

## Baptism Celebration – 6/10/12

This is a different service for us, a baptism celebration, where a total of 27 people are getting baptized this weekend, to proclaim their *new life* in Christ  
And each person has spent a good deal of time and effort working through a Bible study to understand what baptism is, what they're doing, and why  
But before we get to it, I want to be clear about a few things

- The first of which, is that **baptism doesn't save you**  
If it did, or in some way contributed to it – that would be a work  
And **2 Timothy 1:9** says that – [God] *saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace*  
God saved us and called us – not b/c of our works  
It's *God's* work of *grace* in your life that saves you; *Not* your works of obedience  
We obey *b/c* we're saved, not to get saved\*\*\*\*\*

Or another way to look at it, is that **salvation is a gift** – a free gift of God  
And baptism is an act of allegiance/obedience, that shows you've *embraced* that gift  
That indeed, you're a genuine follower of Jesus Christ; You've been given new life

That's what each person is saying by being baptized  
They're already believers, who are now being baptized to show it  
To *show* that they're identified with Jesus; To *show* that he's Lord/Savior of their lives

And it's so important, that . . .

- **An unbaptized believer is a contradiction of terms**  
That's one of the reasons Peter linked it so closely with repentance in **Acts 2:38**  
Saying – *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Repent – as in, confess your sin, and stop doing it  
Acknowledge your wrong beliefs, wrong thoughts, wrong words, and wrong actions . . .  
Ask God to forgive you; And start doing what's right; That's repentance  
Repentance that leads to salvation, from the consequences of your sins

- But notice he says – repent and be *baptized* for the forgiveness of sins  
Linking them so closely together that some people think you have to be baptized in order to be saved; But we know from 2 Tim 1:9, that can't be true  
B/c that would make baptism a work – something tangible you *do*, in order to be saved

When in fact it's by *grace* we are saved, through *faith* – not something we *do*, but something we *believe*  
And this is not our own doing, this saving, Paul says in Eph 2:8 – it's a *gift* of God; *not* a result of works

So Peter's not saying in Acts 2:38 that you have to be *baptized* in order to be saved, but that baptism goes *hand in hand* with salvation  
So closely it seems, that an *unbaptized* believer is a contradiction\*\*\*\*\*  
That's the 3<sup>rd</sup> thing I want to be clear about

- 4<sup>th</sup>, I want to be clear about the **Reasons For Baptism**

Starting the fact that . . .

### 1. It demonstrates commitment

Each/every person getting baptized has *admitted* they're a sinner, in need of a Savior . . .  
They *believe* that Jesus *is* that Savior – that when he died on the cross, he died for them  
They've *repented* of their sin – asking God to forgive them, and turning from any ongoing sin . . .  
They've *received* him into their life – to live *his* way, for *his* glory, forever and ever . . .  
And now they're getting baptized to demonstrate that commitment; To declare it publicly like the Bible says  
That's the 1<sup>st</sup> reason for baptism

### 2. It encourages the saints

Baptisms encourage the church – those who have *already* been baptized  
Reminding us of *our* walk with Christ; *Our* salvation; And *our* commitment

### 3. It challenges the sinners

Urging them to repent and follow Jesus just as they have  
And if that's you – I trust you'll listen closely; And maybe even make this the *day* of your salvation

### 4. It glorifies God

And that's the ultimate point – to glorify the one who saved us in the first place . . .  
And keeps us for all eternity

All of which we want to emphasize, with a verbal testimony

And that's the last point I want to be clear about  
Along *with* their baptism, each person will give a testimony of their salvation; B/c . . .

### • Testimonies reinforce the picture of baptism

Have you ever looked at a picture of modern art and wished for a little plaque that explained what in the world the author was trying to convey?  
That would help, wouldn't it?

That's what a testimony is to baptism; It clarifies what it's all about, and reinforces the symbolism – explicitly giving credit where credit is due

Like when David said to God in **Ps 40:9-10** – *I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation; behold, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O LORD. [10] I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation.*

We have people give a verbal testimony in baptism, b/c it magnifies God's work of deliverance, and faithfulness, and salvation\*\*\*\*\*  
Reinforcing what we *see*, for the purpose of glorifying the Lord, encouraging the saints, challenging the sinners, and demonstrating commitment (*Grady, John, Bob*)

Pray – Bless; Meaningful, Memorable

### Post-baptisms

You've just heard 8/9/10 people bear witness to the saving work of Jesus Christ in their lives, and get baptized to show it

And I can't help but think that some of you need the same; You need to be saved

And you can be, if you *admit* that you're a sinner, in need of a Savior . . .

*Believe* that Jesus is the one – that when he died on the cross, he did so for *you*, so you wouldn't have to . . .

*Repent* of your sin – asking him to forgive you . . .

And *receive* him into your life – to live *his* way, for *his* glory, forever and ever

Admit, believe, repent, and receive

If that's you, if you need to be saved – I'm going to lead you in a prayer

And I want to encourage you to pray along with me, calling out to the Lord in the quietness of your heart

Pray – God, I admit . . . I believe . . . I repent . . . I receive

Father, for those who just prayed, would you impress this day upon their hearts

And for those who were baptized – would you bless them immensely for their act of obedience? I know you will

Hear the praise now of those who love you; And be magnified as we stand, with arms high and heart abandoned, to the one who gave it all