

Baptism Celebration – 6/21/15

Welcome to our Baptism Celebration; A total of 18 people are getting baptized this weekend, and it's always a joy
But before we get there, I want to pray for the Emanuel AME church in Charleston, SC

Before we get to the baptisms, I want to take few minutes to tell you what baptism is, and what it *does*; Starting with this . . .

1. It's an expression of belief

Baptism is 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/every person getting baptized has admitted they're a sinner in need of a Savior . . .

Believe that when Jesus died on the cross, he died for them . . .

They've *repented* of their sin, asking God to forgive them . . .

And have *received* him into their life, to live *his* way and for *his* glory

And baptism is an expression of all that

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. It's a declaration of identity

Baptism is a declaration of identity as a child of God

Having been united with him through Christ, each and every person is saying – “I’m his child, and a part of his family”

Like **Gal 4:4-5** says – [4] *When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, [5] to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. Adoption*

Each person being baptized has been adopted into God's family, and *by* being baptized, they're declaring it

3. It's 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 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”*****

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

4. It's an act of obedience

Just like any other act of obedience in the Bible, baptism is a part of working *out your own 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*

And Jesus, in **Mt 28:19** – *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*

Which makes it an act of obedience; Jesus taught it, the apostles commanded it, and the early church practiced it*****

5. It's a picture of salvation

Salvation *from* judgment; Salvation *through* confession; And salvation *in* Christ

It's a picture of salvation from *judgment*, b/c 1 Pet 3 says that baptism corresponds to the flood, and Noah's deliverance from it

Meaning that the *waters* of baptism represent God's judgment in the waters of the flood; And coming out of the water unscathed, pictures our *deliverance* fr judgment

Just like Noah was delivered from the judgment of the flood

So baptism is a picture of salvation from judgment

But it's also a picture of salvation through *confession*; Or as 1 Pet 3:21 says it – *an appeal to God for a good conscience*; That's a confession; A statement of desire

So baptism is an outward picture of our inward desire to be clean – to be free of guilt and shame, forgiven of our sin, and pure of conscience

It's a picture of salvation through confession

And then 3rd here, it's a picture of our salvation in *Christ*

That due to our faith in him, and connection with him, and union with him – we are delivered from judgment in *him*, just like Noah was delivered in the ark

And then given new life in him, just like Noah was given new life on the earth

3 different ways that 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

And then last . . .

6. It's an opportunity for praise

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 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 praise; And that's exactly what each and every person is doing by giving a verbal testimony; They're magnifying God's work of salvation, all the more

Reinforcing what we *see*, with what we hear; Which makes it an opportunity for praise

That's what it is (**Summary**)

➤ What it *does*, is encourage other believers

1. It encourages other believers

The *church*; And especially those who have *already* been baptized

Reminding us of *our* walk with Christ, and *our* salvation, and *our* commitment to him

Even refueling us to keep on, and *persevere* in our walk

2. It challenges unbelievers

It challenges those who *don't* believe in Jesus; Who *don't* follow him as Lord

Urging them to repent and be saved; If that's you – I trust you'll listen closely

And maybe even make this the day of *your* salvation

In fact, I'm going to give you an opportunity to do so at the end of the service
To admit that you too are a sinner; Express your belief in Jesus; Repent of your sin;
And receive him into your life

And 3rd . . .

3. It **glorifies** God

And that's the ultimate point of baptism – to glorify the one who saved us in the first place, and keeps us for all eternity; It glorifies God (**Summary**)

- So I hope that increases your anticipation for all this, and rejoice with those involved (pray; get in tank) Lord, bless each and every person getting baptized; Impress on them *and* us, the meaning of it all; And be glorified (Baptisms)

You just heard ____ different stories of how God used the circumstances of life, to get their attention and prepare their heart to receive the Gospel – the good news
That God so loved us, he sent his Son to die in our place; To take the punishment we deserve for our sin, and give us new life in exchange; That's the gospel

But it only applies, if you admit, believe, repent, and receive
Admit you're a sinner; *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* the Bible says (Rom 3:23); And embracing the Gospel starts by admitting that includes you
That in God's eyes, you're missing the mark

And **Believe in Jesus**; That he's God in the flesh and Lord of all
And that when he died, he died for you, and then rose again so you could too
So you could be spared from an eternity of judgment, and given new life

Third – **Repent of your sins**

It's one thing to admit you're sinner and keep right on going; It's another to *repent* of your sins and turn from them; Asking God to forgive you, cleanse you, and help you

And – **Receive him into your life**

Giving him full rule and reign as *Lord* of your life; Living his way, and enjoying his presence, never to be forsaken
Admit, believe, repent, and receive

- If you're ready to do that – pray with me right now
I admit . . . I believe . . . I repent . . . I receive (Hands)
We have a New Believer's Packet for you, and would love for you to take one at the door when you leave; And if you'd like to talk to someone . . .
Just stop at the Welcome Center and ask, or talk to anyone with a name tag

I lift these precious ones up to you; Would you bless them; And keep them; And make your face to shine on them even more; Would you be gracious to them, and turn your face toward them, and give them peace; We're alive in you, and we love you for it

Praise God; Stand in worship (Alive)

Baptism Recognition (on floor, baptizees with me)

There's one other meaning associated with baptism that we *didn't* talk about, and *haven't* talked about much in our church
And that's the implication in the Scriptures, that baptism represents our entrance into the *church* – the church universal

Acts 2:41 says – *So those who received his word* [Peter's word, his preaching of the gospel] *were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*
Added to what? The church; The fellowship of the redeemed; The saints of God
Those who were saved, were baptized, and added to the church
Connecting salvation, baptism, and the church in one fell swoop

And since baptism *represents* salvation, and salvation *is* our entrance into the church, you could even say that baptism represents that as well
The bottom line being, that no matter how you look at it, baptism and entrance into the church, are connected

- So I want to do something a little different from now on, and formally acknowledge that in you guys (baptizees)
Not that you weren't a part of the church before, when you were *first* saved – but that there's something *official* about it now that you're baptized

So on behalf of all of us, welcome to the church; We praise God for you, and look forward to the fruit he'll bear in you *and* in us, as a result

- And just to add weight to the significance of all this, I'd love it if you would make your way down front right after the benediction, and express your *own* welcome to them
Just shake their hand or give them a hug, and say – “Thank you for your testimony; God bless you; Welcome to the church”; Can we do that? (Stand)

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, [21] [may he] equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

(Heb 13:20-21)

God bless you; Have a happy Father's Day; You are loved