

## Baptism Matters – 3/5/23

1 Cor 12. I want to talk about some baptism matters this morning, because baptism matters. Especially for the 18 people getting baptized; 9 adults and 9 youth. It's not just a religious ritual that well-meaning people do, and it's not an empty ceremony void of significance. It's important and it matters.

First, because . . .

### 1. Baptism is a matter 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 it a matter of obedience.

What it's *not*, is a matter of salvation. Baptism doesn't save us, or even *contribute* to our salvation. If it did, it would be a *work*. Something tangible we *do*. And the Bible says we're not saved by works.

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*. (ESV) His own decision and favor toward us. Or as Eph 2:9 says it, it's a *gift* of God, *not a result of works*.\*\*\*\*\*

So baptism isn't a matter of salvation, but a matter of obedience *after* you're saved.

Second . . .

### 2. Baptism is a matter of identity

Because the Apostle Paul said – *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*. Gal 3:27. He's not talking about our water baptism, but our spiritual one. To say, that if you've been brought under the *influence* of Jesus, baptized into him by grace through faith, you've also been given his identity. His heart. His mind. His "look." You've put him on. So you no longer see yourself as white, or black, or brown; but Christian. A follower of Christ. A child of God.\*\*\*\*\*

*That's* your identity. And baptism is intended to show it. Being baptized in water is meant to picture your baptism into Christ, and your identity as his disciple.

### 3. Baptism is a matter of symbolism

Symbolism of 4 different truths. Starting with our . . .

- **Salvation.** Baptism should result from our salvation, as a matter of obedience, and it symbolizes our salvation. Our salvation from *judgment*. When we're saved, we're saved from punishment due to our sin. And baptism symbolizes it. Found in 1 Peter 3:18-22.

Just like Noah was saved from death and judgment in the waters of the *flood*, we are saved from death and judgment *now*. And just like Noah was saved in the *ark*, we are saved *in Christ*.

And baptism *corresponds to this* Peter says (1 Pet 3:21). Corresponds to Noah and the ark. We pass through the waters of *baptism*, like Noah passed through the waters of *judgment*. Portraying *outwardly* what has already taken place *inwardly*. That we've been saved from the judgement of death, and assured of eternal life. It's symbolic of our salvation.

Second, it's symbolic of our . . .

- **Cleansing.** Shortly after Paul's conversion, Ananias said in Acts 22:16 – *And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name*. He wasn't speaking literally, as if water can *literally* wash your sins away; but figuratively. Baptism *symbolizes* our cleansing from sin.\*\*\*\*\* Once again, demonstrating *outwardly* what has taken place *inwardly*.

Third, it's symbolic of our . . .

- **Life.** Our new life in Christ. Because 2 Cor 5:17 says – *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come*. When you receive Jesus into your life, you're not a better *version* of you, you're somebody completely different. A new creation with a new life.\*\*\*\*\* And baptism symbolizes it. Old/New. Dead to sin, alive in Christ (Rom 6:11).

And fourth, baptism is symbolic of our . . .

- **Unity.** Our unity as a church. 1 Cor 12:12-13. *For just as the body is one [our physical body] and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body [a unity], so it is with Christ. [13] For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit*.

Though many, we're one. Connected to one another as a whole. Because (A) We've been baptized in one *Spirit*; brought under the influence of the same Holy Spirit. And (B) We all *drank* of the one Spirit; we're all *indwelt* by the same Spirit. Two symbols of the same reality. Our unity.\*\*\*\*\*

And baptism symbolizes it. Just like we're brought under the influence of the same *Spirit* to *connect* us, we're brought under the same *water*, to show it. To *symbolize* our unity.

4 ways in which baptism is matter of symbolism.

And then last . . .

### 4. Baptism is a matter of 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 Ps 40:9-10:

*I have told the glad news of deliverance [salvation] 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 deliverance in their lives. Reinforcing what we *see* with what we *hear*.

4 reasons that baptism matters. (Summary)

If all that's news to you, watch and listen carefully. And if the Lord is knocking on the door of your heart, to deliver *you*, save *you*; open it. And if you already have, but you've never been baptized to show it, make a commitment right now to do so next time.

Prayer – Lord, thank you for this time, thank you for baptism and all that it means, and thank you for your amazing work of grace in so many lives. Do more, Lord. For your glory and our joy, do more. For the fame of your name, do more. The name of Jesus, in whom we pray, amen.

## Baptisms

### Post-baptisms

You just heard 10/8 different stories of how God used the circumstances of their life, to get their attention and prepare their heart to be saved. Saved from the consequences of their sin, to eternal life with Christ.

And you can experience the same, the same salvation, if you . . .

### **Admit you're a sinner**

That's the first step. The Bible says – *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* (Rom 3:23) And being saved, starts by admitting that's you. That you're a sinner, you're far from God, and you need God.

### **Believe in Jesus**

Believe that when he died, he died for *you*. And rose again so you could too. So you could be spared from an eternity of judgment, and given new life starting right now. Eternal life.

### **Repent of your sin**

Ask God to *forgive* you, and make a commitment to stop. To *turn* from your sin, and pursue righteousness instead of wickedness. He'll give you the desire, and he'll give you the strength.

### **Receive him into your life**

Admit, believe, repent, and receive. Receive Jesus into your life to follow him as *Lord*. Living for him instead of yourself. And enjoying his presence forever and ever.

If God's knocking on the door of your heart, open it. Open it and pray with me right now.

God, I admit . . . But I believe . . . So I repent . . . And I receive.

Prayer – Lord, you're so good to us. Thank you for hearing our prayers and saving our souls. Flood those who just prayed with an overwhelming sense of your presence and goodness. And give them an overwhelming desire to hold fast. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Close

### **Baptism Recognition**

God bless you for showing us that baptism matters. That Jesus saves and you're his. We want to affirm that and rejoice with you.

[And now] *to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood . . . to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.* Amen. (Rev 1:5b-6)

### **You are loved**