

Introduction:

- ‘Let’s Celebrate Baptism!’ is our subject today. Three people are getting baptized today!
 - Baptism means to immerse. Can you think of anything better than getting immersed in God! Think about this: Water cleanses and water gives life! Jesus is the Living Water! He cleanses and He gives life! And if a man drinks of him he will never thirst again.
 - John the Baptist’s message was repent! (Mt 3:2). And he was baptizing in the Jordan river. And preaching that One coming would baptize with Holy Spirit and fire!
 - Jesus, himself, was baptized.
 - Peter in Acts 2 (the pouring out of the Spirit) commands those who believe to be baptized.
- Our text for today: *“So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus. As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look! There’s some water! Why can’t I be baptized?” He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.”* (Acts 8:35-38, NLT)

I. What Baptism Is Not

- A. Baptism is not the way to salvation. Repentance and faith in Jesus Christ is how a person is born again. I.e. The eunuch heard and he believed.
 - 1. *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”* (Ephesians 2:8-9, ESV)
Salvation comes by grace and grace is received through faith.
 - 2. *““For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”* (John 3:16, ESV)
 - 3. Acts 15 and Romans 4 make no mention of baptism being essential to salvation but repentance and faith are critical to salvation.
 - 4. If you have not repented and placed your faith in Christ when you are baptized, then all you are getting is wet! No salvation in getting wet.
- B. Baptism is not for the salvation of infants and young children.
 - 1. We do not baptize babies we dedicate them to God.
 - 2. We reserve the right of baptism for the day when they give their hearts to Christ.

II. What is Baptism?

- A. It is an outward sign of something that God has already done in your heart through faith. In scripture it follows after what takes place on the inside of the heart of a man when He believes in Jesus.
 - 1. If you get baptized without the heart change, all you get is wet. That is why I want to explain baptism to you using the word of God.
 - 2. Baptism is an action where a person identifies with Christ's death and resurrection.
“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." (Romans 6:4, ESV)

- B. The word baptism comes from a Greek word meaning to immerse. Most baptisms are by immersion. We may sprinkle someone if it is impossible for them to be immersed in water. IE. Maybe they are in hospital or have some kind of condition that prevents it.
- C. Like I said earlier, "Can you think of anything better than getting immersed into God! Think about this: Water cleanses and water gives life! Jesus said, I Am Living Water! He cleanses and gives life!
 - 1. And if a man drinks of him he will never thirst again.
 - 2. And don't forget the baptism of the Holy Spirit!!! Immersed in Him!!!

III. Salvation! A Reason to Celebrate With Baptism!

- A. The Ethiopian could not understand what he was reading. Isaiah 53:
 - 1. How can I understand unless someone explains it to me?
 - 2. Phillip sat with him. That is so powerful!
 - 3. The Eunuch asks, "*Who is this man the scripture speaks of?*"
- B. Phillip explained it to him. Use Isaiah 53, illustration.
 - 1. What hinders me from being baptized? vs 37
 - 2. If you believe with all your heart you may! vs 38
 - 3. Here is water. Let's do this!
- C. He was baptized into Christ Jesus! This was something to celebrate! The man knew this!

IV. God's Promises Belongs To You! Another Reason To Celebrate Baptism!!!

- A. "For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you." (Galatians 3:26-29, NLT)
 - 1. Like the Ethiopian, you have been saved by grace through faith!
 - 2. Through baptism you put on Christ! Galatians 3:26
 - 3. Through salvation and baptism you are:
 - a) one in Christ vs 27
 - b) true children of Abraham vs 27
 - c) therefore heir of Abraham vs 28
 - d) and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you!!! vs 28
- B. God's Promises belong to us! Celebrate!!! I do not have time to develop this but you find a promise in the OT realize it is yours in Christ Jesus!

V. More Reason To Celebrate Baptism! What Do I Get From Baptism?

- A. Wet! Often in scripture the Holy Spirit fell on those who were baptized. IE. Happened to

Jesus.

- B. A New Identity. Ie. Prodigal son restored to the Father got a new identity! Dead/now alive. Servant/now a son. Lost/but now found...in the right place...at home!
 - 1. You have been adopted by the family of God! Freedom is your new family as well as all who call on the name of the Lord.
 - a) God is your Father...and He is good!
 - b) We are your brothers and sisters, joint heirs with Jesus Christ.
 - c) Jesus is your big brother. He is the son of God we are sons of God... by adoption.
- C. You have a new name - Christian -Acts 11:26 **And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch**. NKJV Christians are those who have chosen to make Jesus their Lord. Rev. 2:17, Is 56:5, Is 62:2, Is 65:15, Rev 3:12.
- D. You have Freedom!
 - 1. This is a whole new culture...a new life... - that screams Freedom!
 - 2. No more bondage! No more shame. No more darkness. Oneness, connectedness.
- E. A new family! The family of God! 1 Cor 12:13-14 **For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit**. NKJV. Saved by God, called out of world, called into the ekklesia (church) and planted together will all the Saints!
 - 1. It is a supernatural work! The Holy Spirit places you into the Body of Christ.
 - 2. The NT compares the work of baptism like entering a new family.
 - 3. Family is to be the place where we get our sense of belonging, education, value, encouragement, etc.
 - 4. Family is where we learn our cultural values.
- F. In Baptism, You are raised in newness of life! Only that which is righteous is raised!
 - 1. In salvation you are clothed in righteousness, His righteousness!
 - 2. It was what Jesus said must be fulfilled in His baptism! The same will raise us!
- G. Baptism is your 'right of passage, your initiation' (initiation means the act of beginning something). It Loudly declares you belong, and you cannot be denied.
 - 1. This kingdom culture threatens political empires!
 - 2. Romans killed those who were baptized. When you get a revelation of what and who you have received you will gladly lay down your life for Him!...like the apostles.
 - 3. Many communistic/Islamic countries will kill you when you are baptized.
 - 4. Baptism insist on a new allegiance!
 - 5. When the church again recovers the significance of it's culture--Baptism, it will again take on a new form. In baptism I really really identify with Him!! When the church takes itself seriously baptism is charged. We are an alternative culture!
 - 6. It is a culture that is life giving. John. 10:10.

VI. Why Should A Person Be Baptized?

- A. Baptism is a public announcement of our faith and our decision to live for Christ. Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38; Mt. 28:19-20 Our being baptized is an encouragement for others to start following Christ.
- B. Because Jesus was baptized. He chose to be baptized and in so doing He identified with us. When we are baptized we are choosing to identify with Him; his death burial and resurrection. Baptism becomes a symbol/prophetic act of our baptism into His death, burial and resurrection.
1. When we go down into the water, we're reminded of Jesus' death on the cross and His payment for our sins. Baptism speaks of being buried with Him Romans 6:4
Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. NKJV
 2. We consider our old life dead. Ie. Cant offend a dead man.
 3. But when we come out of the water, we're reminded that three days later, Jesus rose from the dead! 2Cor 5:17 tells us that if we're in Christ, we're new creations. Baptism reminds us that the old is gone, and the new has come!
 4. Remember: getting baptized is important, but not because it saves you. The grace of God through faith in Jesus is what saves us.
- C. Scripture instructs us to do so: Mk 1:4; Acts 2:38; Mt. 28:19-20; Samaria Acts 8:12-13; Acts 8:36-39; Lydia baptized. Acts 16:14-15; Peter and Cornelius family. Acts 10:47.
- D. Baptism is a symbol of our faith (See:Acts 8:12-13). The model we see in the New Testament is that when someone became a new believer (demonstrating faith in Jesus), they repented and were baptized. Baptism serves as a vital step for those declaring their faith in Jesus.
1. John was preaching a message of repentance to cause people to receive something greater than their 'Jewishness.' They were being directed to enter into the Kingdom of God through repentance. You who are saved, are saved to receive something greater than yourself!
 2. (For those being baptized...) Repentance was not just a turning away from what one had done wrong but a turning to God with all your heart, mind and strength. Repentance is not just turning away but turning to something...Jesus! Baptism followed this act of repentance and faith. *"This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven."* (Mark 1:4, NLT) The call to "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matt. 3:2; 4:17) is an **urgent invitation to reorient our values, habits, loves, thinking, and behavior according to Biblical understanding**, one rooted in the revelation of God's nature and coming reign. In short, repentance means, "Become a disciple of Jesus!"

- E. Baptism is a sign of a persons dedication (wholehearted obedience) to following after God.
- F. Baptism is a sign to the believer like circumcision was for the Jew. Covenant. It is entering into the New Covenant of Christ, a celebration of who we now are known by...Christ, himself. IE. In Christ you have a new land Lord! The old land lord, the devil, can no longer charge you rent.

Conclusion:

- In the words of The Ethiopian Eunuch Acts 8:36 " *What hinders me from being baptized?*" Nothing! Peter to the Cornelius' family: "*Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?*" (Acts 10:47, ESV)
- If you are being baptized today come on up.
"There at the Jordan River those who came to confess their sins were baptized into a changed life." The Message (Mt 3:6).
- "Think of how exciting it must be to have Jesus, lay his hands on you and baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire! there is nothing like being immersed in the third person of the trinity-the Holy Spirit!" God in us! No wonder the initial response of the body and mind of man goes wild. If hills melt like wax at the presence of the Lord, no wonder men speak in tongues, shake and rest in the Spirit when God comes into them to make them His home!