

## WHY BAPTISM?

I want to start out this morning with an informal survey ... When I name a athletic team I want you to respond by either yelling "Yea" if you are for them ... or yell "Boo" if you are against them.

- How many of you are Purdue University fans?
- How many of you are Indiana University fans?
- How many of you are Colts fans?
- How many of you are England Patriot fans?
- How many of you are Cub fans?
- How many of you are Yankee fans?

The whole purpose of exercise ... was not to start a riot! It was to show you how emotional we can get about issues ... some of which really do not matter!

There is not one of us here this morning that does not get emotional about some things. And the subject that I am going to preach about this morning is one of those issues! I am going to speak to you about Baptism. Some of you are already beginning to feel your blood pressure rise ... or you are beginning to squirm ... because of your emotional feelings about the issue.

Just because emotion rises when we talk about baptism does not mean that we should skirt the issue. We cannot ignore the sensitive. If it is in the Bible and we are a people of the Bible ... then we need to be willing to deal with it! And that is exactly what we are going to do this morning! So let's try to remove any emotional connection this morning and see what we can learn.

I want to look at baptism from three different approaches:

- What does the secular world say about baptism?
- What does the Bible say about baptism?
- What is baptism important to you and me?

### 1. WHAT DOES THE SECULAR WORLD SAY ABOUT BAPTISM?

The first thing that we need to understand is that the word baptism was never translated when it was introduced into the English language. It was what is called 'transliterated.' When we transliterate a word ... we simply take the letter in the language we are translating the word from and match it up with the closest letter in the language we are translating in to. The word "baptize" is a transliterated word.

Look at the slide we have up here:

The $\beta$ (beta) became our b
The $\alpha$ (alpha) became our a
The $\pi$ (pi) became our p
The $\tau$ (tau) became our t
The $\iota$ (iota) became our i
The $\zeta$ (zeta) became our z

So the word was never translated in our Scriptures but was simply transliterated into our alphabet. Had it been translated instead ... it would have saved a lot of confusion and commotion!

Liddell & Scott Greek Dictionary is a secular dictionary ... not a religious one ... so if we were to look up the word "baptize" in that dictionary ... we would get a secular definition ... right?

Liddle & Scott defines the word baptism—to dip, to dunk, to immerse.

- It was used of ships that sunk in battle—when you sink a ship you baptize that ship
- It was used for when a person drowned
- It was used in the process of dying cloth
- It is consistently used in immersing in a liquid

A **recipe** that was found dating back to Jesus' day for dilled pickles said ... "You take the vegetable and "baptize" it in vinegar."

My mom used to make pickles—she would take the cucumbers and place them in this big crock full of this solution—they would remain in that crock for about 14 days.

There are probably some here who think that some of us should have been held under the water for 14 days when we were baptized. Maybe we would have come out better.

I am convinced that some people who have been baptized were baptized in vinegar instead of water ... every time you see them they look sour and wrinkled.

The point is ... βαπτίζω ... was just a common, secular word ... when someone said that they were going to baptize something ... **everyone knew that they were going to dunk it into some kind of fluid or liquid.**

This becomes obvious when we look at **JOHN 3:23 ... Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were coming and being baptized.** Plenty of water is not necessary when you are simply sprinkling ... or pouring.

**Ironically ... It was not the secular world that changed the meaning of the world "baptism" ... it was the religious world!**

Edinburgh Encyclopedia records that **in 753AD** that Pope Steven II was asked if baptism by sprinkling on the head would be lawful ... and he said that it would be ... but only in cases of necessity or emergency ... if there was something that kept the candidate from being able to be immersed in water then sprinkling would be Okay.

**In 1311AD** ... the Council of Ravenna determined that sprinkling would be allowed as a substitution for immersion ... even in cases where it was not due to some emergency or necessity.

The Greek word or "**sprinkling**" is not βαπτίζω ... it is ραντίζω (Rantizo). So if someone is sprinkled ... they are not baptized ... they are rantized. The same is true with "**pouring**" ... the Greek word of pouring is Εκχέω (Ekcheo) ... **SO YOU ARE EITHER BAPTIZED ... OR YOU ARE RANTIZED OR EKCHIZED.** They are not the same!

Let me share with you what the leaders of most of the denominations and movements have said about baptism:

- John Calvin (Presbyterian) ... The word “baptize” signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the primitive church.
- Martin Luther (Lutheran) ... Baptism is a Greek word, and may be translated as immerse. I would have those who are to be baptized to be altogether dipped.
- John Wesley (Methodist) Buried with Him by baptism .. alluding to the ancient manner of baptism by immersion.
- Wall (Episcopalian) ... Immersion was in all probability the way in which our blessed Savior, and for certain, the way by which the ancient Christians received their baptism.
- Brenner (Catholic) ... For 1300 years was baptism an immersion of the person under water.
- MacKnight (Presbyterian) ... In baptism the baptized person is buried under the water. Christ submitted to be baptized; that is, to be buried under the water.
- Whitfield (Methodist) ... It is certain that the word of our text **ROMANS 6:4** alludes to the manner of baptizing by immersion.

Brenner was right ... the mode of baptism was not even an issue until 1300 years after Christ commanded it to be done. Baptism meant immersion ... whether it was in connection with the church ... or just everyday life!

I cannot imagine my mom making dilled pickles by setting the cucumbers on a table and then simply sprinkling some vinegar over them. It is not what the recipe calls for ... and it is not what Christ called for in His command! He called for immersion!

**2. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT BAPTISM?**

**a. The Church Saw Baptism as Being Necessary**

The first thing that I want you to be aware of is that every time someone becomes a Christian in the book of Acts (The history of the Church in the New Testament ... what we are trying to restore ... we want to be people of the Bible) ... every time there is a conversion that took place ... baptism was involved! Not one time is it not involved. Let me give you some examples:

- The Jews at Pentecost .... Baptized ... Acts 2:41
- The Samaritans ... Baptized ... Acts 8:12

- The Ethiopian ... Baptized ... Acts 8:38
- Cornelius ... Baptized ... Acts 10:48
- Lydia ... Baptized ... Acts 16:15
- Jailer at Philippi ... Baptized ... Acts 16:33
- The Corinthians ... Baptized ... Acts 18:8
- The Ephesians ... Baptized ... Acts 19:5
- Saul of Tarsus (Paul) ... Baptized ... Acts 22:16

There is not an exception in the New Testament! They were all baptized! And in each case ... if you take the time to read each of these passages ... you will see that they were old enough to understand what they were doing ... you have to be able to believe that Christ is God's Son ... to repent from your sins ... to confess Christ as Lord. That is why we call it believer's baptism ... it is not something someone else decides for you ... like in infant baptism ... it is a decision you make!

So ... once again ... if the Bible is the inspired word of God ... and we want to do what the Bible says ... then why would we want to do anything different than be baptized? ... **Because someone in our past ... or maybe even in our present ... has told us it is not necessary?** Are we going to listen to the Bible or to man?

### **b. Christ Saw Baptism as Being Necessary**

If all we had was the example of what took place in the New Testament Church ... that would be enough for us to do what they did. BUT ... we have something much more blatant! We have the example and the commands from Christ Himself concerning baptism!

If you look at **MATTHEW 3:13-15** ... you will see that Jesus was baptized and therefore was **an example** to us ... <sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. <sup>14</sup> But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" <sup>15</sup> Jesus replied, **"Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness."**

Now ... I understand that John's baptism is different from the New Testament baptism ... But it was the forerunner of baptism that was to come after Christ died and resurrected. He gave us the example that we are to be baptized because it is the right thing to do.

But He not only gave us an example ... **He commanded baptism as well.**

**MATTHEW 28:19 ...** <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, This is a direct command from Jesus Christ to his disciples. He sees baptism as part of the process of discipleship.

In **MARK 16:16 ...** Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. Again ... these are the words of Christ ... not some man who is giving you what he thinks is right ... it is the Word of God.

Not only did Jesus command his disciples to baptize ... **He actually baptized others as well!** Look at **JOHN 3:26 ...** They came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him.”

**b. Although Baptism is Necessary ... It is Not Baptism that Saves Us**  
**EPHESIANS 2:8-9 ...** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.

Baptism Regeneration is the belief that if you just get someone dunked in water ... they will be saved. LISTEN ... it is not the water that saves you ... it is the blood of Jesus Christ. Baptism is where you come into contact with that blood! I will explain that more a little later. The point is this ... We are not baptism regenerationists! We do not believe that there is something magical with the baptismal water ... what we do believe is that Christ and the Bible commands that we be baptized ... and when we do that ... We are showing our faith and obedience toward Christ ... and we are connected to Christ and His redeeming blood ... and we are initiated into His Body ... the Church.

Let me illustrate this a little better by a story we find in **JOHN 9 ...** Jesus has put some mud in the eyes of a blind man and then told him to go to the pool of Siloam and wash it out. **VERSE 6b ...** So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. Did the water give him his eyesight?

No ... the fact that he had faith and that he obeyed gave him the eyesight. But he would have not seen had he not washed in the pool of Siloam. It is the same way with baptism ... it is an expression of faith and obedience ... that connects us to Christ and salvation!

### 3. WHY IS BAPTISM IMPORTANT TO US?

#### a. It connects us to Christ

Look at **GALATIANS 3:27** ... for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. Christ envelopes us like our clothes do when we are baptized into Him.

**ROMANS 6:3-4** ... Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. We are immersed into the death of Christ ... so that we can also that we too can raise from the dead like Christ did. Baptism connects us to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

The whole epic of Christianity is the death, burial & resurrection of Christ ... and we are connected to that in baptism

#### b. It brings forgiveness from sin

In **ACTS 2:38** ... The first gospel message has just been preached ... the congregation is moved to respond to the message ... What should we do, Peter?" And Peter responds ... "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. When you come up out of the waters of baptism ... you come up a new person ... completely forgiven of all the sins that you have ever committed ... and not only those of the past ... you are connected to the Christ who forgives your sins of the future. Baptism enables forgiveness.

#### c. It enables the receiving of the gift of the Holy Spirit

The same verse that tells us that our sins our forgiven also tells us that we receive the Holy Spirit. When you are baptized into Christ ... the Holy Spirit comes and takes up dwelling within you! He then guides you ... he

gives you power over temptation ... He sensitizes your spirit to what God calls you to do! There are all kinds of things the Holy Spirit does through you and for you once He enters you! That happens ... according to the Bible ... at baptism. (We will talk about the Holy Spirit more in 2 weeks.)

**d. It places us in the Body of Christ (Church)**

The other thing that baptism does is place you in the Body of Christ ... the Church. Look at **I CORINTHIANS 12:13 ... For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body** Paul has been talking about the Church in this chapter and says the body has many members ... but it is just one body ... and in this verse, he tells us that we enter that Body by baptism! When you are baptized into Christ ... you are also baptized into His church!

Here at Tri a person becomes a member in one of two ways. They are either baptized by immersion ... or they transfer their membership from another congregation. But those who transfer their membership have had to be immersed. WE don't require anyone to be baptized again ... but we do require that they have been baptized. Is that unfair? No .. not at all ... it is simply Biblical. You enter Christ's Church through baptism.

Now ... Let me explain something here that is very sensitive! There are some of you that may be sitting there right now that are thinking ... “you mean that if I was sprinkled as a baby and have lived my life for Christ all my life that if I were to have died yesterday ...that I would have gone straight to Hell?”

First of all ... Let me say ... that is not my call ... God is the judge not me.

But let me tell you what I think the Bible indicates. Look at **ACTS 18:24-26 ... Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. <sup>25</sup> He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor <sup>t</sup> and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. <sup>26</sup> He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.**

Do ***I think*** that Apollos was a Christian before Priscilla and Aquila invited him over to their house and taught him more adequately? Yes ... I do. I don't have any proof of that ...but it certainly seems to indicate that! BUT ... I am convinced without a single doubt that the Scripture is clear that baptism by immersion connects us to Christ ... and it is certainly **the way of God more adequately!**

Now the reason I want to mention this here is because some of you may very well have **parents or friends** that were raised in a faith that they were taught that baptism was not necessary ... and they trusted their teacher or preacher to be telling them the truth ... they never knew **the way of God more adequately**. Therefore ... they were not immersed into Christ and you are afraid that if you are immersed that you will be condemning them to Hell.

**First** of all ... whether you are baptized or not has nothing to do with where they spend eternity. Their eternity is based on their decisions ... not yours.

**Second** ... Whether they were taught the truth or not is really not the issue here today ... the issue is that you have been taught the truth and you are responsible to respond to it! Ignorance is no longer an excuse for you! Your connection to Christ is through baptism ... it is your decision whether you are going to connect or not!

Doesn't it make sense that you should do whatever God tells you to do rather than come up with all kinds of excuses why you think you don't have to do it?

## **CONCLUSION:**

Let's say that you are watching the TV and a news bulletin comes on and says that there is a tornado headed straight for your community. They tell you to go to your basement if you have one and go to an inside wall and get under something heavy. What are you going to do?

- Well ... I don't think the news people really know what they are talking about ... so I think I will just go outside and watch it happen
- Well ... the neighbor down the street does not have a basement to go down to ... so I am not going to go to the basement either.
- Well ... My mom and dad's house was hit by a tornado once and they did not know it was coming ... so they were sitting at the kitchen table

and the roof was taken right off their house ... but they were Okay ...  
so I think I will just sit at my kitchen table.  
Would you do something like that ... or would you head for the basement?  
Let me tell you what I would do ... I would head for the basement ... go to  
an inside wall ... get under something heavy ... and if there is enough room  
**... I would let Vicki get under their too!**

When we know that there is a Hell at the end of this life ... and Jesus says  
“**he who believes and is baptized shall be saved**” ... Doesn't it make  
sense that you do it? Why take a chance? Why try to come up with all  
kinds of reasons why you don't think the Bible really means what it says?  
Why try to get away with as little as you can? Why try to be a test case  
when you stand before God? Just do what His word says!