

Baptism Celebration – 11/3/19

That brings us to our Baptism Celebration, where a total of 23 people are getting baptized today – 9 adults and 14 students. What a joy.

But before we get to that, I want to tell you what baptism *is*, so you know what's going on and fully appreciate it. It starts with this:

1. Baptism is an expression of belief.

It's one of the main ways in the Bible, for us to say publicly, that we believe personally. That we believe in *Jesus*. That we trust him by faith.

Each and every person getting baptized, believes that when Jesus died on the cross, he died for them.

Each and every person believes, by faith, that Jesus has saved their soul from the condemnation of sin, and given them eternal life.

And baptism is an expression of that. An expression of their belief.

Several times in the Bible you find statements like. . .

When they believed . . . they were baptized. (Acts 8:12)

And those who received his word were baptized. (Acts 2:41)

Why? To *express* their belief; To *show* their faith in Jesus.

By the very act of being baptized, each and every person is expressing their belief.

2. Baptism is a declaration of identity.

Our identity as a child of God.

Having been united with him through Christ, each and every person is saying – “I'm his child; a part of his family.” Because that's what *God* says. **Gal 4:4-5**.

[4] When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son...so that we might receive adoption as sons. That we might be his sons and daughters.

Part of his family for all eternity.

Some of us had the privilege of witnessing the adoption of 3 beautiful little kids yesterday, by Cody and Brittany Rogers; our Worship Pastor and his wife.

We gathered at the courthouse and heard their names officially changed; legally changed. Giving them a new identity.

And that identity was declared, for all to hear and see, for all time.

And that's exactly what's going on with baptism.

Each and every person getting baptized, has been adopted into God's family.*****

And *by* being baptized, they're *declaring* it. They're declaring their *identity* as children of God.

3. Baptism is a proclamation of allegiance.

Allegiance to Jesus Christ, as Lord of their lives.

2 Cor 5:15 says – *He died for all, that those who live [those who are saved] might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*

Jesus died so you and I would no longer live for ourselves, but for him; that he would be Lord of our lives. And baptism is a *proclamation* of that allegiance.

“Jesus Christ is Lord of my life, and I'm not ashamed to proclaim it. I'm with him.”

That's what each and every person is saying by being baptized.

4. Baptism is an act of obedience.

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.

Which makes baptism an act of obedience.

What it's *not*, is an act of salvation. Baptism doesn't save us, or even *contribute* to our salvation. If it did, that would make it a *work*; something tangible we *do*.

And the Bible says we're *not* saved by works. Explicitly. **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. Because of his own decision, to extend favor to us.

So we get baptized as an act of *obedience*, not an act of salvation.*****

We obey *because* we're saved, not to *get* saved.

5. Baptism is a picture of salvation.

Salvation from *judgment*, and salvation in *Christ*. Two sides of the same coin.

The first, is salvation from the judgment of *death*; like Noah was spared from death in the waters of the flood.

The second, is salvation *in Christ*; like Noah was spared *in the ark*.

That's the analogy laid out by the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 3 (18-22).

Just like Noah was saved from the waters of the flood in the ark, baptism pictures *our* salvation from the judgment of God, in Christ.

So no matter how you look at it, baptism is a picture of our salvation – an outward portrayal of what has already taken place inwardly.

That we've been forgiven of our sin, saved from death, and assured of life.

Because we are *in Christ*; in relationship with him.

And then last . . .

6. Baptism is an opportunity to witness.

An opportunity to magnify and glorify the Lord for all that he's done in saving you.

Like when David said to God in **Psalms 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.

That's witnessing. And that's exactly what each and every person is doing by getting baptized and sharing their testimony.

They're *showing* and *telling* God's work of salvation, to us; the congregation.

Reinforcing what we *see*, with what we *hear*. (**Summary**)

So I hope you'll watch and listen closely. Whether you're a believer and God uses this to encourage and *sanctify* you, or an unbeliever and he uses it to *save* you.

In fact, I'm going to give you an opportunity to *respond* to that end, when we're done. To pray with me and be saved, just like they are.

Pray – Father, bless each and every person getting baptized. Impress on them *and* us, the meaning and significance of it all. Use it to encourage the saints, save the lost, and glorify your Son, Jesus. In whose name we pray, amen. (Get in tank)