

## Baptism Celebration – 3/7/21

A total of 15 people are getting baptized this morning – 5 adults and 10 students. 7/8 in this service. And to help you understand and appreciate what’s going on, I want to tell you what baptism *is*. From a *biblical* standpoint. Not church tradition or personal opinion, but what *God* says about it; his perspective. With so many different beliefs out there, or no belief at all, it begs for clarity.

So, 10 thoughts; 10 principles. With lots of Scripture references. Here’s the first:

### 1. Baptism is an act of immersion

Immersion, because that’s what the word means: “to dip under.” It doesn’t mean sprinkle, and it doesn’t mean pour. It means immerse. And the example of Jesus reinforces it. As well as John the Baptist.

Mark 1:10 says that Jesus *came up out of the water* at his baptism. Which means he had to be *immersed* in the water. And the Bible says that John the Baptist was baptizing where *water was plentiful*. (John 3:23) Implying that he was immersing them. Because you don’t need lots of water to sprinkle someone.

So by definition *and* example, baptism is an act of immersion in the Bible.

### 2. Baptism is an expression of belief

It’s 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. By the very act of being baptized, each and every person is expressing their belief.

Their belief that when Jesus died on the cross, he died for *them*. And saved their soul from the condemnation of sin. And gave them eternal life. They believe. And baptism is an *expression* of that belief.

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. Baptism is an expression of belief.

### 3. Baptism is a picture of salvation

Salvation from *judgment*, and salvation in *Christ*. It’s found in 1 Peter 3:18-22. Where Peter compares the experience of Noah’s salvation in the flood, with our salvation in life. Just like Noah was saved from death and judgment in the waters of the *flood*, we are saved from death and judgment *now*; and for all eternity. And just like Noah was saved in the *ark*, we are saved *in Christ*; in relationship with him.

All of which is pictured in baptism. Baptism *corresponds to this* it says. (1 Pet 3:21) We pass through the waters of *baptism*, like Noah passed through the waters of *judgment*. Portraying *outwardly*, what has already taken place *inwardly*. That we’ve been saved from the judgement of death, and assured of eternal life. Baptism is a picture of salvation.

### 4. Baptism is a declaration of identity.

Our identity as a child of God. Having been reconciled with God through Christ, each and every person is saying – “I’m his child; a part of his family.”

Because that’s what *God* says. **Gal 4:4-5**. [4] *When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son . . . so that we might receive adoption as sons*. We might be his sons and daughters; part of his family for all eternity.\*\*\*\*\* And every person getting baptized is essentially declaring it. Declaring their identity as a child of God.

### 5. Baptism is 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 [those who are saved] 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. To say, “Jesus Christ is Lord of my life, and I’m not ashamed to say it.”

### 6. Baptism is an act of obedience.

Something we’re *told* to do. Like the Apostle Peter said in Acts 2:38 – *repent and be baptized every one of you*. It’s a command. Which makes baptism an act of obedience.

What it’s *not*, is an act of salvation. Baptism doesn’t save us, or even *contribute* to our salvation. If it did, that would make it a *work*; something tangible we *do*. And the Bible says we’re *not* saved by works. Explicitly.

**2 Timothy 1:9** – [God] *saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works, but because of his own purpose and grace*. Because of his own decision and favor toward us.

And **Eph 2:8-9** says the same. *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing [this saving]; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast*.

So baptism *can’t* be an act of salvation. Or even a part of it.\*\*\*\*\* Rather, it’s an act of *obedience*. Obedience *because* we’re saved, not to *get* saved.

### 7. Baptism is a burial re-enacted

Using baptism as a metaphor, a word picture, 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?* 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 Jesus, have also been brought under the influence of his sin-defeating *death*?” (**Rom 6:4a**) It’s true.

And then, even more explicitly, he says – *We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death*. Buried. To say that when we were saved, we participated by proxy, in the sin-defeating death and burial of Jesus. *We were buried with him* it says. (4a) Dying to our sin when he died *for* our sin.\*\*\*\*\*

And since Paul uses the metaphor of baptism to describe it all, our baptism in *water* is a burial re-enacted.

But it’s also a display of new life.

### 8. Baptism is a display of new life

2 Cor 5:17 says – *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come.*

And once again, Paul says in **Rom 6:4** – *We were buried therefore with him by baptism into 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 to have new life. Baptism displays that as well.

Old/New. Dead to sin, alive in Christ. (Rom 6:11)\*\*\*\*\* Baptism is a display of new life.

### **9. Baptism is a part of discipleship**

Just before his ascension to heaven, Jesus said in **Mt 28:19-20a** – *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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*

The command is to *make disciples* – followers of Christ; people who grow and go. And the process for that, is baptism and teaching. *Make disciples* [Jesus said] . . . baptizing them and teaching them.\*\*\*\*\*

So *baptism* is a part of discipleship; a part of our growth process. Just like being *taught* is part of discipleship.

And then last . . .

### **10. Baptism is an opportunity to witness.**

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 [salvation] 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’ve not kept it private]; 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 witnessing. And that’s exactly what each and every person is doing by getting baptized and sharing their testimony.\*\*\*\*\* They’re *showing* and *telling* God’s work of grace in their lives. Reinforcing what we *see*, with what we *hear*.

That’s baptism. (**Summary**) 10 principles from the Bible. To explain what each and every person is *doing* in the next few minutes.

And I hope you watch and listen closely. Whether you’re a believer and God uses this to encourage and *sanctify* you, or an unbeliever and he uses it to *save* you. In fact, I’m going to give you an opportunity to pray with me at the end. To pray and be saved, just like they are.

Pray – Father, bless each and every person getting baptized. Impress on them *and* us, the meaning and significance of it all. Use it to save sinners, sanctify saints, and glorify your Son. In whose name we pray, amen.

### Post-Baptisms

You just heard 7/8 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 of Jesus. That God so loved us, he sent him 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. (**Slide**)

But it only applies if you . . .

#### **Admit you’re a sinner**

The Bible says – *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* (Rom 3:23) And embracing the Gospel starts by admitting that’s you. That in God’s eyes, you’re missing the mark.

Second, the Gospel only applies if you . . .

#### **Believe in Jesus**

That when he died, he died for you. And rose again so you could too. So you could be spared from an eternity of judgment, and given new life, starting right now.

Third, the Gospel only applies if you . . .

#### **Repent of your sin**

Asking God to forgive you, cleanse you, and help you *turn* from your sin.

And last, the Good News of Jesus applies, only if you . . .

#### **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, if you want to be saved, pray with me right now.

I admit . . . I believe . . . I repent . . . I receive

If you just prayed with me, let me encourage you to do 2 things:

1. Pick up a **New Believer’s Packet** at the door. Or, if you’re online, go to our website.
2. *Tell* someone about your decision. Maybe even before you leave the building. Or, you can text “**Saved**” to the number on your screen. Tell us. We’d love to know and love to make a connection.

In the meantime, let’s stand to worship. We certainly have great cause.