



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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The Question Everyone Must Answer

Focus Verses: Acts 19:5-6 - ⁵When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Lesson Text: Acts 19:1-10

Truth About God: Submitting to Jesus' lordship brings spiritual renewal.

Truth For My Life: I will submit to the lordship of Jesus in every area of my life, including baptism.

Between the close of the Book of Malachi and the opening of the Book of Matthew, the Bible leaves us with a paper-thin page known as the four hundred years of silence. During those four centuries, the people of God heard nothing from the Lord. There was no word from Heaven until the word of the Lord came through John the Baptist, the Messiah's forerunner. John the Baptist's ministry pointed the people to Jesus and when his disciples heard about the baptism of the Holy Ghost, they were rebaptized in Jesus' name. **Baptism is a spiritual act that brings us into a covenant relationship with Jesus.**

When the apostle Paul arrived in Ephesus, he met a group of disciples who followed John the Baptist. Paul's first question to them cut to the crux of their walk with God. He asked, "*Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?*" (Acts 19:2). Upon hearing the question, the Ephesian believers indicated they not only had not received the Holy Ghost, but they did not even know what it was. Upon hearing their response, Paul was concerned they were not baptized into Christ. He asked them, "*Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism*" (Acts 19:3). Paul told them of another baptism—the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Paul knew the right question to ask, and he was able to discern the Ephesian disciples' spiritual state. **Often, asking the right questions and then listening to the response is more important than speaking.**

Once the Ephesian believers were baptized, Paul "*laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied*" (Acts 19:6). Those believers submitted to New Testament baptism, and God filled them with His Spirit. In John 12:40, Jesus quoted a passage from Isaiah describing a time when God caused spiritual blindness to come upon people. Not all will accept the word of the Lord. Ephesus experienced great revival, but not everyone believed (Acts 19:9). **We often want revival, but unless God sees the hearts of men and women sincerely turn toward Him, a harvest of souls is not a guarantee.**

Paul said, "*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*" (1 Corinthians 2:14). Our flesh (selfish human nature) interacts with the physical world; our spirit interacts with the spiritual world. In a person who is not filled with God's Spirit, the flesh and spirit are "on the same team." Both are dragging our souls toward darkness, which makes it impossible for us to find our way. However, when we believe and obey God's plan of salvation, we are able to discern and receive from the Spirit of God.

God has chosen to use people just like you and me to share the gospel with other people. In Acts 8, the Lord instructed Philip to share the gospel with an Ethiopian eunuch. In Acts 9, God sent Saul to hear the gospel from Ananias. In Acts 10, God united the Jewish preacher Peter with the Gentile centurion Cornelius. Here again, God sent a preacher to share the gospel with hungry people who wanted to know Him. **Our job is simply to be Spirit led.** It is noble to want to reach everyone; however, when we allow the Lord to guide our steps. He knows who is ready.

If you have already repented of your sins but you have not been baptized into Christ according to the Scriptures, that is your next step you must take. Many people seek God's direction for their lives. However, until we obey the direction He has already given us in His Word, we should not be surprised if we do not hear more.

Sometimes God asks things of us we do not understand. When those moments come, our job is to submit our will to His, regardless of our preconceptions. So much depends upon our responses. If we are callous to the hurt we see in people's eyes, they will not feel safe to trust us. Jesus reminded His followers in Matthew 10:16: "*Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*" This world is hungry for the peace and hope Christ offers. In our quest to minister to a hurting world, we must ensure we remain submitted to the hand of God as He leads us.