so we pray for this household this family pray that they will love you and they will follow you and Christo will say all the days as for me and my house we will serve the Lord so we thank you for the sacrament we thank you for this baptism which is a picture of your covenant love which is a sign and a seal and shows us that we belong to your family shows us that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us and washes us from all sin so we pray for her that she will love you all her days that she will follow the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be her shepherd so we pray this in Jesus' name Amen I'm going to ask you questions I don't have a time

[6 : 54] I'll try and hold it Do you acknowledge that you are saved only through faith in Jesus and that you trust in God anything you have done or will ever do but only in the finished work is there to come to Christ by which you took upon yourself a penalty for sins I can't beat the suspense in the moment Do you realise that baptism is not a saving ordinance and though it signifies Annie's membership in the covenant community it is not a matter of magic and do you understand that she is herself responsible to receive Christ as Saviour and Lord as she becomes accountable to him Yes, really long

Do you in this sacrament covenant together with God to raise Annie in the instruction, obedience and worship of the Lord to pray for and with her to keep her in the fellowship of God's people to be faithful and loving in your home to be an immediate example of faith and therefore to do your utmost to lead her to a saving knowledge of Christ at an early age Amen Do you acknowledge that Annie is a gift from God who is of course to be cherished and enjoyed but who belongs at last not to you but to God Do you undertake to assist her in every possible way as she seeks to lead a life of devoted service to her Lord and Saviour Do you with God's help undertake not to hinder Annie should she feel called to serve God in a far away place and do you with God's help undertake not to complain against God should Annie die before you Do you, the members of this congregation agree to pray for Frisco and Maria as they raise Annie in the Christian faith and to support them in their efforts by providing her with further examples of obedience and service to God and should they neglect their God given task will you in all humility rebuke and correct them

Amen Amen It's heavy I'll take this off Annie Christopher Annie Christopher Christopher Boylecrow I baptise you in the name of the Father the name of the Son and in the name of the Holy Spirit May God bless you and keep you May God make his face to shine upon you and may God turn his countenance towards you and give you peace Amen and turn to Luke chapter 6 Luke chapter 6 Luke 6 verse 12 and 26 this morning

I had the privilege this week of speaking at Paul Claree's funeral and it was a joy to be able to do that and yet it was difficult to think of Paul to express this in a few words and what he meant to myself and to many of you and when you go to a funeral it gets you thinking doesn't it I wonder what people will say at my funeral I wonder what the people will say who give the tribute they might say that I want it very brief right and four hymns that's it done just in an hour and I guess we'd all like to be people who are funeral people will say they lived well one thing we wouldn't want people to say is that he wasted his life I'm reading a book by John Piper an American pastor that's called Don't Waste Your Life and I'm going to read you one of the stories that he tells but I haven't got the book with me but it's on page 45 if you want to remember it's about a couple that retire to

Florida and they've been in business for years and they retire to Florida and each day they go along the beach in Florida and they collect shells and their house is full of the most amazing collection of shells they check out in retirement and that is what they do day in day out they go onto the beach and they look for shells and John Piper shells not shells and John Piper says when they die they will stand before God on the day of judgment and God will say what did you do with your life and they will get out their trays and their trays of shells and John Piper says that is a tragedy I mean that is

what so many of us want don't we we won't get to the point where we have enough money maybe not too much where we can just take it easy that is the kind of dream of life where we can just relax and take it easy the greatest challenge to the spread of the gospel in this country and the good news about the

[12 : 34] Lord Jesus in the western world is not the kind of bonkers secular atheism of somebody like Richard Dawkins it is not the Islamist extremist radicals that is not the greatest threat it is Christians who live for this world rather than the next it is Christians whose lives look like everybody else around them it is people who call themselves Christians and yet their priorities are no different from those who don't have Jesus as Lord that is the greatest threat to the spread of the gospel and the growth of the church in this country and that is why when we come to Luke 6 we've got big problems with it especially when you look down at verses 22 and 23 blessed are you when people hate you when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil because of the son of man rejoice in that day and leap for joy because great is your reward in heaven now if you are anything like me verse 22 does not sound like blessing does it sounds like a nightmare and if we're going to understand why this is the life that all of us should desire well we need to see first of all that we are an ordinary people we are ordinary people now at the beginning of this passage the Pharisees the Jewish leaders have been told that

Jesus has come to do a new thing they can't squeeze Jesus into their legalistic understanding of the Old Testament law he has come to create a new people of God and look what happens in verse 12 do you see what they say well do you see what Jesus does one of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray and spent the night praying to God so it seems Jesus is far more into 24-7 prayer than I have whenever there is a big step forward for Jesus in his mission he talks to his father about heaven he prays and he spent the whole night in prayer and verse 17 when morning comes sorry verse 13 when morning comes he calls his disciples the 12 of them whom he designated apostles now if we were Jews our hearts would be racing at this stage we would be singing 12 that's like the 12 tribes of Israel isn't it that is the people who went up to make up the people of God and now

Jesus is choosing 12 new leaders and they are going to be the witnesses! the foundation of the new people of God is going to be built the church those people who have trusted Jesus in history who have seen him and the church is going to be built on that foundation so you would expect them wouldn't you to have a great CV you would expect them to be very impressive you would expect them to be leaders of the day to be high achievers you'd expect well you'd expect people to be able to mean them all so let's do that if the elders and the deacons would look up and not look down and let's test the elders and the deacons alright no looking down alright I can see you so let's shout out elders and deacons in the middle of the 12 disciples Bartholomew Bartholomew well done keep your head up Chris Craddock pardon Matthew Andrew pardon John

Judas come on elders there's only one set only Peter Philip James John we've done another Thomas Judas Judas we're at 11 Peter are we yes you see they just trip off the tongue don't they we all know them we can't help ourselves but the point is this they are very very ordinary people and in fact they are so ordinary that actually we can't remember the names of them all can we the only one that we've heard much of in Luke's gospel is Simon and now he's had his name changed to Peter and so we saw that he was a fisherman and he was convinced wasn't he that he wasn't worthy to follow Jesus so look at Luke chapter 5 verse 8 when he meets Jesus he realises who he is and he says depart from me for I'm a sinful man get away from me Lord I don't deserve to know you then there's Levi Levi is known as

Matthew in Luke's list he was one of the tax collectors he was a cheat and a liar and as you read on you find that they are the most hated of people don't you those tax collectors and what are the disciples like the disciples in Luke's gospel are not known for getting things right they are not known for being at the top of the class they are known for constantly getting things wrong and they weren't special they were very ordinary men and Jesus does not choose people on merit even the names of followers should tell us that what does the word disciple mean it means learner do you remember that when you were learning to drive I used to despise L plates it was enormously humiliating when you were in sixth form and you would drive along the road at 20 mile per hour past your mates with your mother telling you to slow down and it was a great relief wasn't it it was a great relief when you passed your test to go into the sixth form common room and rip up the

[18 : 22] L plates it felt didn't it like L was for loser as much as for learner unless you've got a really spiteful parent it makes you put those green ones on the car sorry for people like that but if you're a follower of Jesus this morning you will know won't you that you need L plates for the whole of life we are spiritual losers who will always be learners and that is what it means to be a Christian to be a disciple even actually the word apostle it just means sent one it's somebody who Jesus has sent to do an errand it is not great one it is not holy one it is not a powerful one it is errand boy it is a sent one and the errand happens to be telling the whole world about him but all they are is sent that's what apostle means and verse 16 should be enough to remind us shouldn't it that it is not by merit we become followers of Jesus look at verse 16 it's and Judas

Iscariot who became a traitor even now at the beginning we're hearing about Judas who's going to betray Jesus to death on a cross that death that he had to die in our place so he could make us worthy to be his followers by taking his sin upon ourselves and if you're a Christian this morning at the heart of King Jesus people are some very very ordinary men and women and if you're not a Christian if you feel ordinary or maybe you feel worse than ordinary then you are just the sort of person Jesus wants in fact Paul tells the church in Corinth these words that God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise and God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong and God chose the lowly things and the despised things and the things that are not to nullify the things that are so that no one may boast before him

God chooses ordinary people so that there is no doubt is there who is responsible for our salvation and that is him if you're not a Christian and you're here this morning you've probably been told all of your life you've got to be someone I was reading this week of the huge pressure that's on Chinese students who come to the UK they've come to this country and they're under enormous pressure because they've got to achieve the degree that their parents want they've got to achieve the right degree to get the job that they want to get and maybe you feel you need to be admired and you need to be somebody who earns your way you pay your way in life can I say that will never work with God will it to be one of his people you've got to recognise that you are very very ordinary and that you cannot do anything to win God's love and you fail to keep his standards and in fact you deserve his punishment in the game of life you're not just a learner you're a loser and so am I but he will freely give you his love if you come to Jesus and that is the only sensible course of action we are an ordinary people secondly we are called by a powerful king we are called by a powerful king look down at verse 17 look at verse 17 he went down with them and stood in a level place you can have a fascinating discussion on this for those who would like to whether Luke is giving an abbreviated version of the sermon on the mount from chapter 5 to chapter 7 whether the word level place means plain at the bottom of a hill or like a plateau halfway up a hill or whether Jesus is giving a totally different sermon on a different occasion but who cares frankly because God's spirit has caused this to be written and as we look at this passage our focus first and foremost is not on when these words were spoken and not on where these words were spoken but on what was spoken and on the one who was speaking so look what he says look at verse 17 he went down with them and stood at a level place and a large crowd of his disciples were there and where were they from?

Well they were from all over Judea from Jerusalem and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon do you see what Luke is emphasising it's a large crowd there's a great number of people clearly Jesus has got some quite impressive pulling power hasn't he?

[23 : 20] Even people from Tyre and Sidon were there why is that significant? Well because they were the two arch enemies of God's people Israel the point is this there is no one who is excluded from coming into God's people and when they come they find a king of huge power look what happens in verse 18 they come to cure him and to be healed of their diseases those troubled by evil spirits were cured and the people all tried to touch him because power was coming from him and healing them all do you see that?

All tried to touch him healing from them all Jesus is so awesome that a touch of faith smashes evil it gives sick bodies health and the message is clear this is God on earth restoring a sin ravaged creation during this life Jesus acts as a trailer showing what his perfect kingdom would be like so you go to the cinema don't you and you look at the trailers and it shows you all the best bits in fact the only good bits of the film is often and you turn to the person sitting next to you afterwards and you either give a nod or you give a no I don't want to go to see that that is what happens to us all the trailer is supposed to show us what the film is like it's supposed to whet the appetite it's an

advertisement and the idea is that you see the trailer and think that's fantastic I'm going to go to the film and when

Jesus walks the earth Jesus shows you and I how wonderful the new creation is going to be when he will return and he will judge this world and he will rid it of all evil and he shows us in one man what the renovated universe is going to be like let me tell you what it will be like Revelation 21 this is what he says what's it going to be like it says he will wipe every tear from their eyes and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things has passed away the dwelling of God is with man and that is the certain future how do we know that is a certain future because we look at King Jesus in the present this is what happens all around him isn't it everything is healed everything is better all sin all sickness and evil disappear but God in his mercy has delayed that final judgment that new world so that very very orderly people like you and like me can come to know him can come to King

Jesus for forgiveness you see nobody else has shown that they can deal with the problems of our world secular humanism promises that the human race can better itself but anybody who knows history knows that that is a lie if you look just at the lives of secular humanist philosophers you find time and time again that they are miserable people Islam it says doesn't it it's the route to peace and happiness that's what it says on the bus as it drives past but let's have a look for a moment at those countries that practice Islamic government in the world today just think about them what are they they are places of oppression and they are places of fear look at the life of Mohammed and you will find that he is a very very troubled man only

Jesus says I'm going to make a perfect new world and you can come into my kingdom now he shows us what that kingdom is like what that perfect new world would be like as he strides the earth and he smashes the effect of sin and Jesus calls people to follow him to come into my kingdom now Jesus says you are not going to experience the full benefits of my kingdom now that is madness you won't but when I return and I judge the world this is what life is going to be like and so we wait don't we we are an ordinary people called by powerful king and thirdly we are called to live extraordinary lives extraordinary lives Jesus fixes his followers and his gaze and he says you are to long for the things that this world despises and you are to reject the things that this world admires and these verses are totally counter cultural let me say before we look at verses 20 to 26 if everybody here today who claims the name of

[28 : 43] Christian lived like this it would transform not only our lives but our city wouldn't it look at verse 20 he looked at his disciples and he said blessed are you who are poor for yours is the kingdom of God to be blessed is so much more than to be happy it is that deep contentment that only a relationship with the true and living God can give you it is to know how high and how wide and how long and how deep the love of Jesus Christ is for you and that blessing comes to those who are poor it doesn't mean those don't have money it doesn't fit with what Jesus has been teaching in Luke no this is those who recognise that they are spiritually poor those who know that they are sinners and there's nothing they can do with it do about it those who recognise the truth of that verse from

Luke earlier in verse 31 that they are sick and they need Dr. Jesus those who don't just sing nothing in my hands I bring simply to your cross I cling but that is shown in the way that they live that is a certain person who has the kingdom of God and they live it now they live under the rule of King Jesus they realise there's nowhere else and no one else to go to and if you want to know God's blessing in your life the first thing you need to see is that you are totally unworthy of it and it's not just a one off event it is an ongoing attitude it is to realise that spiritually you are bankrupt and it's so easy to go on thinking I'm not as bad as other people are and as I have looked at Luke's gospel the one thing that I think I've been confronted again more and more and more is by what a Pharisee I am how easy it is to think that I'm better than other Christians that is an awful thing that they are doing

I would never do that so for example last week we looked at the great privilege and the great blessing it is for us to be able to have a sabbath a day of rest I got home on the Monday and I read a friend of mine who's written an article on why because of Easter I don't no longer keep the sabbath a day of rest I think it's a pretty appalling article that is badly worded I've told him that and is badly argued I don't think it's right but I got so angry about it and I thought well actually he just doesn't get it does he I get it but he that's the spirit of the Pharisee but if only you and I will see our poverty daily we will enjoy the true blessing of being in God's kingdom you see it's only when we

recognise that we are lost without Jesus that we long to know him more and more look at verse 21 blessed are you who are hungry now who hunger now for you will be satisfied that is what it is to hunger to crave

Christ more to long to live that way to long to know God better to want a deeper experience of his love if you desire for Jesus and his kingdom then you will be satisfied because there will be a day when you will be with him Paul says at the end of that passage in 1 Corinthians 13 now we see but a poor reflection in a mirror then we will see face to face now I know in part but then I will know fully I'll know fully as I am fully known and if you long for God like that then what will you be when you will be saddened and you will be sickened by a world that rejects him so look at verse 21 blessed are you who weep now for you will laugh and you weep at your sin don't you and you will weep at the sin you see around you and you will weep at the lives that are displayed not just on the news but in your family your wider family and you will weep at the suffering that sin brings onto others and if you're groaning for the end of this God dishonouring sin filled suffering world well then one day you will laugh you will laugh with joy as you enjoy paradise with God in Jesus perfect new creation and because all of that is made possible for you by the precious son of man look at verse 22 blessed are you when men hate you when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil because of the son of man now we long to be accepted don't we

I crave the approval of others forgive personal illustrations but occasionally I will preach a sermon I'll get home and nobody said anything to me afterwards and I will say to Claire over lunch it wasn't great this morning was it now actually I don't believe that I think it was fantastic but what I want Claire to do is to say no love that was marvellous that was moving what she normally says is it was ok what am I doing I'm fishing for compliments aren't I I'm craving the approval of others and we love that don't we we need somewhere to fit in but look at verse 22 Jesus says blessing comes when we stand out when we want his approval above everything else when we are not accepted by the world which rejects him now I want you to see there's progression in verse 22 do you see the escalating persecution verse 22 they will hate you that's the emotional response then there is the action they will shut you out they will exclude you then finally practically they insult you before your whole character is assassinated you are labelled as evil for following

[35 : 17] King Jesus and that's happening now isn't it we see it as Christians who make a stand on Friday in the Guardian newspaper there was an article entitled was Jesus gay probably and it is astonishing well number one was the Guardian of the Guts to publish something like that about Mohammed but it is appallingly argued it's really this man has kind of read into what it is but go and read the comments and there are some nutty Christians on there but read the Christians who have responded quite nicely and politely and see how others react to them we've seen it haven't we in Christians who make a stand about registering a civil partnership they say that they won't do it as part of their work how does media portray them evil uncaring and unloving we know it don't we we are friends who are ministers of

Scotland and they have stood up for biblical truth and they are vilified in the local media and they are having a fight for their own church authorities for something they keep the building they meet in and their crime standing up for the truth and standards of God's word the Bible but if you read the press if you didn't know those men you would think that they were evil and loving people and maybe just maybe you've experienced that maybe you've asked somebody to do a carol service or something at church and out of love you've longed for them to hear about Jesus and they've just labelled you as a religious busy body maybe you'd be called sad because you won't join in the drinking like everyone else you refuse to go to the strip club after the office party perhaps maybe you've lost the promotion perhaps you feared for your job maybe it's school there's that group of friends and they like you and they accept you you find them fun but when they find out actually you go to church and actually you believe in Jesus and you want to follow him and you take your faith seriously they chip away don't they why do you want to go there have you seen the people who go there the odd people who are in your church well when

Jesus when that happens Jesus says verse 23 it's party time rejoice in that day leap for joy because great is your reward in heaven he says be so happy for that is how the father has treated the prophet it is a wonderful day oh happy day when that happens why well because when you stand in heaven and Jesus greets you as a good and faithful servant all the insults and all the taunts and all the mocking will disappear because you'll be with the king and in fact you are following a long line distinguished truth speakers do you remember Manchaia the prophet he got slapped in the face he

got thrown in prison for telling the truth and that is the life of the Christian absurdly happy absurdly happy because

Jesus loves us I'm never out of trouble because the world hates us we live in the midst of the revolution but we're loyal to the king radically different and yet daily resolved to resist the temptation to settle for the quiet life and to fit in because if you do settle for the quiet life and you just try and fit in look at verse 24 the results are terrible woe to you you are rich for you've already received your comfort woe means how terrible how terrible for you who are rich and again the problem is not money it might be the problem is money but I don't think it is through the example isn't it of every rich man in Luke's gospel if you look through those who reject God because they don't they feel they don't need him and one of the signs for rich people becoming

Christians in Luke's gospel is that they give away all their money but I don't think it is material money that he's talking about again I think it's those who feel spiritually self-righteous They have no need for Jesus because they are good and they are nice people they don't need anybody to die for their sins because they're self-satisfied and that is all the self-satisfaction they're going to get look at verse 25 woe to you who are well fed now for you will go hungry they don't feel they need to know God any better they are content not with food they are well fed by their own ego and they are living for themselves and their desire is for more self but when they stand before Jesus the judge they will realize how much they've missed because they will be sent into an eternity of receiving God's punishment rather than rejoicing in his presence in verse 25 woe to you who laugh now for you will more than weep

[40 : 49] Jesus is not against laughing although you would think so sometimes by his followers it is those who in their self satisfaction are not really bothered by sin or suffering in the world or in fact anyone else they can be quite happy as long as their little corner of creation is going to plan but when they are shut out of God's new creation they will weep and mourn in hell forever and there are people aren't there they long to fit in verse 26 when all men speak well of you for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets you see the only way to fit in this world is to peddle its lies and if the world rejects Jesus and yet praises you then we've got a problem with me the danger is we might be singing from the world's hymn book and not the Lord's the false prophets do you remember what they did they didn't just tell people what they wanted to hear what did they do they told people what they didn't want to hear and it made them very unpopular but if as preachers we tell people what we want to hear it will make us very popular now but very sad forever it is a stark contrast and what you and I need to remember is this

Jesus is speaking to disciples at verse 20 it is possible to call yourself a Christian and to think that you are rich and to think that you are well fed and to laugh at sin and to be spoken well of and this morning only you know what your heart is like and what your life feels like and if you are finding Jesus following Jesus dissatisfying it may well be that you are longing for the wrong things and you are looking for happiness as the world defines it not as the word defines it and you are focused on you and Jesus says how terrible it will be for you because the only way to find blessing is to live the radical life I've called you to it is worth it it is worth it

Jesus says if you are a member of my kingdom now you will know my perfection in my new creation forever Christians are ordinary people called by a powerful king to lead extraordinary lives and it's not the easy life but neither is it a waste of time let's pray ending ending ending ending ending