

CITY CHURCH BAPTISM CLASS

(ABOUT BAPTISM)

MATT 28:19—20

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

MARK 16

“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved;”

Baptism is intended as the initiating rite into Christian discipleship and thus is intended only for people who are old enough to make a decision to believe in and obey Jesus Christ. Baptism is meaningless apart from a personal decision to follow Jesus. The New Testament supports this perspective. *Across the Spectrum Boyd a. Gregory 2009*

When we accepted Christ as our Savior and Lord,

We have made a choice to die to our old way of life, of being selfish and in control of our own lives. We start the process/journey to die to our old nature and its evil/sinful desires. “*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.*” (Galatians 2:20)

Now you are ready to give up your plan for your lives, and ready and willing to trust God with your life for His purpose and plan. Which doesn't have to match up with what you think it should be.

Colossians 3:3 says, “*For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*”

THE PRACTICE OF BAPTISM in the New Testament was carried out in one way: The person being baptized was immersed or put completely under the water and then brought back up again. Baptism by immersion is therefore the “mode” of baptism or the way in which baptism was carried out in the New Testament. This is evident for the following reasons:

Baptism is not only a picture of these important events and facts, but it is also a reminder to Satan of His utter defeat. Every time a person is baptized it's like a video re-run (in 3D and High Definition) of what Jesus did 3,000 years ago.

”*Jesus disarmed the principalities and powers of Satan and made a “public spectacle” of them.*” (Colossians 2:15) Baptism is a part of that public display of his defeat.

This explains why Satan has made such a concerted effort down through the ages to keep the Churches quarreling about the mechanics of water baptism. It' one of his ways of keeping churches divided and his tactic to keep our eyes off the truth of his ultimate defeated.

BAPTISM IS A DECLARATION

- a. Of our public expression of personal faith in Jesus Christ.
- b. You are declaring that you belong to Jesus.

It is also declaration of our repentance and salvation in Jesus. It is a declaration that we are dead to sin and alive to God. It is evidence of our determination to live for Jesus.

Baptism itself doesn't save us and it's not something we do to earn brownie points with God. It is simply the outward expression of that which has already taken place in our hearts by faith in what Jesus has done on the cross.

I believe that something significant happen within you that has brought you to this point. Somehow you have encountered Jesus in a real way that motivates you to be here and be baptized Sunday. Glory to God!!

WHICH LEADS TO OUR SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

Believers are to belong to and be mutually defined by their involvement in the community and family of God's people, but first they must individually decide to become disciples of Jesus. It shows us our separation from the world.

There are many places in scripture that speak of our separateness from the world's system and ways.

- ❖ We are to be in the world but not of the world. (1 John 3:1, John 8:23)
- ❖ We are instructed to not love the world nor the things in the world. (I Timothy 6:7-10)
- ❖ We are told that friendship with the world makes us an enemy of God. (James 4:4)
- ❖ We are told not to be conformed to this world and its ways, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. (Romans 12:2)

In these scriptures they refer to this world not being our home anymore. They refer to us as aliens, as strangers who are actually citizens of another kingdom. (1 Peter 2:11) Nowhere is this separation more clearly seen then in one's baptism. In baptism there is an old world to which I die and a new world into which I am reborn. And between those two worlds there is a tomb. Baptism affirms that we desire to be cut off from the old world/ways and residents of the new one.

This is why Paul introduces that passage in Romans 6 about baptism with this rhetorical question: "How shall we who have died to sin still live in it?" The obvious answer is ...we can't! If your baptism means anything to you, you can't, because, again our baptism is a symbol of separation from our old ways and our new commitment to Jesus.

WHICH LEADS TO OUR UNION WITH JESUS:

It's a picture of how intimately we are connected to Jesus.

Let's read Romans 6:3-5, "Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Jesus 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."

God, in His infinite wisdom/reality, so closely identifies us with Jesus in everything he went through, that to Him (God) we went through it also. The things that happened to Jesus happened to us.

God has put us in Christ. That is an awesome thing. Who could have thought that this is how God would deal with the human race. And even if someone could have thought it, how would it be accomplished? One of the most amazing passages in scripture is 1 Corinthians 1:20, which says, it is "by His doing (that) you are in Jesus."

So close was the identification, so intimate the union that He could become our sin, and we could become His righteousness.

(2 Corinthians 5:17) "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." This divine exchange is made possible because of our close union with Him.

Baptism then, is a demonstration of how closely God has drawn us to Himself through Jesus. A poet named Rees Howells put it this way.

***"So nigh, so very nigh to God, I cannot nearer be;
For in the person of His Son, I am as near as He."***

WHICH LEADS TO OUR ACT OF OBEDIENCE

According to New Testament teaching the first act of obedience they perform as disciples was to be baptized. (Mark 10:38-39)

JESUS' EXAMPLE IN MATTHEW 3:13-17 (NASB)

"Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan *coming* to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?' But Jesus answering said to him, 'Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he permitted Him. After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.'"

Okay, so John's baptism was a baptism of symbolic cleansing. He was calling for repentance by way of preparation for the Person and the work of the Messiah. It was a

preparation for the greater baptism which Jesus would accomplish by His finished work on the cross in the life of a believer.

So when Jesus came to John asking to be baptized, John tried to prevent it from happening. He knew who Jesus was, He knew that he wasn't even fit to remove his sandals – much less baptize Him. You can almost hear John respectfully appealing to Jesus. “Jesus this baptism is for sinners who need to repent. This isn't for you. Would you please baptize me instead?”

But Jesus said, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.”

Jesus showed us baptism was important because of His example. We often speak about following the Lord in the waters of baptism. He was baptized, so we are following His example. (1 Peter 2:21) “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.”

In a similar way, when we follow Jesus' example of being baptized, we too are publicly identifying with God's plans and purposes – and we acknowledge the effectiveness of Christ's death, burial and resurrection on our behalf.

Jesus confirms this later in His great commission by commanding us to make disciples and baptize in His name. We gladly obey him out of our love for Him and all He has done for us.

WHICH LEADS TO OUR IDENTITY

This is also the way of publicly identifying ourselves with the person of Jesus and with the body of believers (the Church) before those in our families, at work, and in our communities.

Many Christians keep quiet and try to blend in, in order to avoid the unpleasant and uncomfortable situations that often result when we identify with being a follower of Jesus.

In Matthew 10: 32-33, Jesus says, “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.”

In the days of the early church (and the persecuted church down through the centuries) if you submitted to baptism, you were literally putting your life on the line. You didn't get baptized if you were lukewarm. Because of the likelihood of persecution, a believer, through baptism, literally identified with the sufferings of Christ. Much of this still go on today in the Middle East...

In Matthew 5, Jesus said that we were the lights of the world. He told us not to hide our light under a bushel, but rather to let our light shine before men so they could see it and give praise to God.

So as you identify with Jesus and His suffering through baptism, you are acknowledging Christ as Lord and Savior of your life, and starting the journey of learning how to carry your crosses daily, and finding your identity as a son or daughter of the Father and brother and sister of Jesus.