

Life Group Notes 2/15/2026 Mark Warren—What to Expect AFTER Water Baptism

No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time.

– *Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.*

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our heart and guide our discussions.

Leaders: *please pre-read these notes and choose the direction that is appropriate for your group. Scan the detailed questions that follow the AI-generated study questions, to see if you want to add any more detailed questions.*

Be cognizant of your group's time and be sensitive. *Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.*

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 2/15. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. ***The purpose is to minister to one another***

Important: At [the very end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week.

This format begins with a summary of the notes, followed by study questions. This week, notes in full detail can be found beginning on page 3: _____

Section I: AI Generated Summary

Here's "co-pilot's" AI summary of the Sermon Lifegroup Notes

Pastor Mark's message explores the meaning and impact of water baptism as a defining moment in the Christian life. Baptism is presented as a public, authentic expression of faith that cannot be performed superficially, because it represents a personal commitment to a transformed life. It symbolizes a simultaneous death to the old self, burial of past sin, and resurrection into new life. Through baptism, believers identify with the death and resurrection of Jesus and begin walking in a new reality marked by freedom from sin's authority and a new identity rooted in Christ rather than past failures or successes.

The passage emphasizes that baptism is not the end of spiritual growth, but the beginning of learning how to live in God's kingdom. This process is described as "spiritual physical therapy," where believers learn new ways of thinking, responding, forgiving, trusting, and serving. Growth takes time and includes moments of stumbling, which are viewed not as failures but as part of learning to walk in a new life. The focus shifts from

performance to relationship, highlighting ongoing access to the Father through the Holy Spirit, who empowers believers to live transformed lives and bear spiritual fruit.

Finally, the section calls believers to live on mission with Jesus. Having been renewed and empowered by the Spirit, Christians are described as representatives of Christ, through whom God works to bring reconciliation, healing, and hope to others. The journey ahead is portrayed as one of continual growth, restoration, and purpose, marked by perseverance, reliance on God's grace, and confidence that identity is defined by Christ rather than by setbacks along the way.

Section II: AI Generated Study questions

Message Theme: What to Expect After Baptism

Total Time: 60 Minutes

Purpose of the Study

To help participants understand baptism as an authentic commitment, embrace spiritual growth as a process, live from a new identity in Christ, and step into a life of mission.

Opening (5 minutes)

Goal: Invite reflection and set the tone.

- In your own words, what does baptism represent—or what do you hope it represents?
- What idea from the message stood out most to you?

1. Baptism as Authentic Commitment (15 minutes)

Key Idea: Baptism marks a real, public turning point.

- The message says baptism “cannot be faked.” What does that mean?
- What makes baptism different from simply participating in a religious activity?
- What do people often try to hold onto from their old life after choosing a new one?
- Baptism is described as death, burial, and resurrection. What do you think dies—and what is raised to new life?
- How does this imagery challenge how we usually think about personal change?

2. Growth Is a Process, Not a Finish Line (15 minutes)

Key Idea: Baptism begins a lifelong journey of learning to live differently.

- Why do people often expect faith or baptism to instantly fix everything?
- Spiritual growth is described as “spiritual physical therapy.” What does that metaphor communicate?
- How does seeing growth as a process change how we respond to failure or setbacks?
- Why is it important to shift from performance to relationship?

3. Identity and Empowered Living (10 minutes)

Key Idea: Identity flows from who we are in Christ, not what we've done.

- According to the message, where should our identity come from?
- Why is it dangerous to define ourselves by past failures—or even successes?

- What does it look like to live from a new identity instead of trying to earn one?
- What kinds of changes would you expect to see over time in someone learning this new life?

4. Living on Mission (10 minutes)

Key Idea: Transformation naturally moves outward toward others.

- Why does true change tend to express itself through mission?
- What does it mean to represent Christ in everyday life?
- Where do you see opportunities to bring hope, reconciliation, or healing?
- What tends to interfere with living on mission?

Closing Reflection (5 minutes)

Goal: Move toward application.

- Which idea from today feels most challenging?
- Which feels most encouraging?
- What is one small step you can take this week to live more fully in this new life?

Facilitator Tip (If Time Is Short)

Focus on these three questions:

1. *“Baptism cannot be faked—what does that mean?”*
2. *“How does seeing growth as a process change how we view failure?”*
3. *“What does living from a new identity look like?”*

These alone can support a rich and meaningful discussion.

Section III: Complete study notes

Pastor began the message stating that “...baptism is one of my favorite expressions of the Christian walk, because you cannot fake it.”

1. What does he mean?
2. How does one “fake it?”
3. What is one faking?
4. What do you lose getting baptized?
5. Do you have a testimony to share?
6. Were you perfected in baptism? Explain.
7. Is it another thing, as Pastor suggests, “...to get in front of your family and friends and say, ‘I want to share with you how my life has changed?’” Explain.
8. How pivotal was the moment for you?
9. Pastor claims that witnessing baptism evokes your own, and takes you back to that moment. Does it? Explain.
10. Pastor was asked, “Why did Jesus, the Son of God, get water baptized by His cousin, John? Can you answer him?”

† **Baptism is a unique expression of simultaneous death, burial and resurrection.**

1. Pastor says, “It recreates a two thousand year-old event in a moment’s time.” Explain.
2. What has died?
3. What rises from the dead?

Look up and invest the time to read Romans 6: ¹*What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may increase?* ²*Certainly not! How can we who died to sin live in it any longer?* ³*Or aren't you aware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?* ⁴*We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may walk in newness of life.* ⁵*For if we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection.* ⁶*We know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.* ⁷*For anyone who has died has been freed from sin.* ⁸*Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him.* ⁹*For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again; death no longer has dominion over Him.* ¹⁰*The death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God.* ¹¹*So you too must consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.* ¹²*Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its desires.* ¹³*Do not present the parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and present the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness.* ¹⁴*For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.*

1. What do you see?
2. What steps are you required to take to live out these verses?
3. What are the benefits?
4. Do dead people sin?
5. What is the promise of verse 7?
6. Look at verse 11. What is your task?
7. Is this easy or difficult?
8. What is the promise associated with taking this step?
9. Look at verse 4: *"4We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may walk in newness of life."* What does your baptism describe, according to Paul?
10. What is the problem that results from obedience?
11. Look at the word "too" in the verse, where it says, "we too." Who else walked in newness of life after the resurrection?
12. What does His life look like today, two thousand years after it began?
13. Compare that life to yours? What do you have to look forward to?
14. When does your new life begin?
15. If you are a new creation, what changes are ahead, beginning now?

Look up 2 Corinthians 5:¹⁶*So from now on we regard no one according to the flesh. Although we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.* ¹⁷*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come!*

1. What do you see?
2. To whom do these verses apply?
3. Explain what it means to "regard others according to the flesh."
4. To what standard are others held, if judged according to the flesh?
5. If you are no longer holding others to what they have been, what is the new standard?

6. Do you meet that standard?
7. If you or others do not meet that standard, what is the hope and the promise to look forward to? Explain.
8. Pastor asks, "Aren't you glad to know that the old has passed away?" Answer him.

Pastor says, "We have been regenerated in a way that we are no longer identified or viewed by the lens of our past. We don't need to be identified by past failures, even divorce or addiction or anxieties. Nor, even by your success and your career."

1. Do you agree?
2. What is the difference between a standard of hope, and a standard of past failure?
3. Which looks ahead?
4. Look at Philippians 3:¹⁰*I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to Him in His death, ¹¹and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. ¹²Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me ¹³Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal to win the prize of God's heavenly calling in Christ Jesus.. What do you see?*
5. How is Paul applying these principles?
6. Why forget what is behind? What is ahead?
7. What are the benefits of looking ahead, never behind?
8. What defines us?

Pastor invites us, having taken that first step of water baptism, to go to "spiritual physical therapy."

1. What does that mean. What is involved?
2. Why do we have to learn how "to walk" in this New Kingdom of God? What is different?

✠ **Learning to walk in the kingdom.**

Pastor emphasizes, here, what might be a new concept: "We spend so much time talking about the Kingdom of God, assuming the Kingdom of God must be heaven, but the reality is that wherever Jesus reigns as King, that is where the Kingdom of God takes up location. Where we have made Jesus the King of our life, the Lord of our life, we now walk in this kingdom of God that He wants us to walk in."

1. What does that mean?
2. What does this bring to mind?
3. How "new" is new?
4. Why does Pastor say, "It takes time?"

Look up Matthew 6: "³³*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.*"

1. What are you seeking exactly?
2. What comes with the quest?
3. The next verse concludes Jesus' thought, saying: "³⁴*Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Today has enough trouble of its own.*" How does seeking the Kingdom deliver you from your own anxieties?
4. Do you have a testimony?

Pastor suggested a list of steps. Can you think of others?

- You begin forgiving when your flesh wants revenge.
- Giving generously when your instincts say, "Hoard."
- Serving when your ego wants the applause.
- Trusting when circumstances appear chaotic.

Pastor then says, "When we walk in the kingdom, it's OK to stumble and fall sometimes."

1. Have you seen a child learn to walk? Did he stumble from time to time?
2. Why does it bring joy and laughter when a child stumbles?
3. What do the parents know lies ahead?
4. What do parents remember that a child does not yet know?
5. What do you do when you stumble? Do you have a testimony?
6. Look again at [Philippians 3, above](#). What steps did Paul tell the Philippians he would take?
7. When Paul forgot, was it deliberate amnesia? What did he replace those memories with?

Pastor says, "You used to respond with frustration and anger, but now you pause and pray. You used to spiral into fear, but now you bring it to the Father. You used to chase approval. Now you rest as a son or a daughter of the Most High."

1. Is this true?
2. What has changed?
3. What is changing?

✠ **Getting close to the Father.**

Look up Ephesians 2:¹⁷*He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.* ¹⁸*For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*

1. What do you see?
2. What does it mean to have access?
3. How does the Spirit give us access? Take your time with this question.
4. What does the Spirit know? Whom does the Spirit know?
5. Review Jesus' message at the last supper, John 16:⁷*But I tell you the truth, it is for your benefit that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.* What are the benefits we received, because the advocate was sent to us?
6. Is access to the Father a part of one's performance skills? Explain.
7. Pastor mentioned the Lord's prayer. Explain how this prayer illustrates this kind of access.
8. Pastor claims, "Relationship is what He longs for." Explain.
9. Can you answer this question: What does a "good Christian" look like?
10. What does he/she do? Where is his/her attention focused?
11. How does the Spirit help our focus?

✠ **Empowered by the Holy Spirit.**

Look at the Promise as Luke related it in Acts 1: "⁸*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*"

1. Describe the promise in your own words.

2. Describe the power Jesus is talking about...what power did the apostles receive?
3. Did you receive the same power?
4. Should you have?
5. What is the difference between Jesus being among us, and the Spirit being in us?
6. If you have watched *The Chosen*, share how the disciples behave when Jesus is with them in contrast to when He is away, and not among them.
7. How should it be to our advantage in theory that the Spirit is always among us?
8. Are we better off than the disciples?
9. Review again what Jesus told them in Matthew 28: [20](#) "...*And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*" How literally is He with us?
10. Explain.
11. Now explain what power we can expect.
12. Review Paul's word in 2 Corinthians 12: "[9](#)*But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest on me...*" What was Paul seeing, God's strength or his own weakness? Why might that be a good thing?
13. What was more on display around Paul? His weakness? Or God's power? Explain.
14. Look again at Galatians 5: [22](#)*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23](#)gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.* What else was on display around Paul?
15. Explain how the Spirit bears fruit. What is growing in our lives?
16. Does a fruit tree bear fruit by its nature or by its effort? Explain.

✠ **On Mission with Jesus**

Review and apply to this principle what Jesus said in John 15: [5](#)*I am the vine and you are the branches. The one who remains in Me, and I in him, will bear much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing. [6](#)If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers. Such branches are gathered up, thrown into the fire, and burned. [7](#)If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. [8](#)This is to My Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, proving yourselves to be My disciples.*

1. What does "much fruit" mean?
2. What does much fruit prove?
3. What does a lack of fruit suggest?
4. What happens when *you* ask what you wish? How often does it get done for you?
5. Why does pastor say, "You cannot manufacture Christ-like character. We can only allow the Holy Spirit to produce it by connecting to the source?"
6. How does a vine produce fruit? List the needed connections.

Now see 2 Corinthians 5: [20](#)*Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God. [21](#)God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.* Pastor points out, this is no longer about what God is doing "to us," but about what God is doing "through us."

1. What does this mean?
2. Where exactly are we Jesus' representatives?
3. Are we ever not representatives for Him?

4. Is it possible for us to impart God's love to another? Explain.
5. How is this done?
6. What interferes with us imparting that love?

Examine Jesus' mission, as first expressed in Isaiah 61 and recorded by Luke in chapter 14: ¹⁸*"The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

1. What exactly was Jesus' mission? List each facet.
2. Describe how each is accomplished. What steps must be taken?
3. If we are "on mission" with Jesus, what are we looking forward to each day?
4. What exactly is the mission? What is the redemption story?

Pastor summarized this way, characterizing the Christian road ahead: "I realize that I want Jesus the King of my life. I am going to go to Spiritual Physical Therapy and learn how to walk in this Kingdom. I'm going to embrace my Father in Heaven who wants to love me. His love will transform me. I will be empowered by the Holy Spirit who is going to give me the power that is needed to live the life God has purposed for me to live. Then I'm going to be on mission for Him, sharing the goodness of what God has brought into my life with other people around me. The journey in front of us is amazing." Then he spoke these words of encouragement. "When you stumble or fall, and it happens, that does not define you. Jesus does. Your job is to get back up, turn your eyes back to Jesus, and be on mission again. To stumble is like the child learning to walk. We expect toddlers to stumble and fall. We have no problem with that. Likewise, there is no disappointment in those who get back up, and start to follow again. God has great things for us ahead. This is His reminder to us. This is our life, to which we've been called. People are looking for this life, and they are looking to us to share the hope that lies within us."

1. What do you see?
2. Look at Micah 7: ⁷*But as for me, I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. ⁸Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will arise; though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light. ⁹Because I have sinned against Him, I must endure the rage of the LORD, until He argues my case and executes justice for me. He will bring me into the light; I will see His righteousness.* What do you see?
3. How does Micah summarize our own walk ahead, as Pastor Mark characterized it?
4. In verse 9, what can we look forward to?
5. Who argues in our defense?
6. Where will we see His righteousness? What does our own walk begin to look like?

Take the time to pray.

Follow up application:

1. Use the **Soap study below** to pursue your own understanding.
 2. List the practical steps Paul suggests in Romans 6 in seeking the kingdom. Take the first step.
 3. List practical steps found in Micah's prophecy above, from chapter 7.
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For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP method** (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—Write what God is saying. / **P**ray—Write what your response is.) to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Romans 6:1-3
Tuesday: Romans 6:4-6
Wednesday: Romans 6:7-9
Thursday: Romans 6:10-12
Friday: Romans 6:13-14
Saturday: 2 Corinthians 5:16-17
Sunday: Philippians 3:10-14

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.