

Baptism Celebration – 10/25/09

Welcome to our Baptism Celebration

We love these services around here b/c we get to hear testimonies of changed lives –
straight from the heart

Story after story of *belief, repentance, and faith*

Best of all, we get to witness their baptisms

54 people in all, who are publicly declaring their identification with Christ

Publicly declaring their true colors, just like the *first* believers did

In fact, take a look at that with me in [Acts 8:9-13](#)

- Stephen, one of the leaders in the early church, was just stoned to death for his allegiance to Christ . . .
The church was being ravaged/persecuted; Believers were being scattered . . .
And in the midst of all that – Philip goes to Samaria of all places
That's like out of the frying pan and into the fire, b/c the Samaritans hated the Jews, and the Jews hated the Samaritans

But go he did, and as v5 says – he *proclaimed to them the Christ*

That is, he preached the gospel – the Good News of God's salvation, received through
faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance of your sins

And the effect was astounding – people actually believed and were baptized

So, v8 says, *there was much joy in that city. But . . .* (read [Acts 8:9-13](#))

They had seen it all; They had their miracles; They had their heroes

But the power of the message, the Gospel, was so compelling . . .

And the power of God so gripped them . . .

That they set aside their old ways, their old beliefs, and their old allegiances . . .

And publicly aligned themselves with *Jesus Christ* in the waters of baptism

- And the same thing is happening this weekend
Each and every person is so gripped by their relationship with Christ, that they are
publicly aligning themselves with him in baptism
And by doing so, they're saying – "I'm forgiven, I'm saved, I'm his"

That's the story of each person being baptized – I'm forgiven, I'm saved, & I'm his

Baptism symbolizes that

It doesn't save you, but shows you *have* been saved . . .

It doesn't forgive you, but shows you *have* been forgiven

And it identifies you with the Savior – once, and for all time

So get ready to rejoice and be blessed, just like the people of Samaria

B/c it's an awesome thing to see changed lives

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Next week – Esther