

Baptism - Following Jesus Publicly

"Jesus of Nazareth always comes asking disciples to follow him--not merely 'accept him,' not merely 'believe in him,'"not merely 'worship him,' but to follow him: one either follows Christ, or one does not. There is no compartmentalization of the faith, no realm, no sphere, no business, no politic in which the lordship of Christ will be excluded. We either make him Lord of all lords, or we deny him as Lord of any." ~ Lee Camp

As we journey together to follow Jesus with every part of our lives, we must continually look at God's heart & character as we follow Him. If I truly believe that He is loving & good, then I am convinced that the things He asks of me have purpose and my love for Him compels me to action!

In the Garden of Eden God asked man to not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, for there is a truth that man is not a good judge of what is good and what is evil. But God who is good knows what is good and what is not! This is the Bible says that the Lord's commands are loving & not burdensome, because they help us to overcome (1 John 5:2-4)!!

Some of the commands we see Jesus give us are things like trust Him; don't worry; heal the sick, cast out demons, cleanse lepers and raise the dead; fast; etc... things that are all apart of Him helping us/and those around us to overcome and allow us to be a part of seeing God's will done here on earth as it is in Heaven!

One final command Jesus gave to his disciples was to make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey everything He commanded (Matt 28:18-20). Then we see his disciples doing just this in the book of Acts. Peter said to the crowd of thousands (Acts 2:38) "Repent & be baptised for the remission of your sins!"

The purpose of this study is to encourage you to follow Jesus' command & be baptized! If you have not gone through the study on "The Power of Repentance," that would be good to go through as Peter exclaimed, "Repent & be baptized!" Both are important!!

In regards to baptisms, I also realize some may not actually know why baptism is important or how it is done, and so this brief study will help you to understand Jesus' command and the significance it brings to our lives! If you have already been baptized, allow this study to help you grow in learning how to share this important command with others around you who are new in their walk with God as we are commanded to "teach others to obey everything!"

The What and Why's of Baptism

The word *baptism* in Greek (the original language the bible is written in) is "Baptismo". Which means "to immerse". Take a second to discuss what the word "immerse" means and what sentences you would use this word in. Baptism is such a cool part of

proclaiming your faith! When we use the word immerse we think of covering up, cooking, being consumed or swimming. This is what baptism is. When someone decides to follow and obey Jesus in every area of their life, scripturally then as a public symbol of their commitment to Jesus they will get baptized. This is where a Christian gets into a pool of water (a symbol of life and purity) and inside the pool they are dipped into the water, the whole body is submerged into the water for a few seconds.

Why?

First, Jesus did it. Read Matthew 3:13-17. We see here that Jesus was baptized by John and scripture says the Father, "loved his son and was pleased" with his decision to obey and follow his dad. This is important because it means Jesus who was man, even though sinless, entered into a world of sin. He too had to declare that he was going to obey the Father in a fallen world. If Jesus did it, he is now my inspiration, there is no greater joy than to do what he did! What a beautiful way to celebrate!

Second, it is a public declaration that we will follow and obey Jesus. Often people will invite family and friends to join the ceremony. I love this because it is also an accountability and commitment to Jesus and the body of Christ. And as non-believers look on it declares you are serious about your new walk. Remember becoming a Christian and getting baptized doesn't mean that we will do everything perfect or have everything perfect in our lives. Being a Christian and getting baptized means we have died to sin and darkness and we have died to getting our own way and it means that when things get tough or we make a mistake we look to Jesus to help and forgive (not to ourselves).

Third, when we are baptized and immersed in water it is a symbol of death. Read Romans 6:1-7. WOW! We are buried with Christ, like Christ was buried in the tomb, and we rise again with him just as he rose from the grave. Think about it! What does it mean to you that you can die to your previous life of foolishness, wandering, selfishness and darkness? How is it for you that you can be set free from sin and live a new life? We too must die and be resurrected in Christ, like our hero did. When we get into a pool of water and are submerged with water, this represents that we have gone into the tomb as Christ did. We must die to the past and to the future. We now must live in Christ so as we are brought back up out of the water we are resurrected from our death into a new life of power with Jesus Christ. Come to life in Christ! Be resurrected!

Today

It is your chance to make a decision to follow and obey Jesus. Have you made this decision? What questions do you have about walking a life as a Christian? Today is your day! We won't be perfect but he who is perfect will live in us! Want to pray and ask Jesus to be your Savior today? Want to be baptized at the RECIM pool, in a river or at a church?

Have you already made a decision but never personally made a choice to be baptized (this is different than your parents dedicating you as a child)? What is holding you back from doing what Jesus did and commanded us to do? Discuss these questions and then ask God to help you do what he did. Let's set up a day where we can celebrate your decision!

Have you already been baptized? Are you living like the old has gone and the new has come? Have you said "goodbye" to your past ways to walk in new ways with Christ? Do you know you have been forgiven and that there can be no regrets in Christ because he has set you free of the things you want to hold against yourself? What choices do you need to express in prayer today about your freedom in Christ and what steps do you need to take to move forward?

"You have been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God who raised from the dead".

Homework: Read Colossians 2:1-15