

Baptism Celebration – 3/4/18

Welcome to our baptism services, whether you're with us in person or online.

This is a different service for us. One that we hold about 3 times a year.

Where people are getting baptized to demonstrate and proclaim their life in Christ. 17 of them this weekend. 6 in *this* service.

And every one of them 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.

Namely, that having repented of their sin and embraced Jesus as their Lord and Savior, they're getting baptized to show it. That's it.

They understand, and are following thru. And I can't wait to get at it.

But before we do, I want to take a few minutes to make sure *you* understand. With 9 perspectives on baptism. Starting with this:

1. Baptism is the gospel portrayed

The good news that Jesus saves. That's the gospel. That he saves us from the consequences of our sin/death, and washes us white as snow. Baptism portrays that. Just like we're immersed in *Jesus* when we embrace the gospel, just like we're brought under *his* cleansing flood, so too we're immersed in water to portray it.

Now, that's not to say that baptism *saves* us. Or even *contributes* to our salvation. It doesn't. If it saved us, that would make it a work. Something tangible we *do*. And the Bible says explicitly we're *not* saved by works. We're saved by *grace*. God's grace. **2 Timothy 1:9**.

[God] *saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace*. His own decision to extend favor to us.

So we get baptized to *portray* the gospel in our life, not to embrace it. To *show* we're saved, not *get* saved.*****

Picturing outwardly what has *already* taken place inwardly. That we've been forgiven of our sin, cleansed of all unrighteousness, and saved from what we deserve. Baptism is the gospel portrayed.

2. Baptism is a command obeyed

Just like any other act of obedience in the Bible, baptism is a part of working out our *salvation with fear and trembling* (Ph 2:12). Something we're *told* to do.

Like the Apostle Peter said in Acts 2:38 – *repent and be baptized every one of you*. It's a command. And once again, it's something we do *b/c* we're saved, not to *get* saved. We're saved by grace, and obey out of love. Love for God. Wanting to glorify him with our whole life. Baptism included. It's a command obeyed.

3. Baptism is a commitment made

A way to formally and publicly express your love and *devotion* to the Lord. Like couples do at their wedding.

They formally and publically express their commitment to one another.

And the same is true with baptism. It's an expression of our commitment to Jesus.

To identify with him and follow him all the days of our life.

To fly *his* flag instead of our own. It's a commitment made.

And if you're *already* baptized, *their* commitment ought to remind you of yours. *Your* commitment to Christ. That's what the Puritans meant by *improving* their baptism. Every time they saw and heard someone express their commitment to Jesus in baptism, they renewed their own. And we ought to do the same. We ought to renew our own devotion. It's a commitment made. And re-made.

4. Baptism is a burial re-enacted

Rom 6:3. The Apostle Paul is writing here. And says in v3 . . .

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus [as in brought under his saving influence] were baptized into his death?

It's a rhetorical question to say, "Don't you know that those who have been *saved*, those who have been brought under the influence of Jesus . . .

Have also been brought under the influence of his sin-defeating death? It's true.

And then, in the next verse, Paul reiterates it.

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death. (Rom 6:4a)

IOW when you were saved, you participated, by faith, by proxy, in the sin-defeating death of Jesus. *We were buried with him* it says. (4a)

So that, when he died *for* your sin, you died to sin. No longer held in the grip of its power. And bondage. And consequences.

All of which our *water* baptism re-enacts. No doubt one of the reasons Paul *uses* that word. It's a burial re-enacted.

5. Baptism is new life displayed

Look at v4 again. *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.* We too might be raised.

Just like *Jesus* was raised to new life, so were we. When we put our faith and trust in him. We were raised from our *spiritual* deadness, to *walk in newness of life* (4b).

And not just now, but later. V5 – *For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.* Shall. Future tense.

IOW our new life is now *and* yet to come.

And baptism displays it. Old – New. Dead to sin, alive in Christ (Rom 6:11).

Baptism is new life, displayed.

6. Baptism is a birthday celebrated

A means of celebrating our *new birth* in Christ. The day we were born again.

Oh, it might not fall on the *calendar* day we were saved, but it's still a celebration of it.

Better than *any* party we could throw ourselves.

When we first started our church, we used to call our introductory get-together, Party With The Pastor. And Becky used to joke that it was false advertising.

B/c I'm anything *but* a partier, and it was anything but a *party*.

But this? This is a party. That *God's* throwing. With *all* the pastors. All his people.

B/c it's meant to celebrate their spiritual birthday. And *re*-celebrate ours.

7. Baptism is a commissioning pursued

A means of affirming our calling as a child of God, and pursuing the works he before ordained (Eph 2:10). The things we should do. The ministry we should fulfill.

God has in mind all *kinds* of things for us to do in the course of our lives. And baptism is one of them. It's a commissioning pursued.

And, a commissioning of its own. To pursue even *more* of his will in our lives.

Advancing his kingdom and accomplishing his purposes more and more.

Baptism is a commissioning pursued.

8. Baptism is an escape re-lived

An escape from judgment. Like it says in 1 Peter 3:21. Where Peter sets up an analogy between the waters of the flood, and the waters of baptism.

To say that just like the ark was *Noah's* means of escape from judgment, the judgment of the *flood*; so too, baptism pictures our escape from the judgment of *death*.

Or to say it another way, the waters of *baptism* represent judgment and *death*, among other things, just like the waters of the flood did.

And baptism itself, represents our *escape* from such judgment, by coming up *out* of the water, and passing through.

It's the very thing that happened when we were saved. We escaped judgment on our souls, due to our sin and sin nature. We escaped it. Not b/c of *our* effort, but His.

And baptism pictures it. Re-lives it. It's an escape re-lived.

9. Baptism is faith applied

Again, from 1 Pet 3. Where it says that baptism corresponds to Noah's ark.

It goes like this: Just like the ark was Noah's tangible and visible expression of *his* faith in God, *baptism* is the tangible and visible expression of ours.

Or to say it another way, building and getting into the ark was Noah's external expression of internal faith. Faith in God.

And getting baptized is ours. *Our* external expression of internal faith. Faith in Christ.

You might think of it in terms of James 2. Something our *Women's* Ministry has been studying recently.

Faith apart from works is dead it says (James 2:26). Useless. Nonexistent.

And while baptism isn't the *only* manifestation of our faith, it's certainly a big one.

So big, that if you've never *been* baptized as a believer, you should wonder about your faith. Whether it's really real.

B/c baptism is faith applied. Just like the ark was for Noah.

➤ 9 perspectives (**Summary**). That I hope help you understand. And help you improve on your *own* baptism. Your own devotion.

And if you've never given your life to the Lord in the first place, if you've never been saved like they are, will you listen carefully?

B/c afterwards, I'm going to give you an opportunity to pray with me. To be saved by God's grace, through faith and repentance, just like them.

Pray – Lord, be glorified in our time now. Move within us and among us. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear. And awaken faith in those without it.
