

BUILDING FOR ETERNITY

3. Water Baptism – Dying to Self



INTRODUCTION

We have begun looking at the truths that will lay a strong foundation in our lives, and as we have learnt, each one is like a steel girder that needs to be pushed firmly into the rock. So far we have studied repentance and faith which are essential to enter the Kingdom of God. Now we will look at another truth that is closely linked to the first two – and that is water baptism.

In Hebrews 6:1-2 it mentions these three truths as foundations. 'Repentance ... faith ... and baptisms.' There are two baptisms we will speak about and the first is water baptism. This is when a person is immersed in water as a sign to others that he (or she) has repented of his sin and put his trust in Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

1. Why should we be baptised?

a. To follow the example of Jesus

- Matthew 3:13-17
- John the Baptist had been preaching on repentance.
 - Many came and repented of their sins and were baptised.
 - Jesus came and asked to be baptised too.
 - John hesitated as he knew Jesus was not like other men.
 - John knew Jesus did not need to repent and be baptised.
 - Jesus answered in v15, 'it is proper I fulfil all righteousness.'
 - Jesus wanted to do everything his Father required of him.
 - We need to follow his example.

b. To obey the command of Jesus

- Matthew 28:19
- There is great blessing in obedience.
 - When Jesus obeyed and was baptised the Father spoke from Heaven, "This is my beloved Son ... with whom I am well pleased."
 - Our Father is pleased when we obey and we can expect he will do something special in our lives when we are baptised.

Share: You may like to invite someone in the group who has already been baptised to share what their baptism meant to them. As the leader, you could share too.

2. How should we be baptised?

a. By immersion in water

- Matthew 3:16 - Jesus was in the water as it says he came up out of the water.
John 3:23 - We are told there was plenty of water.
Acts 8:38-39 - When the believers were baptised they went down into the water and came up.

The meaning of the word baptise in Greek is 'to dip' or 'to immerse'. If you wanted to dye a T-shirt, for example, the word that was used in Greek is 'baptise' or 'immerse'.

b. In the name of Jesus

Matthew 28:19 - 'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'

Acts 10:48 - 'Be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.'

We are not baptising a person into a church, but in the name of Jesus. Baptism signifies that a person has now become part of the Body of Christ.

3. Who should be baptised?

Those who have repented and believed! We see this clearly in the following verses:-

Acts 2:38 - 'Repent and be baptised.'

Those who believed Peter's message on the Day of Pentecost asked what they needed to do, and this is Peter's reply.

Mark 16:16 - 'Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved.'

The foundation of repentance and faith must be laid first. Baptism is a sign that these have already taken place.

(Below are some questions you could discuss in the group. If your group is too large, then divide into several groups and appoint leaders. Allow 10-15 minutes to go through the questions, then meet together again and share your answers, before completing the study.)

a.) *What do you think baptism means? Discuss.*

b.) *When we are baptised we are declaring that our old life is dead, and yet we still struggle with our old life. Why is that and how can we walk in victory?*

4. What does baptism mean?

When a person is born again, something happens inside of him or her. Baptism is an outward sign of what has happened. You are declaring to others and the spiritual powers that you have turned from your sin and are following Jesus.

a. It is a sign that your sin has been washed away

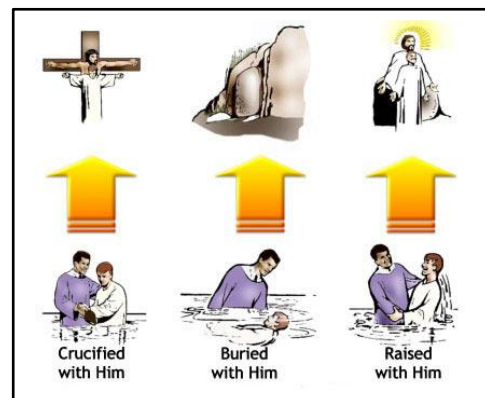
Acts 22:16 - 'Be baptised and wash your sins away.'

Just as water washes the dirt from the outside of your body, so water baptism is a sign you have been washed clean on the inside by the blood of Jesus.

b. It is a sign that you have died and risen with Christ

In Romans 6:3-10 it tells us that when Jesus died on the cross our sinful nature was crucified with him. Jesus took the penalty for our sin and broke the power of the sinful nature over our lives. Just as Jesus was buried, so our sin is now buried, and just as he rose from the dead, we too have risen to live a new life in him. Baptism demonstrates to others what has already taken place in our hearts.

You only need to be baptised one time, but we need to keep on living out these truths – we are to put to death the old self and live in the power of the new life.



5. How can we live out the meaning of water baptism?

Let's answer that question by looking at Romans 6:11-14. In these verses it tells us 4 important things we need to do to live this new life.

- a. V11 'Count yourselves dead to sin'
Firstly we need to believe that the old nature does not have power over us! Often people say, 'I have always had this problem. I can't change now.' We can't change ourselves but the Holy Spirit can if we yield ourselves to him.
- b. V12 'Do not let sin reign'
Don't allow little sins to creep back in so they start to take over your life. Deal with them immediately.
- c. V13 'Offer yourselves to God'
Offer to God that part of you that is causing you to fall. Is it your tongue? Your hand? Offer it to him and yield to the Holy Spirit. He alone can give you the power to change.
- d. V14 Remember the grace of God
As you humble yourself before God, admitting your weakness and asking for his help, he will provide the grace to do what is right.

Conclusion

Baptism is important! It is one of the foundational truths that needs to be laid in our life. If you have already repented and put your trust in Jesus to save you, but have not yet been baptised, do consider doing so. For those who have been baptised let's remember the significance of what we have done. Are we living out the truth and meaning of our water baptism?