

Baptism Celebration – 11/3/19

That brings us to our Baptism Celebration, where a total of 23 people are getting baptized today – 9 adults and 14 students. What a joy.

But before we get to that, I want to tell you what baptism *is*, so you know what's going on and fully appreciate it. It starts with this:

1. 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.

Each and every person getting baptized, believes that when Jesus died on the cross, he died for them.

Each and every person believes, by faith, that Jesus has saved their soul from the condemnation of sin, and given them eternal life.

And baptism is an expression of that. An expression of their 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.

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

2. Baptism is a declaration of identity.

Our identity as a child of God.

Having been united with him 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. That we might be his sons and daughters.

Part of his family for all eternity.

Some of us had the privilege of witnessing the adoption of 3 beautiful little kids yesterday, by Cody and Brittany Rogers; our Worship Pastor and his wife.

We gathered at the courthouse and heard their names officially changed; legally changed. Giving them a new identity.

And that identity was declared, for all to hear and see, for all time.

And that's exactly what's going on with baptism.

Each and every person getting baptized, has been adopted into God's family.*****

And *by* being baptized, they're *declaring* it. They're declaring their *identity* as children of God.

3. 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.

“Jesus Christ is Lord of my life, and I'm not ashamed to proclaim it. I'm with him.”

That's what each and every person is saying by being baptized.

4. 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, to extend favor to us.

So we get baptized as an act of *obedience*, not an act of salvation.*****

We obey *because* we're saved, not to *get* saved.

5. Baptism is a picture of salvation.

Salvation from *judgment*, and salvation in *Christ*. Two sides of the same coin.

The first, is salvation from the judgment of *death*; like Noah was spared from death in the waters of the flood.

The second, is salvation *in Christ*; like Noah was spared *in the ark*.

That's the analogy laid out by the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 3 (18-22).

Just like Noah was saved from the waters of the flood in the ark, baptism pictures *our* salvation from the judgment of God, in Christ.

So no matter how you look at it, baptism is a picture of our salvation – an outward portrayal of what has already taken place inwardly.

That we've been forgiven of our sin, saved from death, and assured of life.

Because we are *in Christ*; in relationship with him.

And then last . . .

6. 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 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 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 salvation, to us; the congregation.

Reinforcing what we *see*, with what we *hear*. (**Summary**)

So I hope you'll 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 *respond* to that end, when we're done.

To pray with me 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 encourage the saints, save the lost, and glorify your Son, Jesus. In whose name we pray, amen. (Get in tank)

Post-Baptisms

You just heard 11/12 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 then rose again so you could too.

So you could be spared from an eternity of judgment, and given new life, starting 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.

That's repentance.

And then 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

Bless them and keep them.

If you just prayed with me, we praise God for you, and want you to do 2 things:

1. Pick up a **New Believer's Packet** at the door.

2. *Tell* someone about your decision. Maybe even before you leave the building.

Stand to worship.

Close

Baptism and New Member Recognition

We'd like to recognize and bless both those we welcomed into *membership*, and those who were *baptized* this morning.

Acts 2:41 says – *Those who received his word* [Peter's preaching of the Gospel] *were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

Added to what? The church; the church universal; the fellowship of the redeemed.

So we want to acknowledge that, and extend a personal welcome to you (Baptizees).

And the same goes for those of you joining *our* church: new members.

In Gal 2:9, Paul says that after the apostles scrutinized his life and message, they gave him *the right hand of fellowship*.

Meaning, they confirmed his acceptance and inclusion with a handshake.

So right after we close, would you make your way forward, shake their hand, and just say,

“God bless you. Welcome to our church”?

And for those who were baptized, “Thank you for your testimony.”

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood . . . to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. (Rev 1:5b-6)