

Spiritual Disciplines Within The Church

Chapter 2: Why Seek Baptism in the Church?

Introduction:

If you asked many Christians to openly identify themselves with the Son of God in an unusual way which He Himself specified, they will think it strange. Some feel self-conscious about such public displays of devotion. This is the response of many to the idea of Christian baptism. How important is baptism?

I. Baptism openly identifies you as a follower of Christ.

- A. The first thing Jesus said about those who become His disciples is that He wants them to be baptized. (*John 4:1*)
- B. Baptism should be the first public expression of faith by those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. (*Matt. 28:19, Acts 16:30-33*)

II. Baptism openly obeys the command of Christ.

- A. Baptism is a practice ordained by Jesus Christ Himself.
- B. For a disciple of Christ to know His will about baptism and then willingly refuse it is to intentionally disobey Christ and sin against God.

III. Baptism openly expresses your faith in many truths.

- A. Baptism is symbolic.
- B. To submit to baptism says that you believe what baptism represents.

IV. What are these truths?

- A. God is Triune.
 1. You are saying through baptism that you believe there is only one God who is three persons. (*Matt. 28:19*)
 2. Christian baptism was designed by Jesus to acknowledge the role of each person in the triune Godhead in your salvation. (*John 16:8*)
- B. Your sins have been washed away.
 1. Water baptism doesn't wash away sins: rather, it "symbolizes" cleansing. (*Acts 22:16*)
 2. The baptismal water which washes the body pictures the cleansing of the soul.
 3. "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized."
- C. You have been united with Christ in His death and Resurrection.
 1. Believer's identification with Christ.
 2. Baptism is done in the spiritual realm. (*Rom. 6:3-5; I Cor. 12:13*)
- D. Through Christ God has given you new life.
 1. You emerge from the baptismal experience a living testimony. (*II Cor. 5:17*)
 2. "We should also walk in newness of life." (*Rom. 6:4*)
 3. "I am the resurrection and the life." (*John 11:25*)

"This is not merely turning over a new leaf, but being given a new life. Baptism is both a testimony to this new life within and a pledge to 'walk in newness of life'."