

Baptism Celebration – 10/28/18

Welcome to our Baptism Celebration. We've been looking forward to this for over a month now, and it's finally here. Welcome livestream (West at 9).

This is a different *kind* of service, where people are expressing their faith and obedience to Christ in the waters of baptism. 23 this weekend, with 8/8/7 in *this* service.

And every one of them has spent a good deal of time and effort working through a Bible study to understand what baptism is, what they're doing, and why.

Nobody is shooting from the hip here on a whim.

And if I were to summarize their testimonies, it would go something like this:

Having come to the end of *themselves*, they embraced *Jesus* as Lord and Savior.

So that now, they follow him as Lord, and are getting baptized to show it; to show the *new life* they have in him.

➤ It's just like **Rom 6:3** says – *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus* [as in brought under his influence] *were baptized into his death?*

It's a rhetorical question to say – don't you know that those who have been *saved*, those who have been brought under the influence of *Christ* . . .

Have also been brought under the influence of his sin-defeating death? It's true.

And baptism pictures it. It's one of the reasons he *uses* the word.

Baptism pictures our spiritual participation in Christ's death (Rom 6:3)

His sin-defeating death on the cross. In our place. For our sins.

In other words, Christ's death (cross) was our death, and baptism pictures it.

All of us who have been brought under his saving influence, *baptized into Christ*, have been brought under the influence of his sin-defeating death.

And water baptism pictures it. It pictures our spiritual baptism.

➤ And then, in **v4a**, he reiterates it.

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death [we participated in his sin-defeating death], *in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life* [we too might be raised].

As believers, when he died *for* sin, physically, we died *to* sin, spiritually.

No longer bound by its power. No longer subject to its eternal consequences.

In order that, just as Christ was raised [to life], *we too might be raised*. Raised from our *spiritual* deadness, to live a *new* life in him*****

➤ So baptism not only pictures our death, but our life.

Baptism pictures our new life in Christ (Rom 6:4)

If anyone is in Christ [the Bible says], *he is a new creation; The old has passed away, behold the new has come.* (2 Cor 5:17)

When we're saved, we are given new desires, new passions, and new purposes. Making us a new person.

Or to say it another way, when we are baptized into Christ, spiritually, we are given new life. A new life to live, and enjoy, and offer to the Lord as an act of worship.

And baptism pictures it. It pictures all that, coming up *out* of the water, washed and new.

So baptism pictures death *and* life. Our new life in Christ.

Declaring it to the *church* so that all may rejoice, and declaring it to the *world* so that all may be saved. (**Summary**)

➤ And just to be clear – baptism *pictures* these things, it doesn't *accomplish* them. In other words, baptism doesn't save you. Or even *contribute* to your salvation. If it did, that would be a work. And the Bible says that's not how it works.

We're saved by *grace* it says (Eph 2:8-9)

Not our works of obedience, but God's unmerited *favor* toward us. (2 Tim 1:9)

We obey *b/c* we're saved, not to *get* saved.

And baptism is a part of that. It's a part of our obedience.

So . . .

Baptism pictures outwardly what has already taken place inwardly

In other words, each and every person, by getting baptized, is saying that they've already been forgiven of their sin, they've already been cleansed of all unrighteousness . . .

And they already have new life in Christ. It's already happened.

And this is their golden opportunity to glorify God because of it

➤ So get ready to rejoice, and get ready to respond. (**Summary**)

Because afterward, I'm going to give *you* an opportunity to follow Jesus *yourself*. To have new life and eternal life, just like they do.

Pray (get in tank) – Lord, bless each and every person getting baptized. Be glorified by their obedience and magnified by their testimony. And impress on us the symbolism of it all.

Post-baptisms

You just heard 8 different stories of how God used the circumstances of life, to get their attention and prepare their heart to believe the Gospel. The good news of Jesus. That God so loved us, he sent his Son to die in our place. Taking the punishment *we* deserve for our sin, and giving us new life in exchange. That's the Gospel.

But it only applies, if you . . .

Admit you're a sinner facing judgment

You have to admit that you fall infinitely short of God's standard of righteousness. And are therefore subject to his wrath – his eternal punishment in the throes of hell. The first step toward being saved, is admitting that in God's eyes, you're missing the mark and facing judgment.

The 2nd, is to . . .

Believe in Jesus to save and keep you

IOW accept by faith, that he's God in the flesh and Lord of all. Just like the Bible says. And that when he died, he died for *you*. And then rose again so you could too. So you could have new life now, and eternal life forever. Saved from hell and kept for heaven. You have to believe.

And then . . .

Repent of your sins to be forgiven

Ask God to forgive you, cleanse you, and help you. Help you *turn* from your sins. It's one thing to *admit* you're a sinner and keep right on sinning, and another to *repent* of your sins and stop. One saves, the other doesn't. It's one thing to believe in Jesus and *reject* him, like the demons, and another to believe and *repent*. You have to repent. No repentance, no forgiveness.

And last . . .

Receive him into your life as Lord and Savior

Giving him full rule and reign to lead and guide you. Drawing on his strength to live his way. And enjoying his presence, never to be forsaken.

God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (Jn 3:16)

That's the gospel. But it only applies if you admit, believe, repent, and receive.

➤ If you're ready to do that, pray with me. (I admit. I believe. I repent. I receive.)

As we continue in prayer, I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand or come forward, but I do want to pray for you. And encourage you to walk in a manner worthy of your new calling; your new life.

Pray – I lift these precious ones up to you. Would you bless them and keep them? Would you give them peace beyond their understanding? And a hunger for your Word? Guide and protect them by your Spirit. And bind us together as one. Amen.

➤ If you just prayed with me, let me encourage you to tell someone. Your faith is personal, but it's not meant to be private. Let your light shine. And 2nd, pick up a New Believers Packet. Stand to worship (*Because He Lives*).

Close

Operation Christmas Child – pick up a shoe box

New Believer's Packet

Guest Central

Elder/Deacon Prayer

Baptism Recognition – Would those of you who were baptized come down front, so we can recognize and praise God for you as a church?

Right after we close, would the rest of you come forward, shake their hand, and just say, “God bless you. Thank you for your testimony?”

Let's make this as meaningful and memorable for them as possible.

[23] Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. [24] He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. (1 Thess 5:23-24)