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"Baptism & Communion"

Review - Series "ONE" What we believe

Ephesians 4:1-6 (NIV) As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

What is Paul talking about when he states ONE BAPTISM in Ephesians 4:5?

Baptism leads to our ONEness because we all are called to take the same step of obedience.

- What is normative when it comes to baptism in the Bible?

Acts 8:36-39 (NIV) As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" 37-38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

- Philip not only shared the command to be baptized but also the mode of baptism - immersion.

Acts 16:25-34 - Paul and Silas in prison

- The Jailer's response, "What must I do to be saved?" Place one's faith in Christ.
- Paul and Silas shared the good news - *the gospel preceded baptism then and is still the normative today.*

Acts 2:36-38 (NIV) "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." 37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

- Notice when the people heard the truth, they repented and were baptized. - *normative*
- Obedience is central to baptism. It's not about comfort, fear or convenience.
- Our reason for being baptized starts with what Jesus commanded in the Great Commission.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV) Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- Clearly from scripture, baptism is a command.

In each of these stories, baptism is not a marker of how much you know, but an understanding of the gospel, repentance and choosing to place one's faith in Christ. It's not:

- "I need to *conquer a sin* and then I'll be baptized."
- "I need to *learn more*, and then I'll be baptized."
- "Someday I'll be baptized."

Baptism leads to our ONENess because of what it means.

Romans 6:4-7 (NIV) We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— 7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

- Baptism has great spiritual significance. We are identifying with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus when we are baptized. Through baptism, we acknowledge Jesus' death for our sin and Jesus' resurrection for our new life.
- There is a response to salvation that demands a public declaration of faith in Christ through baptism.
- It's a picture of new birth - an obedient starting point for new life in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 (NIV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

- Through baptism, we now see each other differently as new creations in Christ Jesus.

Our ONENess is strengthened by our call to baptize.

- Matthew 28 - Jesus commands us to make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching new believers to obey everything Jesus commands us to do.

What do we do when someone comes with another message concerning baptism?

- Acts 18: When Apollos' understanding of baptism was incomplete, Priscilla and Aquila filled in the gap.

What do we do when we see gaps in understanding?

- Fill them in with the historical and original teaching from Christ and the Apostles.
- Remember when someone doesn't know, God is a God of grace. Be a grace giver.

For Small Group Discussion:

Main Scriptures: Ephesians 4:1-6, Romans 6:4-7, Acts 2:36-38, Acts 8:36-39, Acts 16:25-34.

- Why is baptism so important to our faith?
- Why is identifying with Jesus' death, burial and resurrection in baptism so important?
- What were or are your fears about baptism? How did this message and discussion help you?
- In Acts 18:18-28, who is your Apollos and how will you help them understand God's heart for baptism?

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