

Baptism

Sunday, September 17, 2006

Tonight, I want to talk to you about the importance of being baptized in water and what it means. The Bible makes it very clear that when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, then you need to be baptized.

As you read through the New Testament, you discover that when someone was converted, he or she was immediately instructed to be baptized.

Let me give you a few examples...

Acts 8:12 (NKJV)

But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.

Acts 8:35-38 (NKJV)

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. [36] Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" [37] Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." [38] So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went **down into the water, and he baptized him.**

Philip didn't waste any time. As soon as someone professed his faith in Jesus, he baptized him.

In Acts, chapter 9, we find the story of the great Apostle Paul conversion. The Lord told him to go into the city of Damascus and find a man named Ananias who would tell him what to do.

So Paul went to the house of Ananias, and when Ananias spoke to him, he was healed of his blindness and then he was baptized. Listen to what it says...

Acts 10:44-48 (NKJV)

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. [45] And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. [46] For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, [47] "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" [48] **And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord...**

In Acts, chapter 16, verses 14-15 we read.....

Acts 16:14-15 (NKJV)

Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. [15] **And when she and her household were baptized**, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.

Let me give you one more example....

Acts 16:30-33 (NKJV)

And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" [31] So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." [32] Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. [33] And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. **And immediately he and all his family were baptized.**

It is very clear that when someone got saved in the New testament church, they also got baptized.

Jesus is our greatest example and the first thing He did when He began His public ministry was to be baptized.

Matthew 3:16-17 (NKJV)

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. [17] And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Baptism is very important. Everyone who receives Christ as Savior should be baptized as soon as possible.

Baptism is not for unbelievers, it is for believers. First, a person is to repent of his sins and then he is to be baptized.

Acts 2:38 (NKJV)

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Mark 16:15-16 (NKJV)

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. [16] He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

The order is clear....

First, you must repent of your sins and become a believer in Christ, then you must be baptized.

If you were baptized as an infant or before you truly repented of your sins and became a follower of Christ, then you need to be baptized again since you have truly received Christ as your personal Savior.

Baptism should be your first act of obedience in following and obeying the word of God. Jesus said...

John 14:15 (NKJV)

"If you love Me, keep My commandments.

When a believer is baptized, he identifies with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

Paul wrote these words:

Col. 2:11-12 (NKJV)

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, [12] **buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God...**

Romans 6:3-6 (NKJV)

Or do you not know that as many of us as **were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?** [4] Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. [5] For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, [6] knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

Baptism sets forth the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and our participation in it.

Our justification depends on the fact that when Christ died, He died in our place. He was our representative. He paid the debt that we owed.

Romans 6:23 (NKJV)

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We were all sinners. We were under a death sentence. But Jesus died in our place. Baptism signifies that we have accepted Christ as our substitute. We have accepted that when he died and was buried, He did it for us. By being buried with Christ in baptism we are saying that his death was on our behalf.

Baptism is also an acknowledgement of our own death in Christ. My burial with Christ means not only that He died for me, but that I died in Him. The old me is dead and buried with Christ. I am a new creation in Him. I have been given new life. I am no longer a slave to my old sinful nature.

2 Cor. 5:17 (NKJV)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Romans 6:11 (NKJV)

Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When you are baptized, understand and believe that when you go under the water, the old sinful person you used to be is being buried, and when you come out of the water, you are coming forth as a new creation in Christ.

How should you be Baptized?

Should you be immersed in water or sprinkled when you is baptized?

The answer is: **You should be totally immersed in water.**

The word “baptize” is a Greek word that never got translated into English in our Bibles. If it had there would be no controversy about it at all because “baptize” means “To dip or to immerse”. There is absolutely no question about that.

Baptism by total immersion more accurately symbolizes identifying with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ than does sprinkling.

Listen again to the account of Philip baptizing the Ethiopian:

Acts 8:38 (NKJV)

So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch **went down into the water**, and he baptized him.

It is obvious that he was baptized by total immersion.

The same is true when John baptized Jesus.....

Mark 1:10 (NKJV)

And immediately, **coming up from the water**, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove.

John 3:23 (NKJV)

Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, **because there was much water there**. And they came and were baptized.

He would not have needed “**much water**” if he only sprinkled those who were being baptized. It is apparent from scripture that baptism is to be done by total immersion.

Finally, let me talk about what should be said when someone is baptized.

Should we say: “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?” Or should we say: “I baptize you in the name of Jesus Christ?”

Jesus said.....

Matthew 28:19 (NKJV)

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Peter said...

Acts 2:38 (NKJV)

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ

Those verses seem to contradict each other but we know that there are no contradictions in God's word. If there seems to be a contradiction, the problem is with our understanding, not with the Bible.

Here at Elim Church, we baptize using the name of Jesus Christ. We do it because in every account of baptism in the New Testament it was done in the name of Jesus Christ.

Remember this, if there is a single verse that says something, and many verses that say something else, then we must base our doctrine on what the many verses say rather than what the single verse says.

In the New Testament there are three accounts where the name used in baptism is specifically given. Let me give them to you.....

Acts 8:16 (NKJV)

For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 10:48 (NLT)

So he gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Acts 19:5 (NKJV)

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

There are also six references to baptism in the New Testament. Let me give them to you....

Acts 2:38 (NKJV)

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ ...

Acts 22:16 (NKJV)

And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

1 Cor. 1:13 (NKJV)

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

1 Cor. 6:11 (NKJV)

And such were some of you. But you were washed (baptized) in the name of the Lord Jesus

Galatians 3:27 (NKJV)

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Col. 2:12 (NKJV)

buried with Him (Jesus Christ) in baptism....

There is not a single recorded instance in the Bible where anyone was baptized any other way but in the name of Jesus Christ.

If you will carefully read the book of Acts, you will find that the disciples of Christ did everything in His name.

Acts 4:12 (NKJV)

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Philip. 2:9 (NKJV)

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

Col. 3:17 (NKJV)

And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

It is quite evident that the weight of Scripture indicates that we should baptize in the name of Jesus Christ. That's why we do it that way here at Elim Church.

How can we harmonize Matthew 28:19 with the rest of Scripture?

Jesus said, "...baptizing them in the name (singular) of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Father, Son and Holy Spirit are titles, not names.

I am a father. I am a son. I have a spirit. But those are titles, not my name.

The name above all names is Jesus Christ.

So when you are baptized, be baptized in the wonderful name of **Jesus Christ** and you will be proclaiming to the whole world that you are His follower and that He is your Savior and Lord.