

## Baptism, a Challenge, a Change

5-1-95 am

When I was about 10 years old, I walked down the aisle in this church building one evening during a gospel meeting. I sat on the front pew right over there. I filled out a card that asked for my name, address, phone number and the reason why I came to the front of the auditorium. I checked the statement that said, "Baptism." I remember I had also invited a friend with me that night and he leaned over the pew where I was seated to see what I was doing with the card. I believe Martel Pace came to me and had me stand before the audience and say the words, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Living God!" Then I went into the dressing room with him and a couple of other men. I changed clothes so that I would not have to leave here soaking wet. We went up the stairs behind this wall and down into the baptistry right behind where I stand now and I was baptized.

For the past several weeks, Mark and I have been talking about some of the fundamentals that are involved in becoming a Christian. God's word tells us that if we believe it is first because we have heard the message of the Gospel of Christ. We heard it with the intention of doing what is right no matter what it called us to do. With that attitude, we were able to believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because we believed, we repented of our sins and confessed that Jesus is the only name by which men must be saved! Which brings us today to the subject of baptism.

### 1) What is it?

a. 2000 years ago, when someone used the word "*Baptize*", there was not the confusion that there is today. Public usage of words bring about changes in definitions. If you want to know what someone means by something they say, you let them define the terms they use. Since the Bible was originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic and Greek, those who translate it into English must use words that will help us understand what was meant by the one who wrote it or spoke it. The word Baptize was never translated. The Greek word for Baptize is basically Baptize!

b. The Enhanced Strong's Lexicon defines baptizo to mean "1) to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge. 2) to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one's self, bathe. 3) to overwhelm."

c. Today most people use the word "baptize" to mean simply a religious ceremony where one joins a church by having water poured or sprinkled on his head. That's Not what baptism was 2000 years ago.

d. If you went to someone's house to eat dinner, the dishes had been baptized the night before, or shortly after the previous meal. If they had not been, you likely would not want to eat from them, because to baptize your dishes meant to immerse them in water and wash them so that they are clean.

e. In Mark 16:15-16 And he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. (RSV) Do you think there was any doubt as to what Jesus meant? It was not sprinkling a little water on someone's head, nor pouring water on them, but submerging them into a pool of water, and washing them clean. There was a reason why it was important to immerse and in just a few

moments, I'll tell you.

## 2) What does it do?

a. It takes away your sins.

Acts 2:38 And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (RSV)

Acts 22:16 And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.' (RSV)

b. It saves you and adds you to the church.

1 Peter 3:21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (RSV)

Acts 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (RSV)

c. It gives you rebirth.

Titus 3:3-5 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by men and hating one another; 4 but when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, (RSV)

It gives you a new slate. Wouldn't it be great to know that all the regrets of your past are gone and forgiven and forgotten. No matter what you've done, no matter how long you did it.

Listen who was there on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:36 when Peter said, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." even those people who Crucified Jesus were able to have a another chance at a clean slate so that in verse 41 "those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls." (RSV)

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (RSV)

d. It puts you in Christ, where all spiritual blessings are found.

Galatians 3:26-27 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (RSV)

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, (RSV)

### 3) What it does not do.

a. It does not take away all of your problems  
Baptized two in prison.

b. It does not change your physical environment.

There are exceptions to this, but the point is that God does not automatically get you a new Job, or take you to a new school, or get you a new family just because you have been baptized.

c. It does not make you rich materially.

d. It does not make temptation go away. There are many people who think that they have to get all their ducks in a row *before* they can become a Christian. Certainly repentance is involved in becoming a Christian, but don't think that you will no longer have any desire for the fleshly things that have ruined your relationship with God in the first place.

1 John 1:6-2:2 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves*, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar*, and his word is not in us. 1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that you *sin not*. *And if any man sin*, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for [the sins of] the whole world. (KJV)

### 4) What it means.

a. A representation of the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus.

b. In studying the word baptize, I found this discription.

Not to be confused with 911, bapto. The clearest example that shows the meaning of baptizo is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be 'dipped' (bapto) into boiling water and then 'baptised' (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptising the vegetable, produces a permanent change. When used in the New Testament, this word more often refers to our union and identification with Christ than to our water baptism. e.g. Mark 16:16. 'He that believes and is baptised shall be saved'. Christ is saying that mere intellectual assent is not enough. There must be a union with him, a real change, like the vegetable to the pickle!

Invitation.