



The Importance of Baptism

May 30, 2004

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Introduction:

Today is Pentecost Sunday. As we conclude our service this morning we will be celebrating with a few people as they publicly declare their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. It is fitting that we talk about the importance of baptism. I want to make it clear this morning that baptism does not save us. We are saved by faith alone in Christ alone. If it is true that we are not saved by baptism, then why do we baptize in water? What is so important about baptism?

I. Believers should be baptized in water.

Jesus taught this to His disciples. He expected that they would carry the gospel to the world. Those who believed the gospel message were to be discipled and baptized as followers of Christ.

Matthew 28:19-20

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

On the day of Pentecost when God the Father gave the Holy Spirit to comfort, empower, teach and be with those who followed Christ, there were people who heard the gospel message that Peter preached and asked what they needed to do to be saved. This was Peter’s reply to them.

Acts 2:38-39

“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

Salvation happens when we believe in our heart and confess with our mouth. It is not baptism. Baptism indicates that we have believed and confessed, and that we choose to obey Christ as one of His disciples.

Over and over again we find in scripture that whenever people became believers they would be baptized in water. In this way they identified personally with the work of Jesus Christ.

II. Baptism is a visible expression of what has happened invisibly.

In baptism we make visible what has been invisible. We are immersed in water, which speaks of the cleansing of sin which has taken place in our lives by faith in Christ’s work on the cross.

Through baptism we look back to the moment of our new birth and the time when God’s grace rested on our lives. Through baptism we look ahead to moments of God’s grace being extended when we do fall short of His glory, and through baptism we look presently at the grace of God that rests upon us as one of His sons or daughters.

When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, God smiled down upon His life and ministry. The heavens opened, a dove descended and rested on Christ,

which indicated he was the Anointed One, the Messiah, and God's Spirit would work with Him in His ministry. Also there was a voice heard that said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

I believe that when we follow Christ in baptism, God approves. God sees each step we take, each thing we do in life, I believe that heavenly hosts as well as fallen angels also see when we take steps of faith in our life and journey with God. We understand from reading Hebrews that there is a great host of witnesses, those men and women of faith who also are observing our race of faith. Baptism not only speaks to those present here this morning, but all creation and all the unseen spirit world knows when we are baptized, which side we have chosen to be on.

III. Baptism expresses our union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.

The act of baptism says, I am marked as a follower of Christ. When I was a youngster in school, we all wore the bright yellow slickers when it rained. I still remember what they looked like. Everyone had one. They had metal buckles that were hinged and went through a grommet to fasten the coat shut. The only way to identify which one belonged to you was by marking your name on the inside of the coat.

Baptism marks us. The water which we are buried in becomes a place of demarcation. The grave of water which we enter and exit in baptism becomes a boundary line or a mark in time that separates.

We are separated from the past. **Psalm 103:12 - as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.**

The transgressions, which are the ways we break God's laws, are removed. The east and west move away from each other. They are not even close when it comes to measuring the distance they are apart. In the universe, it is impossible to measure that distance because the east and west are infinite in the distance they are apart.

Conclusion:

If you haven't followed Christ in water baptism since you have become a believer, then I encourage you to come to the next baptism class and tell the world in the next baptism service that you are a follower of Christ. We should not ignore such an important step in our spiritual journey. We should not put off such a valuable expression of our union with Christ. We should want all creation to know that we are marked and whose side we are on.

We are separated from the old. Even though the old is familiar, and comfortable, when we are in Christ, the old has passed and He makes us a new creation. Baptism says the old is gone, the new has come.

2 Cor. 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

We declare in baptism that someday this body will be resurrected to eternal life. There will be a change and we will come out of the grave with a new body – a resurrected body.

The expression of our union or oneness with Christ is made known through baptism.

Romans 6:3-5

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

IV. Baptism expresses we are clothed with Christ.

When I put on clothes it covers up a lot. You don't see the bumps, scars, bruises, wrinkles etc. that you would otherwise see. You see the nice clothes, and usually your attention is taken away from the imperfections you might otherwise see.

So it is with Christ. It tells us in Galatians 3:27 "for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

In baptism we are covered with water, which expressed the way He envelopes our lives. We become saturated, whelmed with Christ and He becomes our cleansing on the inside and our covering on the outside.