

Baptism In The Name Of – Matthew 28:18-20

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It's baptism weekend, and 15 people are entering the water. 8 students and 7 adults. Which gives me a little more time to talk about a particular aspect of baptism that's exceedingly familiar, but little understood. So familiar you could repeat it in your sleep.

I'm referring to the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20. This is famous Great Commission passage, near the very end of Jesus' ministry, shortly after his resurrection and right before his ascension.

[18] *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations [all people groups], baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* (ESV)

Outline

The question I want to answer this morning is "What does it mean to be baptized *in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*? What does it mean to do *anything* in the name of someone? Let alone *three* someone's. And *these* three? The persons of the godhead. What does it mean to be baptized *in the name of* the triune God?

Or is it meaningless? Just a filler phrase? Something that sounds but doesn't really mean anything. "Based on your profession of faith in Jesus as your Savior and Lord, and his work of grace in your life, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." Boom.

Are they just words? A magical incantation? The mindless banter of an over-spiritualized pastor? An empty utterance in a hyper-spiritualized moment?

I think not. And I'm pretty sure you don't either. Because first of all . . .

Jesus **told** us to baptize in the name of the **triune** God

He *told* us to. And *nothing* Jesus said is mindless. Nothing he commands is empty. As the perfect Son of God, everything he said was carefully worded and thoroughly intentional. Especially his *last* words.

So that in and of *itself* is reason to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

But if you've ever thought about the *phrase* itself, you probably have a great big question mark in your mind. And I want to answer it.

But before I do, I want you to see that . . .

• It's part of obeying his **command**

Baptizing people in the name of the triune God is part of something bigger. Starting in v19 – *Go therefore* [Jesus says] *and make disciples*. With all the *authority* in the world, Jesus tells us to *reach* the world. Go and make disciples of *all nations*.

Disciples, as in followers and learners. Worshipers and servants. Go and urge *others* to repent and believe. Go and make *more* saints. Go and call *more* people to faith. Go and make disciples, he said.

And then what? Move on? Preach the Gospel and leave it at that? Sink or swim? Leave the new disciples to fend for themselves? Figure it out on their own? Obviously not.

"*Go and make disciples*," Jesus said, *baptizing* them and *teaching* them. Middle of v19 and start of v20. Baptizing and teaching. Two words called present participles.

And just in case you weren't listening in English class, present participles are usually words that end in "-ing" and denote an ongoing action. Words that typically answer questions like: How is the main action performed? Or in this case, the main command. By what means is it accomplished? What should accompany it?

So when Jesus said, "Go and make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them, the main action, the primary command, is *make disciples*. And do so, he said, accomplish it, by *baptizing* them and *teaching* them. Ongoing, present tense actions, to be lived out by every church, and every person in the church. Baptize and be baptized. Teach and be taught.

So baptizing people in the name of the triune God is part of obeying the command of Jesus to make disciples.

In fact . . .

• It's one of **three** parts of making disciples

There aren't just two participles here, there are three. Found in the word "Go." *Go therefore and make disciples*. In English it comes across as another imperative, another command. But in Greek, the original language, it's another participle. With the sense of, "*As* you are going," make disciples. Going. "-ing."

Now, does that mean it's *translated* incorrectly? No. We can trust our Bible. At least *good* translations. Like the ESV, that *we* use. And the CSB, and the NASB, and the NKJV. They all say, "Go therefore and make disciples." And we can trust them.

But translation is often treason. Leaving some aspect or nuance of the original language out. It's never word for word. Or in the same order. Languages don't work like that. And this is a prime example. The word "go."

Because in addition to its close connection with the command to *make disciples* – in order to add emphasis and urgency, as in "go and do it" – in addition to that, it also conveys the sense of *continually* going to make disciples. *As* you are going make disciples. Going through life, going from place to place, going overseas, going wherever, however.

If you've ever wondered why we do what we do as a church, this is it. Three present participles. Going, baptizing, and teaching. Teaching them the Word. And baptizing them *in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*? (19b)

But the question remains, what does that *mean*? What does it mean to baptize disciples in the name of the triune God?

Five things. First of all . . .

• It means . . .

1. We're under his **authority**

Baptizing and being baptized in the name of the triune God, means we are under the authority of the triune God.

It's like a general under the authority of Alexander the Great, 300BC, who would go to the leader of another nation that he intended to conquer, and say, "I come to you in the name of Alexander the Great."

Meaning, "I come to you under *his* authority. I'm not acting on my own account, but his. It's not my authority you need to consider, but his. I'm doing what I'm doing out of devotion, and allegiance, and obedience to him."

Same for those who are baptizing. And those being baptized. The pastor isn't plunging them beneath the cleansing flood on his *own* authority, but God's. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In the *name* of each. And therefore under the *authority* of each. Who are all one.

And by yielding to such an action, the person *being* baptized is *declaring* themselves to be under God's authority. That's the first meaning.

The second is that . . .

2. We belong to his kingdom

To be baptized in the name of the triune God means we *belong* to him. Forever identified with him. Fully associated with him. Part of his family. Part of his people. Part of his church.

Or to say it another way, to be baptized in the name of the triune God, means we've taken on a new identity as a servant of the King, and forever belong to his Kingdom.

I think it's easiest to see with a *negative* example. Like Paul gives in 1 Corinthians 1. Where he addresses disunity in the Corinthian church, as some were following him, identifying with him; and some were following others. Like Peter and Apollos.

So Paul asks in **1 Corinthians 1:13** – "*Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*" "Were you brought under *his* influence? Do you belong to *him*? Are you a part of *his* tribe?

Obviously not. They belonged to Christ. Having been brought under his influence in salvation, they were baptized in his name to show it. To show they belong to *him*. To Christ and the *entire* triune God. To Christ and his *Kingdom*. Just like us.

Third, to be baptized in the name of the triune God, means . . .

3. We're assured of his support

His support in the form of power, provision, and protection. Again, just like the field general who operates with the support of the Commander In Chief. Or the ambassador, who communicates with the support of the President.

We are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to convey his full support in all we do. All we do for the Kingdom. The *Father's* support to give us life in the first place, and sustain it for all eternity. The *Son's* support to *prepare* our place and ensure our home. And the *Spirit's* support to fill us and empower us on the way.

So that no matter what *comes* our way, we have all the power, provision, and protection we need to make it safely home. All the support we need to live in a manner *worthy* of our baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We're assured of his support.

Fourth, it means . . .

4. We're recipients of his blessing

To be baptized in the name of the triune God means we're on the receiving end of God's triune blessing. Because obedience *always* brings blessing. In this case, the obedience of being baptized.

We're blessed with the Father's love, we're blessed with the Son's assurance, and we're blessed with the Spirit's presence.

We're blessed with joy unspeakable and the opportunity to say it. We're blessed to encourage the church and build up the saints. We're blessed with peace we don't understand and grace we don't deserve.

When we're baptized in the name of the triune God, we're blessed beyond what we could ever ask or imagine. His *name*, is that powerful.

And last . . .

5. It's all for his glory

When we're baptized in the name of the triune God, it means the entire act, from our testimony to our immersion, is all for the *glory* of the triune God. His glory and our joy. His exaltation and our worship. His fame and our fortune. His renown and our praise.

Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory. (Psalm 115:1a) That's the unspoken utterance of every single person getting baptized. It's all for the glory of triune God.

Summary

If you've never done that, if you've never been baptized as a believer, make a commitment right now. And start working through the process right away. Go to our website and get the Baptism Packet.

But if you're not a believer, if you've never been saved in the first place, start there. Listen carefully and make a commitment to *Christ*.

Prayer – Father, use this teaching to clarify our beliefs, solidify our convictions, and sanctify our lives. And use these baptisms to encourage those who know you, convict and convince those who don't, and lead more and more to get baptized. For your glory and our joy. In Jesus' *name*, amen.

You Are Loved