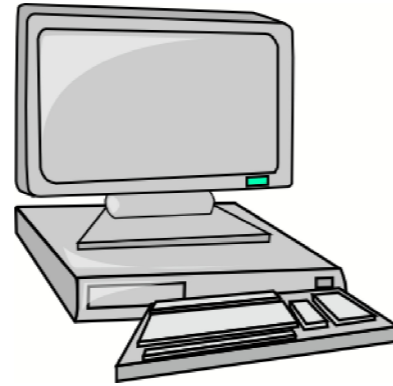


Occasion: The Baptism of Our Lord
Text: Romans 6:1-11
Title: "BAPTISM: Rebooting Your Life"

Date: 01-10-2010

Introduction:

How many times has it happened to you? You're working on your computer and the program stops, frozen up. In the upper left hand corner of the window you get the message, "Not Responding". You have to **"reboot"** the computer- restart and reload the system, all the programs. Hopefully, you've been saving your work regularly, or you lose everything.



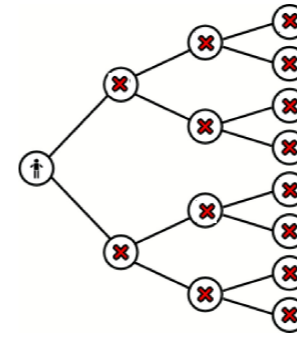
At times, haven't you wished you could **"reboot"** your life? Whether it is a personal problem, or health issue, a relationship going bad, strife in the family, or whatever-wouldn't it be nice if there was a **"restart"** button that you could push and everything would just **"reboot"** in an uncorrupted, pure version?

While it is true that we cannot turn back the clock and start over again on anything in life, it is also true that 'in effect' God offers us the opportunity to do just that, to **"reboot"** our lives, to **"reboot"** our relationship with Him and then to **"reboot"** our relationships with others. So, what is this **"reboot"** of our lives and our relationship with God? What is this **"reboot"** that we are to practice in our relationships with others? The answer -> Baptism. God has given us Baptism as the **"reboot"** of our lives. God has given us Baptism as the foundation to **"reboot"** our relationship with Him and with others through forgiveness and love.

Setting:

To understand Baptism as the **"rebooting"** of our lives with God, we first have to ask a question and we have to clearly and fully understand the answer and all its implications.

First the question: What is sin? A simple question, yet the answer to this question is profoundly significant. In the beginning, God created man in "His image, His likeness". Man in his very core desires, his heart, loved God and desired only to live by God's Will. You might say that the software running in man's heart was pure and uncorrupted. God had written software and installed it in man's heart, man's mind. That "software" was programmed to run perfectly, and as it did so, man would only and always have pure desires and man would only and always think pure thoughts. When the first man and first woman took the bait and fell for Satan's lie, their software was corrupted. Now the program running inside of man had a virus.



What happens when you copy a corrupt program from one computer and install that program on another computer? The computer on which the corrupt software was installed now runs a corrupted program as well every time that corrupt program is started. Ever since the program running Adam and Eve's heart and mind was corrupted, every copy of their corrupted program has been installed on their descendants. You and I have received the same corrupt program. The software that runs our hearts' desires, our minds' thoughts is corrupt! We cannot help but to live our lives in corruption and sin. That's how we are programmed! That's who we are!

I. BAPTISM: A NEW PROGRAM BOUGHT BY CHRIST FOR YOU:

Jesus came into the world with a pure heart and a pure mind. The program running on Jesus' heart and mind was uncorrupted. Jesus lived in the image and likeness of God. Scripture teaches us:

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, - *Colossians 1:15*

³The Son is the radiance of God's glory
and the exact representation of His being, - *Hebrews 1:3*

In the past two weeks, we have read in the Gospels lessons, how Jesus grew from and infant to a child and now to a man. Describing Jesus as He grew and matured, Scripture tells us that after Joseph and Mary went to the Temple to make the appropriate sacrifice for the firstborn son:

³⁹When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰And the Child grew and became strong; He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him.
- *Luke 2:39-40*

Then, last week we saw when Jesus was 12 years old, Mary and Joseph took Him to Jerusalem for the Passover and when they returned to Nazareth, Scripture says:

⁵¹Then He went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But His mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵²And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. - *Luke 2:51-52*

Jesus came into the world perfect and pure in His heart and mind. Jesus grew as a child and Jesus lived His entire life perfectly under the Law and God. He did so, not for Himself. He did so for us. Jesus stood in for us as a substitute, being the pure and perfect people we should be. Then Jesus took our guilt for sin upon Himself and

He took the punishment that was our upon Himself as He died for all to see on the cross. What Jesus earned through His perfect life and His sacrificial death He gives to us as a gift. He earned it, He paid for it with His blood and His death, and He gives it to us, as a gift **in Baptism**. The apostle Paul wrote in the Epistle Lesson:

³Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were Baptized into his death? 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 live a new life. – *Romans 6:3-4*

In Baptism, God joins us, ties us together with Christ, as one, so that we are bound together and are **"no longer two, but one"**. What belongs to Jesus—a righteous life, eternal life, becomes ours. What belongs to us—guilt for sin, damnation, becomes Christ's, which He paid for on the cross.

In Baptism, THEN, God forgives us for the corrupt program we received from Adam AND God washes away the guilt for all the sins we have committed while operating under that program. In Baptism, we stand before God pure and blameless, – with no record of our sin, without any guilt for sin, only the credit for the righteous life lived by Jesus for us.

II. BAPTISM: A NEW PROGRAM BEING INSTALLED IN YOU DAILY:

But Baptism is not only a One Time Event. Baptism is an Ongoing Process in our lives. In Baptism, God gives us the Holy Spirit, to rewrite our corrupt software--to uncorrupt us, to direct us by a pure and uncorrupted software, the Word of God.

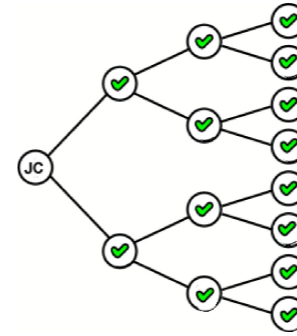
You see, it is one thing to be forgiven by God for having been born and having lived by a corrupt software inside of us always leading us into sin. God has forgiven us once and for all for the corruption we inherited and have lived by. But that corrupt software has to be uncorrupted, those corrupt desires and those corrupt thoughts have to be uncorrupted, rewritten. Old corrupt code has to be erased and new pure code installed. The apostle Paul goes on to write at the end of the Epistle Lesson and beyond:

¹¹In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹²Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness. – *Romans 6:11-13*

Living the Christian life is living Baptism. Living the Christian life is taking the pure and uncorrupted program of Christ that God gave you, and installing it on your heart and your mind. If you continue to run by the corrupt code you received from Adam,

you will continue to live in sin—to think corrupt thoughts and do corrupt things. Corrupt software produces corrupted data. You need to run a pure and uncorrupted software in your heart and your mind. You have it, you have the Holy Spirit, you have the Word of God, but are you installing them in your heart and in your mind? Scripture says,



⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰**and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.** – *Colossians 3:5-10*

What's going on in your life right now? What software are you operating under? Are you still running the old software you got from Adam? The corrupt version? Whenever you see corrupt data come out of you, corrupt deeds, –> that happened because you're still running the old corrupt software! It is so important that you live your Baptism, not just remember that it happened in your life! It is so important that you follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit in your life. When the Spirit directs you to worship God weekly, do it! When the Spirit directs you to pray regularly, do it! When the Spirit tells you to read to the Word of God, to be involved in a Bible Study with other Christians, do it! How else is the Holy Spirit going to install the new, pure, uncorrupted software of God's Word and God's Will on your heart if you don't let Him install it? Some Christians have that new software from God, but they refuse to install it! If you don't install it on your heart and in your mind, then you cannot live it in your life!

Conclusion:

How blessed we are! God hasn't abandoned us because our software is corrupted! No, God doesn't want to throw out the computer because the software is corrupted. God loves us! He wants to have us be His forever. God has given His Son to repurchase us from sin and damnation. In Baptism, God personally gave us what Jesus bought for us! God is now working in your life to install a pure and uncorrupted software on your heart and your mind. Through the guidance and power of His Holy Spirit and with the pure truth of His Word, God wants to transform you, your life, your heart, your mind, so that you operate in a pure and loving way, now and forever.

How's the installation of Christ's software going on in your heart, your mind? AMEN