

# **BAPTISMAL SERVICE**

I COME TO DO THY WILL

Hymn 95 More Christlike (2 verses)

We rejoice that Brother Ian Armstrong has consecrated His life to the Lord and wishes to symbolize that consecration today in the presence of his fellow brethren in the Chicago Ecclesia. If there are any other candidates who wish to symbolize your consecration, you may come forward at this time or at the end of this service.

## **ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM**

There are many great purposes that people have pursued and achieved.

In 1921, Albert Einstein, the theoretical physicist who developed the general theory of relativity, received a Nobel Prize in Physics for his achievements.

In the 1936 Olympics, Jesse Owens, an American track and field athlete won four gold medals and broke world records still unbeaten to this day.

On July 21, 1969 astronaut Neil Armstrong was the first man to set foot on the moon.

We could list countless other great achievements of mankind. Impressive as these achievements are, in comparison to your decision to consecrate Brother Ian, they are insignificant. None of these achievements have done anything to reverse mankind's downward course into sin and death. If successful in fulfilling your consecrations vows, you will become a glorified body member of Christ with a very important future purpose to accomplish.

### **What is the ultimate purpose of Christian Baptism?**

1 Cor 15:29 - Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead? (NKJ)

This passage says that we are baptized "for the dead," meaning that the ultimate purpose of our baptism is to bring the dead world of mankind back to life, helping them to walk up the highway of holiness to moral, spiritual and physical perfection.

Gal 3:27,29 (NKJV), "27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ...  
29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Acts 3:25 "In your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed" NKJV

Therefore, those who are baptized into Christ are Abraham's seed, whose future purpose is to bless all the families of the earth.

In order to have this opportunity to help to bless all the families of the earth Brother Ian, you will need to make your consecration your top priority in life.

In Mark 10:37-40, James and John requested of Jesus...

**Mark 10:37-40** (NKJV) "37 ... "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory." 38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" 39 They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; 40 "but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared.""

Brother Ian – Jesus has asked you the same question, “Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” and you have answered “YES.” And so you shall.

Notice that Jesus said to James and John, “you do not know what you ask.” In a similar sense, none of us can fully know what our consecrated life and experiences will hold out for us. However, we can be assured of the God's promises –

**Romans 8:28** (NKJV), “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

**1 Corinthians 10:13** (Rotherham) “Trial, hath not taken you, save such as man can bear; faithful, moreover is God, who will not suffer you to be tried above what ye are able, but will make, with the trial, also the way of escape, that ye may be able to hold out.”

God has assured you that in the end, all your experiences will work out for your good and that He will never permit more of a trial than you can handle with his help. For the remainder of your consecrated life, you can be assured that God will keep these promises to you.

## **JOHN'S BAPTISM**

John the Baptist was the first to baptize individuals in water. The purpose of John's baptism included getting sinful Jewish people to:

- 1) confess and repent from their sins
- 2) to bear the fruit of righteous living in obedience to God's laws

3) and to receive a typical cleansing which restored repentant Jews back to the condition of harmony with God as enjoyed under the Law Covenant and through the tabernacle arrangement

## **BAPTISM INTO CHRIST**

Yet the baptism into Christ is more than this. Those baptized into Christ receive actual justification provided by Jesus' Ransom sacrifice to a heavenly calling. The Christian's death to sin, walking in newness of life and drinking of the cup of sacrifice is a far deeper commitment than John's baptism. It is more than the pursuit of righteousness; it is the total death of self will and a complete commitment to sacrifice ALL of one's time, talents and possessions to the Lord, even if at the cost of suffering and persecution.

In Luke 12:50 (NKJV) Jesus said, "...I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!"

Meaning I am I constrained (or in difficulty) until this be accomplished.

Jesus' Baptism was not over at Jordan. It was ongoing. He lived his baptism every day and so should we.

**Rom 6:3** (NKJV) "3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized **into His death?**

### **How are we baptized into Christ's death?**

As body members with Jesus, we are part of the joint sacrifice of the Christ, head and body. We are part of the Sin Offering sacrifice. Our sacrificial experiences are preparing us to be part of a merciful and sympathetic priesthood that will bless all mankind in the future kingdom.

We are going to read Hebrews 10:8-10 inserting explanation as we read through it.

Hebrews 10:8-10 (NKJV) "8 Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), [That is the typical tabernacle sacrifices] 9 then He [Jesus] said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." [by sacrificing myself]. He takes away the first [the typical sacrifices of the tabernacle] that He may establish the second. [the antitypical sacrifices of Christ and His body members.] 10 By that will we [Jesus' body members] have been sanctified through the offering of the [joint] body of Jesus Christ [head and body] once for all." [We too like Jesus say, "I have come to do Your will, O God."]

Paul explains how we are body members with Christ in 1 Corinthians 12:

1Co 12:12 (NKJV) "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ"

1Co 12:27 (NKJV) "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually."

Paul explains how there is further sacrifice to be made by Christ.

Col 1:24 (NKJV) "24 I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,"

So there is further sacrificing the body members of Christ must do to complete this sin offering sacrifice.

So this is how we are baptized into Christ's death; by joining with him in his Sin offering sacrifice, with the purpose in mind of developing us as a sympathetic priesthood to bless mankind in the future kingdom on earth.

## **NARROW IS THE WAY**

In consecrating Brother Ian, you have chosen a difficult path.

Matt 7:13-14 (NKJV) "13 Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

Some have made the mistake of thinking that since we have chosen the "narrow way" that the Lord's people suffer more than the world. However the whole world of mankind is on the broad road to destruction and suffers from wars, crime, drugs, illness, broken families and many other hardships.

Our choice is not one of either suffering with Christ or being exempt from suffering. Rather, it is a choice of accepting experiences directed and overruled from the Lord for our good versus the random suffering the world experiences. We have a purpose to our experiences, which is to develop a holy, sanctified Christlike character to prepare us for the work also described in Rev 5:10 (NKJV) which explains that Jesus has "made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

## **COUNTING THE COST**

### **What does consecration cost us?**

Luke 14 (NKJV) 28 "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it - 29 "lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish... 33 "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."

Instead of urging everybody to become his disciples, the Master would not have any one take upon himself the responsibilities of this relationship without due deliberation and forethought. The cost of consecration is everything - all our time, energy and power.

Does that mean that we can no longer do any of the things we enjoyed in life before we consecrated?

To answer that question, let's look at it from this perspective.

2 Cor 11:2 (NAS) "I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin."

Paul describes the consecrated, as engaged to be married to Christ to be His bride. Think about the behavior of an engaged couple truly in love with each other. They are each excited about and infatuated with the other. They want to be with each other all the time and invest great effort and resources in planning for their wedding day. They think about each other all the time and are counting the days till their wedding day.

In a spiritual sense, that is what consecration is like. We deeply love Jesus, our bridegroom. So much time, energy and resources are consumed in prioritizing Him that we lose interest in many of the earthly priorities that used to appeal to us, yet provided no real lasting joy.

Yet as in a marriage, as time passes, if distracted by other interests, the romantic fires can die out. So also, in our consecrated life, there will always be excuses not to make the Lord our top priority and then to lose our spiritual focus and zeal.

We may be tempted to say...

- \* After I graduate from college I will finally have time to serve the Lord
- \* My family obligations don't leave me time to serve the Lord
- \* I am working too much overtime, but when I retire I will have time to serve the Lord
- \* Now that I am finally retired my health is limiting my ability to serve the Lord, so I will leave that to the younger ones.

LUKE 9:61-62: "And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Jesus being able to read minds could perhaps see that this man was ready to be persuaded by his family to not follow Jesus.

After making the commitment, we cannot be like Lot's wife, looking back on what she was leaving behind in Sodom. Jesus said in...

Matt 6:24 (NASV) "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other."

A decision to consecrate is especially difficult for young people since they are more conscious of peer pressure and it is harder to be out of step with the crowd.

Also, the enticements and pleasures held out by the world seem too good to pass up, yet like Pinocchio's Pleasure Island, the reality is opposite of what is promised. Focusing on earthly pleasures, entertainment, games and enjoyments may feel good at the moment; however they produce no real lasting joy, happiness, benefit or purpose.

## **CONSECRATION DEFINED**

### **What is consecration?**

MATT. 16:24: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

ROM. 12:1: "I BESEECH you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

PSA. 40:8: "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

Consecrations means:

- 1) Turning our attention away from human goals, pleasures and interests.
- 2) Prioritizing our time, energy and ability in serving your Lord.
- 3) Substituting God's will in place of our human will.
- 4) Sacrificing our fleshly interests at the cost of pursuing our spiritual interests.

Brother Ian, today your Consecration will be symbolized by the act of your baptism in water.

## **A NEW CREATION**

Now that you are consecrated, you have become a New Creation.

2 Cor 5:17 (NAS) Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

EPH 4:22-24 (NKJV) "that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."

**GAL 5:22-25** (ASV) “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.”

**Rom 6:4, 11-13** (NKJV) “4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”

Romans 6 illustrates that lowering the candidate into the water represents the death of the Old Man with his sinful ways and the raising up of the candidate shows our walk in newness of life as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. Yes Brother Ian. You are a fellow brother with us; a New Creature in Christ Jesus.

## **SANCTIFICATION**

### **What is sanctification?**

Every New Creature grows in sanctification as they carry out their consecration each day. Sanctification is the process of daily transformation of character from the Old Man to the Christlike New Creature. This great work is accomplished with guidance from the scriptures and the holy spirit.

**JOHN 17:17**: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

**EPH 5:26** “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word”

So the Truth of God’s Word provides the intellectual knowledge needed to guide us in our Sanctification or transformation of character to be more Christlike. Romans 12:2 explains it this way.

**ROM 12:2** (NKJV) “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

## **NOT MY WILL, BUT THY WILL**

**Let’s talk about God’s will.** Consecration involves the New Creature following God’s will in everything they do in life. Jesus set this example.

**JOHN 6:38**: “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.”

We do well to follow Jesus' example.

**MATT 7:21-23** (NKJV) "21 Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the **will** of My Father in heaven.

22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Many believe they are serving Jesus, by doing their own thing. That is why Jesus says to them, "you who practice lawlessness." They serve Jesus by following their own feelings, or by following the teachings of those they admire, rather than learning and following what is taught in the Bible.

How can you know whether you are following your own will or God's will?

### **HOW WE LEARN GOD'S WILL**

There are two ways to learn God's will for us: Through Instruction and Discipline.

Let's talk about Instruction first.

**PSA 119:105** "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"

We get instruction through the Bible and the helps he has provided for understanding His Word.

**2 TIM 3:16:** "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

So to know the mind of God and do his will we need to regularly study his word. Otherwise we will be much more likely to make mistakes in determining God's will by simply following our feelings or following the advice or examples of others that we admire.

All throughout history, God has raised up leaders to guide his people, like Moses, Samuel, Daniel and the Apostles. During the Gospel Age He provided seven messengers, including the Faithful and Wise Steward.

It is tempting to think we know God's will better than those He has appointed to help us.

In this same way, in Numbers 16:3, Korah rebelled against Moses saying - "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. " NKJV

So it is tempting in pride to think we know better. On the other hand, the Apostle Paul commended the brethren in Berea for how they responded to his teachings.

Acts 17:11 (NAS) "...they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so."

Notice how they just didn't take Paul's word for it, rather they studied the scriptures daily to see if what Paul taught really did agree with scriptures. So we should take this balanced approach and do the same.

**Luke 12:37** (NKJV) says, "Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them."

So at this end of the age the Lord has provided a great feast of Bible Truths for us.

Daniel 12 speaks of Bible time prophecies, explaining in verse 10 that at the time of the end, "the wise will understand."

Sadly, some have rejected various topics in the Studies in the Scriptures as not important or wrong without taking the time to carefully study them. Rather than following our feelings, let's follow the example of the brethren at Berea and first carefully examine the Studies in the Scriptures to determine if each chapter is in harmony with God's Word. We trust it will be a great blessing to do so.

We said that there are two ways in which we learn – Instruction and Discipline. Let's now talk about discipline.

## **DISCIPLINE**

**Hebrew 12:5,6,10** - "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; 6 For those whom the Lord loves, he disciplines... He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness."

So God will bring disciplining experiences in our lives to help us overcome our sins and weakness and become more holy.

Jesus said it this way in John 15:2 "...every branch that bears fruit, He [God] prunes it so that it may bear more fruit."

God as the vinedresser is carefully pruning the branches to produce more fruits. So it is important that we cooperate with God in the development of our own characters, noting our defects and seeking to correct them. Hence the Apostle Paul encourages us in ...

1 Cor 11:31-13 “31 But if we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged.  
32 But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord ....”

By rightly evaluating our experiences and learning from them, the Lord may not see the need to discipline us further in a particular area.

It is important to harmonize the lesson we are learning from our experiences with what the Bible teaches, otherwise we may take away the wrong message from the experience by simply reacting to our feelings.

One of the problems with presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, is that when the heat is turned up, we are tempted to crawl off of the alter.

We have talked about two ways of learning: 1) the instruction we receive from studying and 2) the pruning and disciplining experiences the Lord brings to help us develop our character.

Let’s now move on to an important question. **Now that you are consecrated, what should you do with your spiritual life? What activities should you engage in?**

#### **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WITH YOUR CONSECRATED LIFE?**

The answer is that this is a personal decision between you and the Lord, however we would like to share some suggestions for all of us to consider:

1. Don’t let a day go by without studying and meditating on the Truth in some way. The more you learn, the more you will be able to distinguish God’s will from your own will and to do His will.
2. Help the ecclesia as you have opportunity.

You are not an island unto yourself, you are one of many members of Christ’s body and as such, it is important to learn to work with the other body members in a loving, submissive and contributing manner.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 “12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body... “ Paul goes on to explain that the ear cannot say that because I am not the eye I am not part of the body.

So when the Ecclesia calls upon you for help, accept the opportunity to serve whenever you are able. If it is something you are apprehensive about doing, it may be the Lord has something for you to learn in

the experience. Part of surrendering our will to Jesus, is being submissive and cooperative with the other body members.

3. Attend meetings as often as you can.

Hebrews 10:24-15 (NKJV) “24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

4. Be courageous and seek opportunities to witness with people you come in contact with in the world.

5. Offer to help other brethren in a service that appeals to you or where you have a talent.

6. Prepare for and participate in the studies. Ask questions when you don't understand something and share what you learned.

7. Support your natural family in any way you can so that you can help give them more time and energy in the Lord's service.

8. Discuss the Truth with your family as it will be a blessing to both them and you.

These suggestions will hopefully stimulate your mind to consider the possibilities for how you will serve. However, that is between you and the Lord.

### **WHAT WILL YOUR TESTS AND TRIALS CONSIST OF?**

Your trials will often be along the lines of testing your love for the **Lord**, Truth and brethren

Let's first talk about the test of our love for the Lord.

I noticed that your February 18 Manna Text for your birthday is Duet 13:3, which says, “the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Our love for the Lord is proved in how deeply we value His teachings and commandments as found in the Bible. Following these principles when it is not in the best interests of our earthly comfort and success is evidence of our love for the Lord.

Certain hobbies or interests may draw our love away from the Lord and to other pursuits. The attraction of modern technology can be used to further our spiritual study and learning or drain our time and energy with games and entertainment.

We are also tested along the lines of the **Truth**.

We may be challenged that the Truth is really error and that the Harvest message has several mistakes. As long as you have been studying and proving what you believe with scriptures, you will be able to overcome these challenge with answers from God's word.

Finally, we are tested along the lines of love for our **brethren**

One or more brethren may offend us and this will test our love for the brethren. Perhaps some brethren may be wrong in how they act towards us or perhaps the Lord is sending us a hard message through the brethren. Either way, we can chose to forgive and overlook their shortcomings and and rise above it, or better yet, learn where we are flawed from the experience and improve our character. Will we respond as Jesus would respond, or will we be bitter and resentful against our brethren?

It is not a question of whether these trials and test will come to us. It is simply a question of when they will come? Be prepared by studying the Truth. Don't be surprised. Respond in a way that will please the Lord.

### **JOYS OF CONSECRATION**

The burden of the trials and test of our consecrated life are trivial in comparison to the greater joys and spiritual happiness.

**F677** "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John 15:11

"...those who have not consecrated themselves... are apt to consider that in this sacrifice every joy is lost. But every member of the New Creation knows the contrary...-that though some earthly joys, once held very dear, are sacrificed one by one, in their places come heavenly joys that far more than compensate for the loss. As our Lord again said, "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." (John 16:20)"

**F678** "But blessings come through all such tears and sorrows and disappointments-- the blessings of a realization of divine approval, a joy superior to that of the natural man, the joys of the Lord, fellowship and communion with the Father.

"There could be no such joys were it not for our blessed hopes. If our joys were dependent upon circumstances of this life merely, we should be without joy; and, as the Apostle has declared, be "of all men most miserable." (1 Cor. 15:19) It is when hope has laid firm hold upon the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word, that joys spring up as flowers in a desert, vivified by our tears-- such flowers of joy and blessing as the poor world in its wilderness condition could not produce or imagine. ... By divine arrangement the joy which springs into being through the implanted hopes and prospects must be nourished by prayer, and by activity in the Lord's service."

Before we close this service, if there are any other candidates who wish to symbolize your consecration, you may come forward at this time. I will step down to greet the baptismal candidate(s) and ask three questions.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES**

- 1) Do you acknowledge that as a member of the fallen human race of father Adam, that you are a sinner and have you repented of your sins to the best of your ability?
  
- 2) Have you accepted Jesus as your personal Savior, trusting in His Ransom sacrifice to provide for forgiveness of your sins?
  
- 3) Have you made an unreserved and full consecration to faithfully serve and obey the will of your heavenly Father, to the best of your ability, even unto death?

You brethren here welcome you into the family of God our Father and Jesus our Lord and elder brother.

### **HYMNS**

Opening: Hymn 95 More Christlike (2 verses)

Closing:

134 Jesus, I my cross have taken

277 All to Thee

150 Growth in Grace