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What Does My Baptism Say About Me? Acts 4:32-37

Who here has been baptized?

Why did you get baptized? What did you believe was happening when you were baptized?

What changed in you or for you after you were baptized?

2 Views on what baptism accomplishes:

Sacrament (catholic) - God's grace (salvation) is given (conveyed) at that moment, but it also necessitates works

Ordinance (protestant) - represents grace given by faith alone

4 Views on what baptism says:

Paedo-baptists (Presbyterians, Lutherans, most Reformed churches) believe baptism is entry into the New Covenant Family of God, the Church, using the following as rationale:

- a) infants were circumcised in the Old Covenant,
- b) Baptism is parallel to circumcision, entrance into the New Covenant
- c) evidenced in household baptisms in Acts, etc.
- d) that infant baptism has to be "confirmed" at some point later in life

Credo-baptists believe that baptism cannot happen without faith:

Restorationists (Church of Christ) believe we are saved at the moment of baptism, meaning: you're not saved until you have been baptized

John 3:5 *Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*

Other credo-baptists (Assembly of God, some Foursquare churches, Pentecostal churches) believe water baptism is followed up with a later baptism of the Holy Spirit. You have to have two separate baptisms. They also would use John 3:5 as evidence for their position on baptism.

Other credo-baptists (Baptists, Methodists, most other Protestants, including us) believe that baptism is a sign of what God has already done in the life of the believer

Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Baptism is a picture of going down into the grave and being buried. Coming out of the water is then a picture of being raised with Christ to walk in newness of life. Baptism very clearly pictures death to one's old way of life and rising to a new kind of life in Christ. What does that mean?

We now have a New Identity, leading to new motivations

Romans 6:3-4 *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

We are now a part of a New Family, leading to new priorities

1 Cor. 12:13 *for in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit*

We are now living a New Life, leading to very different perspective

Colossians 2:12 *having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.*

What is “faith?”

Faith always has three elements - an assessment, an object and an expectation

Assessment - looks around and assesses that something or someone could be better than it is; that somehow that person or thing is broken

Object - the thing we bank our hope on. You ask the object of your hope to fix what is broken or to deliver what is desired or needed

Expectation - what you expect the object of your hope will deliver

Everyone in the world will put their faith in someone or something, but we can only direct our faith in one of two directions:

Horizontally, we search for hope in the situations, experiences, physical possessions, locations and relationships of everyday life

But, all of these things suffer from some degree of brokenness

They are a part of the problem, therefore unable to fix the problem

Vertically, hope in God

God is perfect, He is not broken, He is beyond the brokenness

What God does, and what He gives is not broken

Our faith in the Person and Work of Jesus results in the vertical now empowering our endurance to live in the horizontal:

Vertical (**2 Timothy 2:1**) *you then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus*

Horizontal (**2 Timothy 2:3**) *Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus*

Our baptism, therefore, is a public statement we make of the following:

Baptism is a symbol of what has already begun - new life in Christ

Baptism symbolizes Christ’s death and resurrection...and it also symbolizes the application of redemption to us, as a result of our response of faith.

Baptism symbolizes new birth and entrance into the Church.

And...baptism is an obedient response to God's will,

And...it's a public profession of one's faith.

Baptism should strengthen and encourage our faith.

So there's the statement baptism makes, but what of the results?

Romans 6:1-11 *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For it we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

Sin is not limited to just doing bad things, saying bad things, thinking bad things, and hanging out with people who encourage us to do, say and think bad things.

Is my life, is your life any different?

Can we each say that we are walking in "newness of life?"

Are we living out what we said our baptism was saying about us?

Have we each put to death our horizontal idols?

Are we willing to allow God to kill our sin? Are we no longer controlled by sin?

Can we really say we want to radically reorient our lives around the gospel of Jesus?

Being "dead to sin" also means being "alive to God in Christ Jesus"

What does being dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus look like?

Acts 4:32 *Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common.*

- Radically reorienting their lives for the gospel people and the gospel mission

Acts 4:33 *And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.*

- Sharing with power their testimony of the resurrection of Jesus

Acts 4:34 *There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold*

- Giving sacrificially, not protecting their horizontal futures

Acts 4:35 *...and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.*

- Trusting the church leadership with their gifts

Acts 4:36-37 *Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.*

Levites, those from the tribe of Levi were not given any of the Promised Land. God told them He, God, was their portion

Ps. 73:26 *My flesh and my heart may fail, God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever*

If we believe that God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever, our lives will be lived in dramatically different fashion.

Baptism says God is our strength, He now controls our hearts

He is our portion

He is all we have

He is all we want

We want nothing else but to be in relationship with Him.

We will gladly suffer as a good soldier, because we care more about His glory than we do about our comfort and security

We looked at this already:

Romans 6:3-4 *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

Who wants to get baptized?