

Mark 12:13-17

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Date: 19 October 2014

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[0 : 00] Good to see you all here with us today, whether you're a regular attender or a guest. We even have some old faces here we haven't seen in a while. It's very, very good to have all of you with us today.

For those of you who are guests, we've been working through the Gospel of Mark verse by verse. We find this to be generally the best way to preach. We believe that the Scriptures are inerrant, that they contain within them no error whatsoever, no contradiction.

We believe that the Scriptures are authoritative, that they are authored by God and therefore should be obeyed as His Word to us. We believe that the Scriptures are sufficient, that they contain within them everything we need to know for worship and for holiness in our living.

And we believe in the clarity of Scripture, and that is that we can know what God has intended for us to know from His Word. And so we go through it carefully, verse by verse.

And today we've come to Mark chapter 12, verses 13 through 17. Now I'm going to do something a little bit different, as I have for the past countless weeks preached you a 45-minute to an hour sermon.

[1 : 19] We're going to take a little break from that and give a shorter sermon on this particular text, do the Lord's Supper together, and then I'm going to come back and talk a bit about baptism as we're doing baptisms this morning, just in case you hadn't caught on yet that that is happening today, to talk a bit about that as well.

So this is the way we're going to approach our preaching of the Word this morning. So if you will, follow along as I read to you Mark chapter 12, beginning in verse 13.

And they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians to trap Him in His talk. And they came and said to Him, Teacher, we know that You are true and do not care about anyone's opinion, for You are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God.

Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay them or should we not? But knowing their hypocrisy, He said to them, Why put me to the test?

Bring me a denarius and let me look at it. And they brought one. And He said to them, Whose likeness and inscription is this? They said to Him, Caesar's.

[2 : 31] Jesus said to them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marveled at Him. This is God's Word to us.

It was written for His glory and our good. We would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands. Let's pray together. Father God, we need You in all things at all times, and we certainly need You now.

So I would pray, Father, that by Your Spirit, You will help me to speak with clarity and with conviction concerning Your Word. And we pray, Father, that by Your Spirit, You will rightly apply what is spoken to all of our hearts.

That we might be transformed. That we would be changed from our old selves and greater likeness to Christ. This is the great calling for those of us who claim to follow Him.

And so have Your way with us to that great end today. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So, just to catch our minds up quickly to where we are in the life of Jesus, this is what's called Passion Week.

[3 : 47] It's the last week leading up to His crucifixion on Friday. Back at the beginning of chapter 11, He has entered into Jerusalem, called the Triumphal Entry, on Monday.

Sunday, some things transpire there. He comes back in on Tuesday, turns over tables in the temple, essentially takes over the temple and begins teaching in this place.

And then on Wednesday, His authority begins to be challenged by the scribes and the Pharisees, the elders, all of the religious elite of the day.

He's come and He's challenging their authority by speaking with authority the Word of God. And they want to know who is this man and by what authority is he disrupting the system that they've set up, this apostate Judaism.

A Judaism that didn't serve to worship God at all, but rather served to puff them up and give them acclaim and to give them praise. So we see them ask the question at the end of chapter 11.

[4 : 52] And he very tactfully ignores the question altogether. Kyle, a couple of weeks ago, spoke well of that. And he goes on at the beginning of chapter 12 to tell them a parable to show that they are, these religious leaders, are just like the religious leaders of the past of Israel that killed the prophets.

When God sent prophets to them to turn the people back to God, they killed them, they stoned them, they beat them. They didn't listen to what they said. And he goes on in the parable to talk about this man that owns this vineyard sending his son.

And we know that this is Christ in the story. And we know that in just a couple of days, the very same thing will happen. He will be murdered. He's come on behalf of the Father.

But those who are in charge of Israel, looking over their spiritual well-being, will have him killed. And we come here now to this further challenge in verse 13.

Notice in verse 13 it says, And they sent, speaking back in Mark chapter 11 verse 27 of the chief priests and the scribes and the elders, all of those at the top of this apostate worship system of God.

[6 : 08] They sent to him some of the Pharisees, people of a particular sect, a particular order of Judaism, and some of the Herodians with a very intent purpose.

This was a special delegation with a specific mission, and that was to trap him in his talk. To ask him a question that would cause him to answer in such a way that they could bring about what they've been trying to do all along.

And we've seen this occur again and again and again in Mark's gospel. They're looking to destroy him. They're looking to arrest him. They're trying to get him out of this limelight because the people are listening to what he has to say.

They're recognizing him as one who has authority, and they want him gone. So they come with this mission. So we're fairly familiar with the Pharisees and who they were.

There were two large Jewish sects, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Major difference between the two of them is the Sadducees didn't believe in a resurrection at all. The Sadducees were much more liberal in their understanding of the law of God.

[7 : 12] The Pharisees, much more pharisaical, if you'll allow me. They were better adherents to it. They really tried to follow it strictly. In our modern terminology, they would have been the fundamentalists of that day.

But we see this other group, which has been mentioned a couple of other times in Mark's gospel, but this group called the Herodians, and we need to understand who they were. They are a political sect of Judaism.

A more pointed intention was political, which sought potential freedom from Roman rule through the reign of Herod. Herod reigned in this day, existed, was allowed to exist and have some control by the occupying nation of Rome.

They believed that the Herodian dynasty would be favorable to the reestablishment of a Jewish theocracy. So it was their hope, they thought, that Herod and his line would have the power to gather the people once again, to overthrow Rome, and re-put the Jews underneath God's rule in a sense.

A man who is called by scholars, this is not his real name, he's an unknown author, but scholars called him Pseudo-Tuturlian, wrote in a book that you won't remember the title of, and I probably can't pronounce, so I'm just not going to, but wrote in a book where he accused the Herodians of promoting Herod as the Messiah himself.

[8 : 47] They wanted people to believe that it was through his order, his lineage, that they were going to be re-established as an independent nation. So that's who these men are, this sect, this political sect of Judaism.

This is just another continuance of an alliance between the Pharisees and the Herodians. Back in Mark chapter 3, verse 6, it says, the Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

And Jesus, in fact, recognizes the danger of this alliance in Mark 8, verse 15. He warns the disciples, he cautions them saying, watch out, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.

And the Herodians would have been part of that. Beware of what they're teaching you, that it doesn't infect the way in which you think. So these are the men that come to him with a very specific task, to trap him in his talk.

But they begin with a bit of flattery. A little smart play on their part in verse 14. They came and said to him, Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God.

[10:08] And if we don't understand the context of what they're doing, that they're coming, in fact, to trap him, that they're seeking to destroy him, this is a very true statement of who our Lord is.

That he didn't care. He is true. Wasn't too concerned about what people thought of him, but rather wanted to just follow the way of God. But you must see here, this was false flattery on their part. They're saying to him, we want you to answer the question we're about to ask. We're giving you the power to do it. Please answer this question that we're going to ask of you, which was meant to trap him.

That's a rather clever question on their part. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay them or should we not?

Now to understand their tactic, we really need to understand the nature of this question, and we can't do so without some socio-political historical knowledge.

[11:10] We just can't quite wrap our minds around it. This question in our day doesn't nearly make the sense that it would have made in that day. Now since I'm sure you guys all understand the socio-political history of the time, for the sake of time we're just going to skip right over it.

Just kidding, we're not. We're going to spend some time talking about that. I learned quite a bit this week in my study of this. Why was this question so particularly tactful on their part?

And it was. It was a rather brilliant question that they asked him. They just didn't know they were asking the Son of God this question. When they talk about paying a tax, taxes, plural in most of our translation, they're referring to a specific tax called the poll tax.

This tax was instituted in A.D. 6. Now remember, we're most likely in A.D. 33. Most people agree upon this. Some don't, so I'll say most likely A.D. 33.

This tax, the poll tax, was instituted in A.D. 6 by means of the census of Quirinius, who was a Roman god, but the census of Quirinius when Judea became a Roman province.

[12:22] And most of us who are familiar with the story of Jesus are familiar with this census because this is the census that took Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. This was the one, the gathering of the people.

This was to count the people so they knew how many people would have to pay this particular tax. This was the very purpose of this census.

The poll tax was used directly to finance the occupying Roman army. This is what it went to. And among the Jews, it was the most hated of all the many Roman taxes.

As a head tax, as a tax put on every individual who was Jewish in this day, it implied that Rome owned not only the land. Of course, they taxed for various purposes of land ownership and transporting goods across the land and moving as a person across the land.

So these taxes said that Rome owned the land, but this one said that they owned the people themselves. As their sovereign, they had a right over to their very being.

[13:29] And of course, the Jews viewed rightly themselves as God's possession and the land as a part of God's covenant with them. So this was a particularly hated tax.

Additionally, they could only pay this tax with the denarii. It was a silver coin. Rome was the only people allowed to mint coins made of silver or gold.

This is one of the ways they controlled commerce in the day. So they could only pay this tax with a silver coin, the denarii. The denarius bore an image of Caesar's face on one side, and on the other side was an image of Caesar sitting on his throne in the robes of a deity.

And the Jews considered the coin itself an idolatrous image, and therefore the use of it idolatrous. So you kind of add insult to injury with this particular tax that could only be paid this way. In fact, they were allowed to locally mint coins, and they did so out of copper, and they took care of most of their trade and transaction with these copper coins in order to avoid using the silver and gold coins of Rome.

[14 : 39] But this one had to be paid with the denarii. The tax was so hated, in fact, that in the year that it was instituted, it was the immediate cause of a revolt.

So in AD 6, there was a result of a revolt led by a guy named Judas of Galilee. Not Judas that would betray Jesus one day, very soon in our text, but led by a man named Judas of Galilee. The Jewish historian Josephus described the call to revolt in these terms. Judas called his fellow countrymen cowards for being willing to pay tribute to the Romans and for putting up with mortal masters in place of God.

This was how seriously they took this. And in fact, at the beginning of Mark 13, we're going to see Jesus predict the destruction of the temple in AD 70, I believe is when it was destroyed.

The revolt that led to that eventually was begun in AD 66. Again, I hope I'm getting that correct. I believe I am. And this was the tax that caused that.

[15 : 42] This was the major cause of that revolt to happen in this place as well. So this is a big, big deal. In fact, this question that they asked of Jesus was a question that they had asked themselves many times.

This is a question that was politically charged. There were probably many conversations happening about this, and there were probably many opinions about what should and shouldn't be done concerning this particular tax.

So it's a very clever question. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay them or should we not? Because if Jesus answered no to their questions, they could charge him with treason against Rome.

But if he said yes, they could accuse him of disloyalty to Israel and her God. So you see the place that they think, at least, that they have him in.

Kind of stuck. Rocking a hard place. For our minds, at least, would be, wouldn't we? So they asked Jesus a clever question, but Jesus' response is all the more clever, all the more excellent in dealing with them.

[16 : 51] And what he does is he undermines his critic's position in two ways. I am losing my voice this morning. He undermines his critic's position in two ways.

First, excuse me, *ad hominem*, which is Latin, means to the man. So his first argument is *ad hominem*, which means that he discredits the one asking the question.

And the second way he does it is theological. So first, *ad hominem*, verse 15 says, but knowing their hypocrisy. He's very aware of what they've come to do. They've given him this false flattery at the beginning of verse 14 with this following question.

He's very aware of what it is they're trying to accomplish. He says to them, why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.

And they brought one. Now catch the silliness of what they're doing is they're coming to him and they're saying to him, should we pay this tax with this coin that we find to be idolatrous or should we not?

[18 : 05] And what he does is he says, well, I don't have one on me. So why don't you bring me one and we'll talk about it. And they produce one. So he's got a group of men who are carrying the very coin in their pocket.

That's how brilliantly played that is. So they've got this idolatrous imperial coinage on them, which means that they themselves paid the tax and therefore participated in what the crowds would have found to be idolatrous.

So he dismantles *ad hominem* the argument right there. But he goes on. He secondly lays out a theological argument. Verse 16b.

And he says to them, whose likeness and inscription is this? They said to him, Caesar's. Jesus said to them, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.

So he lays for us some theological understanding. And this is not an understanding that should have been foreign to them. These men, particularly these men, knew their Old Testament.

[19 : 14] They had studied it. This was a culture that really knew their Scriptures. In fact, it's kind of a shame that we claim to follow God. I hope that all of us do with the purest intentions and motives of our heart.

But yet these men really probably knew their Scriptures better than we do. There's a text in Daniel when Israel's been carried off into Babylonian captivity. They have been, the temple's been destroyed once again by Babylon.

They've been carried away. And Daniel sings praises to God in Daniel chapter 2, verse 21. He says, God removes kings and sets up kings. As one example, there are many other places that the Old Testament Scriptures talk about how God providentially sets up governments. sometimes as a judgment over the people, sometimes as a way to care for the people, but the people were to know that it was ultimately God that reigned because He established governments. This is a reality in our New Testament as well. Romans 13.1, Paul says, let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

[20 : 28] And so what Jesus is saying to them is that Caesar has the right to tax you, and it's been given to him by God. You don't have to agree with the tax.

You don't have to particularly enjoy the tax, but He is a government placed above you, and God did it. It is His reign over you by this government.

That makes us uncomfortable as Americans, doesn't it? We exist in a democratic system, a democratic republic to be exact, and we want to control every part of our government, and we should.

We should exercise those rights and do those things, but we also must recognize that when the people that we didn't vote for end up in office, God placed them there. That puts an absolute knot in my stomach sometimes when I think about it because it just doesn't seem that He would in many cases.

But I don't have His view on the world. I don't fully understand His purposes and His ways and the way in which He's working good on my behalf. So I have to trust and know that He is, and they should have done the same.

[21 : 37] And this is what Jesus is saying to them, right? And in this way, He brings further indictment on them because they were successful in doing the one, paying to Caesar what is Caesar's, but they were failing to do the other and rendering to God the things that are God's.

They did not give Him the worship of their hearts. Here they had the Christ standing before them, and it was their intention to trick Him, to trap Him, to arrest and eventually destroy Him.

And they'll do it. They'll successfully do it by the purposes and plans of God in two days on Friday. So He totally dismantles their argument in a rather brilliant way.

And in fact, the last little sentence we see from verse 17 says, and they marveled at Him. I believe that the pronoun here is applying both to these men that came and spoke to Him.

They asked Him such a brilliant question in their minds that was bound to trap Him. They didn't think there was any way He could possibly get out of this question. And as well as the people who were around listening, there would have been other people gathered, and they marveled at Him.

[22 : 51] They marveled at the brilliance of His response. So what is the application of this for us? We see this picture, this glimpse into the life of Jesus, and seems to be so much wrapped into the political issues of the day.

What does it mean for us? Firstly, provided that our government doesn't require anything of us outside the law of God, we should obey our government.

We should submit ourselves to the government that God has placed over us. Also not an easy thing to do. In fact, our Declaration of Independence asks of us to overthrow any government that doesn't rightly defend the rights of individuals.

As an American, boy, do I want to take up arms and overthrow our government. But as a Christian who lives in America, the proper thing is for me to submit to the government, to the authority placed above me.

I read to you a moment ago Romans 13.1. I'd like to continue reading down through verse 7. It would probably do you well to go there with me. Romans 13.1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God.

[24 : 14] And those that exist have been instituted by God. That's verse 1 I read to you previously. Verse 2 says, Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

Right? There's punishments for not obeying the laws of the land. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority?

Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval. For he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

Therefore, one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath, but also for the sake of conscience. Now, verse 6, back to the point of our text in Mark.

For because of this, you also pay taxes. So, obey the authorities and all the laws of the land, and pay your taxes. For the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them, taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

[25 : 28] If you'd like to study this further, 1 Peter 2, 13 through 17, would do well to take a look at that also. Did you guys all know that the federal income tax is unconstitutional?

You know that? It's a direct, it's a direct non-apportion tax, which our Constitution actually forbids, and on three separate occasions, the Supreme Court has ruled that that is the case, that that is what the Constitution guarantees us as a law.

It's unconstitutional, the federal income tax. It's actually an illegal tax on the people. I have been so tempted to not pay it, and to take them to court, and to be a real pain about the whole issue altogether, but you know what?

I wouldn't win. I don't have the money to throw at that kind of a lawsuit. It would be an entire waste of time, and all I would end up doing is being a real pain, right?

They would end up flicking me away and go on with their business the way they have all along, and so I believe the right thing for me to do as an American Christian is to pay the tax.

[26 : 35] They ask for it, pay the tax, recognize that ultimately it's all God's money, it all belongs to Him, and He's always supplied for every one of my needs. Would I like to have a percentage of it back to use for other things?

Absolutely. But He's aware, and He knows what I need, and He provides amply for all that I need, and so we should be submissive in that way. The day that the IRS agents stop carrying guns, I might reconsider, but for now, this is where we stand.

It's appropriate, provided that our government doesn't ask us to do something that's outside the law of God. We are still subject to God's law, and we will obey Him firstly.

Secondly, we should submit ourselves to the Lord's leading. So I've talked about the brilliance of Jesus Christ. He is to be marveled at as we watch Him live out His life.

Amazing. But we have to remember this. There's much record of this in the Gospel according to John. John 5.19 So Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing.

[27 : 49] For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. In the Trinity, this Trinitarian relationship, we believe that Jesus is fully God, and He does not set aside His deity when He came to earth.

He became fully man, but He remains fully God. So there's these three parts. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and they coexist together. All of them fully God, and yet distinct in some ways.

And that is the way in which they order themselves. Fully God, yet He takes command from God.

He lays aside authority, and He lets the Father God, this part of the Godhead, speak to Him and tell Him what He ought to do.

Again, John 8, 28, He says, I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. And this is the way we are meant to live as well.

Not to carefully study the brilliance of Jesus' arguments, and to become masterful logicians the way that He was, but simply to relent our own wills and desires, our very words, and listen to what the Father would have us say.

[29 : 08] John 16, 13, Jesus says, When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth. For He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears, He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come.

So this is what we are to do as well. Take an example from the way in which Jesus handles conflict in His day, and to handle it with the same type and measure of grace.

And that is to depend fully on the Father God, to fully obey Him in everything, that we might honor Him with all that we do. This is the high call for those of us who are disciples of Jesus Christ, to lay aside, to take up our cross daily, to follow Him.

This is what we are meant to be, to be no longer self-governing, but governed by God. The church is now a theocracy. We are reigned over by our Lord.

This is why the distinction, I think, is important to make, that we are Christians who live in America, not so much Americans. And this is a very serious thing. If we, in fact, there's a God that exists and reigns over the world, I would like to live in His kingdom.

[30 : 22] I think this is the right and proper thing. The Scriptures promise that someday He's going to bring all of the work to a culmination. All of the kingdom establishment, all the kingdom of building, it'll come to an end.

He will destroy the evil of this world, and He will establish His kingdom forever. I want to be counted among the number that praise Him in those days. The Scriptures tell us what we must do for that to be the case.

Repent and believe. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. There aren't multiple ways to find this out. It is through the propitiation of Jesus Christ.

He took our punishment in Him. If you will believe this is the truth for you today. So the call for all of us always, whether we are found in Christ and can say with confidence that we are Christians, that we are disciples of Christ, there's going to be sin in our hearts, ways in which we haven't subjected ourselves to His leadership.

Ways in which we'd love to rise up against this government. We should repent. We should turn back to Him in belief. And if you're not found in Christ this morning, you don't know that.

[31 : 29] You've never placed saving faith in Him. We're going to look at a beautiful picture of what that looks like and what it means in just a few moments. It's not too late. What a wonderful morning.

A beautiful day to repent and believe. And I would ask you to do that together. Let's pray. For this is the will of God.

That by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

There was sermon number one. Ready for sermon number two? It'll be much shorter. So we're going to do some baptisms here in just a few moments. And just to make sure everybody's minds and we hope hearts are caught up to what we're about to do together, let me say to you that we are what are called credo-baptists at Christ's Family Church, which means that we believe that baptism is an ordinance of the church properly administered only after an individual has made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

We believe this for a number of reasons. Let me give it to you in brief this morning. Firstly, we see John the baptizer's baptism. John's baptism found in Mark 1.4 is a baptism of repentance, a declaration of repentance.

[32 : 53] Repentance. The repentance had taken place. It was a picture of an expressed desire to be made right with God. When Peter preaches on the day of Pentecost, chapter 2, verse 40 and 41, he says, Save yourselves from this crooked generation.

So those who received His Word were baptized. And there were out of that day about 3,000 souls. So they believed and then they were baptized.

Now remember that many of these individuals were Jewish in this day, had received a sign of covenant promise already. Back in Matthew 3, verse 7-9, again we see John the Baptist and he's out in the wilderness and he's baptizing in the Jordan and in verse 7 of chapter 3 he says, But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, now get this, here's the Pharisees, the Sadducees, these men who were self-proclaimed followers of God.

He says to them, You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. They came out to heap on some other religious rite, some other ceremony that they thought would help them gain proper credit with God.

And he says to them, now bear fruit in keeping with repentance. Show that you actually believe that you're sinful and need God and need to turn to him and then you can be baptized and they went away after this.

[34 : 27] So, we are credo-baptists simply because we believe that baptism is a picture, again, a symbol. It doesn't administer any grace. It's not salvific, but it's a picture of a work that God's already accomplished in the heart of an individual.

An inner thing that we're now showing in a symbolic outward way. Now, we baptize by immersion for two reasons. Because it's not easy getting this set up.

And some people devote space in a building, which I understand why, with steps and heated water and because they believe this.

And thank you guys who helped me set this up. It was so much easier with hope this week. The Greek word, though, so firstly, the Greek word from which we derive the English word baptize is baptizo.

The Greek word baptizo, where you see it in your scriptures, translated as baptized or baptized, which means, and all Greek scholars, whether believers or not, agree to dunk repeatedly or drown.

[35 : 32] It's a very emphatic, very emphatic language what that baptize means. Also, secondly, what we believe the ordinance of baptism represents.

What is it meant to picture? Romans 6, 3 and 4 says, Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We were buried, therefore, with him by baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

So it's a picture of what happens when we place faith in Jesus Christ. The old, sin-sick part of ourselves dies, and we're now given a new heart, a new capacity to follow God.

So the old has gone away, the new has come. And so, we believe rightly we immerse people. We put them under the water just like you'd be put under the ground if you died.

[36 : 35] It's a more perfect picture of what that looks like, buried and raised once again. Around here, because many of you are guests, I'm going to tell us again, I jokingly say that when our tradition changes to just laying people out on the ground and tossing a little dirt in their face and the funeral's done, we may rethink baptizing by immersion, but until then, as long as the way in which we deal with dead bodies is putting them in the ground, we'll do the same with baptism for the picture that it represents.

And so, with that said, I'm just so incredibly pleased that we've got to baptize so many across the years, both new Christians and those who have just come to the conviction that they ought to be baptized as believers.

It's a blessing to get to do it. I'm really, really joyful to get to participate in it and be such a major part in it.