

Baptism Celebration – 6/5/11

Welcome; Visitors; This is a different service for us, a baptism celebration, where a total of 34 people are getting baptized this weekend – about half students and half adults
But before we get there, I want to take a few minutes, and be clear about what baptism is; B/c to some, it's just a glorified bath . . .
While to others it's a mysterious ritual, endowed with more meaning than was ever intended

So first of all . . .

It's a picture of salvation

Without ever saying a word, each baptism that you'll witness, is a picture of their death *to* sin, and Christ's death *for* their sin

Like Paul says in **Rom 6:3** – *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?*

IOW those who have been saved, *baptized into Christ*, brought under his influence just like we're brought under the influence of water in baptism . . .

Those who have been saved, *were baptized into his death*

That is, they were brought under the influence of his sin-defeating death on the cross

Which means two things

(a) They died *to* their sin – i.e. they were released from its grip, free to live a life pleasing to the Lord

(b) Christ died *for* their sin – releasing them from its penalty; the penalty of death

So without ever saying a word, each baptism that you'll witness, is a picture of their salvation – their death *to* sin, and Christ's death *for* their sin

- But that's not it – there's a third aspect of their salvation pictured by baptism, and that's their newness of life

Paul goes on to say in **v4** – *We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death*

Once again, when we're saved, we experience the *spiritual* death of our old life, our old nature – by being brought under the influence of Christ's *physical* death on the cross

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

Just as Christ rose from the dead physically, we too might rise spiritually – to live a life that's new, and full, and forever

So without ever saying a word, each baptism you'll witness, is a picture of their salvation, and the new life it brings *****

- It's a picture; Not a prerequisite – don't get this wrong
Baptism doesn't *save* you; Or even *contribute* to your salvation
If that were the case, it would be a work; And the Bible clearly says that we are not saved by works – by external things we do

Rather, baptism shows that you *have* been saved

Picturing outwardly, what has *already* taken place inwardly – that you've died *to* sin, b/c Christ died *for* your sin . . .

And that you've have been raised to live a new life, for him; It's a picture of salvation

And second . . .

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 believe his Word; That we trust him by faith, and live his way

Over and over again, people were baptized in the Bible to show their belief, to show their faith in Jesus

So by the very act of being baptized, each and every person is saying – I believe, I'm forgiven, and I'm His

- **I believe**, as in – I believe that when Jesus died, he died in my place, for my sins, paying the penalty I deserved

Baptism is an expression of your belief that Jesus died for you

It's also an expression of your belief that you're forgiven

That's the second thing being "said" – **I'm forgiven**

As in, I'm pardoned for all that I've ever done, and relieved of my guilt – b/c I've confessed my sin in godly sorrow

That is – I've admitted it to God, asked for forgiveness, and turned from it in repentance

Which means I'm forgiven; B/c 1 Jn 1:9 says – *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

That doesn't mean that the people getting baptized are perfect – they're not

It does mean that they're forgiven and right before God

Declared righteous, and growing in godliness

So baptism is an expression of belief to say – I believe, I'm forgiven, and **I'm His**

I'm a child of God, like **John 1:12** says –

To all who did receive him [as opposed to those who didn't], *who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God*

Adopted into his family, and never to be forsaken; I'm His *****

- That's the story, the testimony, of every single person getting baptized – I believe, I'm forgiven, and I'm His; It's the work of grace that baptism pictures

And as you watch, if you find yourself thinking – "*I don't have that; I don't know God like that;*" Then listen carefully, and open your heart to him; Get saved

In fact, at the end of the service, I'm going to give you an opportunity to do exactly that

To confess your sin, ask forgiveness, believe in Jesus to save you, and receive him into your life as Lord – just like they have (Baptisms)

Close – Before we close, I want to give you an opportunity to respond to what you’ve just heard and seen

Maybe you’re heart’s been stirred, and you need to get right with God

And you’re ready to confess your sin, and receive him into your life

If so, I want you to come forward as we sing one more song – and get on your knees, pour your heart out to God, and ask him to save you

If God’s stirring your heart, if he’s calling you – now’s the time; get saved; don’t wait

Just slip out of your row, and start walking

As you do, someone on our staff, or one of our leaders, will join you – to pray for you, and be with you; And eventually, I’ll lead you in a prayer of salvation

You come as we sing (*You Alone Can Rescue*)

Prayer

God, *I believe* – I believe in Jesus, and that he died in my place, for my sins

Sins and sinfulness *I admit* – I admit that I’m a sinner and need a Savior

Please forgive me, *I repent* – I’m done living my way, and want to live yours

So *I receive* you now, as Lord of my life

Trusting you to save me and keep me for all eternity

I believe, I admit, I repent, and I receive; Thank you Jesus