

Sermon – Water Baptism

-prayer-

Acts 2:38

Amplified Bible (AMP)

³⁸ And Peter answered them, Repent (change your views and purpose to accept the will of God in your inner selves instead of rejecting it) and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of *and* release from your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism is not about religious ritual. It is about right relationship. The word "Baptism" comes from the Greek "baptizo" meaning to immerse. While arguments abound regarding whether total immersion or dipping is necessary, based on the balance of the evidence, I believe that it is total immersion. We will discuss briefly some of that evidence today.

Is baptism required for salvation?

Clearly not based on the following:

There is no mention of Baptism only Belief...

John 3:16

New Living Translation (NLT)

¹⁶ "For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

The thief upon the cross accepted Jesus there and was not baptized, yet Jesus granted him life.

Luke 23:43

New Living Translation (NLT)

⁴³ And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."

So... Is baptism necessary for salvation? No but in a way Yes. Let me explain...

Jesus also told us Matthew 28:19-20

Matthew 28:19-20

New Living Translation (NLT)

¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations,^[a] baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Footnotes:

a. [28:19](#) Or *all peoples*.

So, Jesus has commanded us to do this. Are we sold out to Jesus? Are we obedient servants of the master? He told us to do this until the end of the age when he returns. If we are truly Christian we would do what Christ commands us to do...

Mark 16:15-16

New Living Translation (NLT)

¹⁵ And then he told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. ¹⁶ Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.

Note that it is the refusal to believe which brings the condemnation...

Acts 2:38

New Living Translation (NLT)

³⁸ Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What is Baptism?

Baptism is significant to us because it symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In our place and for our sins, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came, shed his blood on the cross and died for our sins. Then he rose again that we might have the hope of eternal life. It is his triumph over death and his resurrection that guarantees us a new everlasting life in him. We were rescued from the wrath of God the father and restored into right standing with him. It is because of this that we can have joy everlasting in the kingdom of God. Jesus became our justification, redemption, propitiation and expiation so that we could be positionally sanctified because of him. This is why our sanctification is both instantaneous and ongoing. We are righteous in the eyes of God the father because Jesus is our covering, our great high priest and our intercessor with the

father. Sanctification is ongoing as the Holy Spirit brings about the likeness of Christ in our lives.

If we show our identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ in baptism, we are dying to our own flesh, to our Adamic nature, and raising up in a covenantal new life in Christ. Baptism is ordained by the Lord. It is his commandment. We have been baptized into his death and so we die to ourselves and rise with Jesus in newness of life.

By baptism we show our faith, we are united to Christ, it is through faith that we are united to Christ it is through obedience in baptism that we exemplify the union.

In Matthew 28:19 we see a different formula than Acts. If we study carefully Luke was saying that we baptize in the name of Jesus Christ as he is our salvation and we recognize his atoning sacrifice for us. He was referring to Jesus as God. In Matthew we read that we are to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. What Matthew has done is denote in explicit terms the roles of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in our salvation. From one aspect, Jesus died on the cross for our sins, but also consider he was begotten of the Father and Conceived by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit's role to bring about the likeness of Christ within us as he goes about his restorative work in us. This in my mind makes both legitimate. So why do I baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Because that is what Jesus said to do and it is a call for them to be present in this act of obedience and glorification to the Son, it recognizes their roles in the act of redemption...

Galatians 3:26-27

New Living Translation (NLT)

²⁶ For you are all children^[a] of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes.^[b]

Footnotes:

- a. **3:26** Greek *sons*.
- b. **3:27** Greek *have put on Christ*.

Do we baptize unbelievers?

NO.

Because baptism is an expression of faith it is therefore only for those who believe.

Do we baptize infants?

NO.

But we do dedicate them to the Lord. As the commandment to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) applies in this context, it is impossible for an infant to conceptualize or have committed any sin. We believe that children are covered under their parents until the age of accountability or around 12 years of age when they can rationally make their own decision to follow or not to follow Jesus.

That being said do we condemn the Catholic believers for what they do in baptism?

NO.

The fact of the matter is that Baptizo also means to dip. Baptizo is used in scripture for the washing of hands for example. I believe that Jesus exemplifies grace to what I perceive as a contextual and exegetic error. I believe that God looks upon this act as dedication. It does not replace adult baptism.

Why do we believe in total immersion?

Romans 6:3-4 tells us:

Romans 6:3-4

New Living Translation (NLT)

³Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? ⁴For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

The immersion in water is therefore symbolic of burial of Christ. Now some will say but Christ was buried in a cave. To which I will remind them that it is a symbol established by John the Baptist and validated by Christ himself, who was baptized to fulfill all righteousness and to be an example for us.

Consider Acts 8:36-38

Acts 8:36-38

New Living Translation (NLT)

³⁶As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?"^[a] (*) ³⁸He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

Footnotes:

- a. **8:36** Some manuscripts add verse 37, (*) *"You can," Philip answered, "if you believe with all your heart." And the eunuch replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."*

Is the Grace of God then a license to go on sinning?

NO.

If we have died to ourselves in Christ as we are showing through the act of obedience in baptism; we should not sin because we are dead to it. I thank Jesus every day that I am covered by his sanctifying blood, because if I tried to live this alone. I could not fulfill it. I die daily with Christ, yet not I, but he who lives within me. I have shed the nature of Adam and taken on the nature of Christ. I am a new creation, therefore, sin has no place in my life.

Since sanctification is both instantaneous and ongoing, I rejoice in the knowledge that my King's Holy Spirit is making me more like him. Every day and I walk in the liberty and grace that Faith in him has made me victorious.

Is that a reason to willfully sin? Not if you value what Christ has done for you.

A Baptist professor of mine once said, as a Baptist and on the balance of both sides of the argument in scripture, I admit that I could be wrong on this issue, but why take the chance?

What is truly amazing is that there are many Bible believing, Christ worshiping, God declaring people who do not understand the necessity of Baptism. Unfortunately these are usually the same people who don't see the value of church membership...

Membership and baptism are so closely tied because being a member of the new covenant people of God is not a result of physical birth or race. It is a matter of Spiritual birth that occurs by faith in the Word of God and his son the Logos - Jesus Christ.

You see the Pharisees and Sadducees claimed Abraham as their father in this discourse with John shows:

3 In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was, ²"Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near."^[a] ³The prophet Isaiah was speaking about John when he said,

"He is a voice shouting in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the LORD's coming!
Clear the road for him!'"^[b]

⁴John's clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁵People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. ⁶And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

⁷But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize,^[c] he denounced them. "You brood of snakes!" he exclaimed. "Who warned you to flee God's coming wrath?" ⁸Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. ⁹Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. ¹⁰Even now the ax of God's judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹"I baptize with^[d] water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.^[e] ¹²He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire."

So to paraphrase... What the Pharisees and Sadducees were saying in modern English was: "Don't talk to me about the wrath of God because I am a descendant of Abraham and so I am covered by the promise of his blessing. God's wrath is reserved for the Gentiles not us." I love John's response, because what he is saying is that: "Your right! God is faithful in his promises, but you are making a huge mistake if you think that if you perish because of his wrath he has not fulfilled his promises to the children of Abraham, he just won't be fulfilling them to the unrepentant and unbelieving children of Abraham.

*I believe this is also saying that God promised to save the nation not all individuals in that promise.

We are baptized into Christ and we are members of the body of Christ. Why would we not take up membership in that?

We are called to be connected to each other

Hebrews 10:24-25

Contemporary English Version (CEV)

²⁴ We should keep on encouraging each other to be thoughtful and to do helpful things. ²⁵ Some people have gotten out of the habit of meeting for worship, but we must not do that. We should keep on encouraging each other, especially since you know that the day of the Lord's coming is getting closer.

1 Peter 1:22-25

Contemporary English Version (CEV)

²² You obeyed the truth,^[a] and your souls were made pure. Now you sincerely love each other. But you must keep on loving with all your heart. ²³ Do this because God has given you new birth by his message that lives on forever. ²⁴ The Scriptures say,

"Humans wither like grass,
and their glory fades
like wild flowers.

Grass dries up,
and flowers fall
to the ground.

²⁵ But what the Lord has said
will stand forever."

Our good news to you is what the Lord has said.

Footnotes:

- a. **1.22** *You obeyed the truth*: Some manuscripts add "by the power of the Spirit."

So is baptism really necessary?

- It is connect to conversion and membership in Christ
- It was done by the Christians of the early church
- It was commanded by Jesus that we do it
- We were told to Go and make disciples AND Baptize them in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

John's Baptism is a sign to others that we have individually repented and want to be a part of the Body of Christ, not that we have a birth right or covenantal promise. This is why it caused such offense at the time of Jesus. It was countercultural to what they believed. It was a radical departure from their understanding within the Judaism of the day. Jesus brought clarity, they just didn't want to see it. It took the blessing from an apostate nation and bestowed it upon individuals both Jew and Gentile.

That's you and me folks. Salvation is personal so is our obedience to God.

God no longer requires men to be circumcised, that is of the old covenant. In the new covenant God wants circumcision of the heart. This is show by our obedient and glorifying act of identifying with Christ in the waters of Baptism.

So I come full circle to this:

Acts 2:38

Amplified Bible (AMP)

³⁸ And Peter answered them, Repent (change your views and purpose to accept the will of God in your inner selves instead of rejecting it) and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of *and* release from your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

You are called to obedience. You are called to life as a member of the body of Christ. You are called to life in Christ.

If you are baptized and still not living in obedience... repent and get on it! Stop ignoring the Holy Spirit's call on your life.

If you are not baptized and believe in Jesus, then I fall back to what a wise redneck once said...

Git R' Done!

Or if you prefer a more scriptural quote here...

If God is calling you to life and life more abundantly, how will you respond?

Prayer