

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 19TH, 2024 // BAPTISM

IDENTIFIES US AS CHRIST FOLLOWERS

This is a public display that we've chosen a life of faith in Jesus. We take on the "new man" or woman and are "brought to life." It is the most evident part of our adoption into the family of God and should mark a turning point.

- **Baptism is not salvation but a response to being saved and a physical representation of it. AN OUTWARD SIGN OF AN INWARD WORK**

Baptism is a tangible example to those in our community that we are a "new creation." Baptism doesn't make us a Christian. It is a symbol, like a wedding ring, that we are Christ followers.

- **We die to sin (buried in water) and are raised to new life in Christ (coming out of the water).**

WE'RE RESURRECTED

THE SYMBOLISM OF A FRESH START

Baptism symbolizes us dying to ourselves and being buried, but more importantly, it identifies us with rising again!

- We'll have struggles, but from this moment, we're labeled as new creations, **no longer slaves to our former selves! We're all born into some kind of struggle; this is why we must be born again.** Romans 6:3-7
- Becoming a Christian and choosing to get baptized doesn't mean we won't make mistakes. It does mean that **we are no longer slaves to sinful lifestyles.** This means **we can be delivered and permanently changed.**
- **The point of salvation is deliverance from destruction. Jesus gives us a fresh start.**

A NEW IDENTITY

BAPTISM ISN'T A MAGICAL FORMULA

The words spoken over someone getting baptized are not as important as **the genuineness of the person's heart** making the public profession.

- **How we pray for people getting baptized is important, but it's more so the understanding of why this event is taking place and Whose identity they're adopting.**
- Galatians 3:27-28

ABOVE ALL THINGS, WE FIND OUR IDENTITY IN JESUS

Salvation only comes when we identify ourselves as followers of Jesus above all things, even gender, occupation, nationality, or skin color.

- That's why understanding our new identity in Christ is vitally important. **We are no longer identified by our past mistakes.**

THE EXAMPLE

- Matthew 3:15-17

WE FOLLOW CHRIST'S EXAMPLE

Jesus had no reason to get baptized since He had never committed sin. He got baptized to set an example for us. As followers of Jesus, **we should want to follow His example.**

- **Jesus never asks us to do anything He hasn't already done.** We also see that His baptism brought the Father "great joy."

WE FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF OTHERS

1. On the day of Pentecost, about **3,000** were baptized.
2. The **Ethiopian eunuch** was baptized by Philip.
3. **Saul/Paul** was baptized after his Damascus road conversion.
4. **Cornelius and his family** were baptized.
5. **The Philippian jailer** and his household were baptized.

THE COMMISSION

- Matthew 28:19-20
- John 14:15

IT'S SIMPLY ABOUT OBEDIENCE

We are naturally rebellious because of humanity's fallen state. As people who claim to follow Christ, **we need to stop debating God, and just start following His lead and instruction.**

- Though I cannot explain everything about baptism, I know **it is imperative to follow God's instruction.**

DO WE HAVE TO?

- 1 Peter 3:21-22

A LIFE "PLEDGED" TO GOD

Salvation is more than a one-time experience; it is a life-long relationship with Jesus. Though initial salvation may happen at conversion, baptism is one of the first steps in obedience to Jesus, and **without obedience to Jesus, we cannot be saved.**

- **Baptism shows the world our pledge to live a life that obeys and honors God.**

HOW SHOULD ONE RESPOND TO THE GOSPEL?

- **Belief:** Realizing that Jesus is the Savior.
- **Repentance:** Heartfelt sorrow for the sin we've committed, a desire to change, and a denial of self in order to walk in obedience to Jesus.
- **Daily faith:** Saving faith is personal trust in Jesus that is active every day. It is complete surrender to Him.
- **Baptism:** The outward profession of the inward work of grace.

WE NEED TO CHECK OUR HEARTS

If one understands the weight of sin and the grace God has shown us through His forgiveness, they will start to approach God in humility and obedience.

- **When we start asking how little we must do to please the Lord, there is a much bigger heart issue that is revealed and that needs to be addressed.**

ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS

- The questions about our relationship to God should never be centered around "**What do I HAVE to do?**"
- After we start to understand His sacrifice for us, we should respond with questions centered around "**What more CAN I do for Christ?**"

RESPONDING TO THE CROSS

- **Today we all have an opportunity to respond to what Jesus has done for us.**
- If you don't have a relationship with Christ, we can help you **start that journey.**
- If you have recently committed to Christ, you can make that public through **baptism.**
- If we already follow, we can remember the cross through taking **communion.**