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## Getting A Handle On Baptism

**Intro:** Today, I want to teach you about Baptism. Why do we practice such a thing? Why would we get a tank filled with water and publicly dunk people in it...and then get all excited about it. (We cheer / clap / etc...) What's up with that?

- Baptism is a physical symbol that illustrates spiritual realities.

### I. What Is Baptism?

#### A. Baptism is a symbol of being identified with Christ

*I Cor. 12:13 "Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into Christ's body by one Spirit, and we have all received the same Spirit." (NLT)*

1. Baptism illustrates that we are all unified together in the same spiritual Family with the same spiritual parent. There are no longer any distinctions (Jews / Gentiles / rich / poor /etc..) We are all made one in Christ.
2. Our identification is not who we are in this life (titles / ethnic group / social standing) BUT, in the fact that we all now belong to Christ. Our identity is in Him.
3. When a person accepts Christ, they are spiritually placed into the body of Christ with all other believers around the world and all other believers for the past 2000 years.
4. Baptism symbolizes this. Baptism shows who you are identifying with.

#### B. Baptism is a symbol of Jesus death, burial, and resurrection

1. When we immerse someone under the water, this symbolizes Jesus' death and burial. When we bring them out of the water, this symbolizes Jesus' resurrection.
2. Baptism is a wonderful symbol of the Gospel! The price paid! Propitiation!

#### C. Baptism is a symbol of my death to my old life

*Rom. 6:3 "...For we died and were buried with Him by baptism."*

(What died? My old self / my old life.)

*Rom. 6:6 "Our old sinful selves were crucified with Him..." (NLT)*

1. Baptism symbolizes the spiritual truth that the power of my old life was done away with. It no longer has authority over my life and decisions.
2. When I gave my life to Christ, a death took place...a death to my old self. This doesn't mean we quit sinning. But it does mean that the power of the old self has been done away with.

D. Baptism is a symbol of my new life in Christ

*Rom. 6:4 "And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives." (NLT)*

1. God didn't just get rid of the old, He placed something new inside us. He gave us a brand new life. The old power over our lives was broken and a new power was placed in us. Jesus is in us. We are possessed people!
2. Baptism illustrates that fact that just as Jesus was raised to new life and power, so we too have a new life with power when we put our faith in Christ.

E. Baptism is a symbol of my existing relationship with Christ

*Acts 8:12 "But now the people believed Philip's message of Good News...As a result, many men and women were baptized." (NLT)*

1. When people received Christ, then they got baptized. Physical baptism shows what has already taken place spiritually. This is why baptism always happens after a person gives their life to Christ.
2. Baptism does NOT make a person a Christian. Baptism demonstrates a person already is. This is why we don't baptize babies / infants / etc..
3. Baptism shows that there is already an existing relationship with Jesus.

## II. Why Get Baptized?

A. We should be baptized because Jesus told us to

*Matt. 28:19 "Therefore go, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit." (NLT)*

1. Being baptized is a direct command by Jesus. It is part of being a disciple of Jesus. Jesus said that it is important to publicly identify oneself with Him.
2. Baptism is just not an optional activity for the really committed. It is the normal and necessary step for all believers.

B. We should be baptized to proclaim Him publicly

*Matt 10:32 "If anyone acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will openly acknowledge that person before My Father in Heaven." (NLT)*

1. Baptism is one of the primary ways we can acknowledge Jesus here on earth

before others. This is what these people are doing here today.

2. Some people wonder why we have to do this publicly / in front of others. Jesus tells us that we are to confess Him before others. If a person is not willing to get baptized publicly in front of believers / there sure not going to stand up for Him out in the world.

C. We should be baptized to demonstrate we are unashamed

*Luke 9:26 “If a person is ashamed of Me and My message, I the Son of man will be ashamed of that person when I return in My glory...” (NLT)*

1. Public baptism allows a person the opportunity to be unashamed to identify themselves as a follower of Jesus Christ. We live in a culture that wants us to be quiet about our faith...to keep it to ourselves...as if we're supposed to be ashamed.
2. Baptism is the coming out of the closet experience! Unashamed!!!

D. We should be baptized to unleash more spiritual growth

*Heb. 3:13 “You must warn each other every day...so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God.” (NLT)*

1. When we keep telling God NO, our hearts get hard. Resisting God creates a calloused heart. Every time we tell Him No another layer goes down. When we tell God YES, it just unleashes more faith and obedience in our lives.
2. Baptism is telling God yes. Baptism is being obedient. When we follow God in whatever He asks us to do, it just creates even more obedience in our lives. It unleashes more fervency to serve Him.
3. These people today are telling God yes and taking steps forward in their spiritual growth. They are unleashing even more obedience.

### III. Why Immerse People?

A. Immersion is the best symbol of these spiritual realities

1. It is the best picture of Christ's death / burial / resurrection
2. It is the best picture of our spiritual death / and resurrection to a new life.

B. The Word “Baptize” implies immersion

1. The Greek word “Baptizo” means to dip in or under. Used to describe placing cloth in a dye (explain)
2. Today, these people are showing that they have been immersed into Christ; they have begun the process of taking on His characteristics / they are starting to look and act more like Jesus.

As we celebrate with these folks today for their obedience, maybe it's time for you to consider the next step in growing your faith. Maybe it's time for you to be the next one in the water at our next baptism. Maybe it's time to unleash your faith?