

## Sermon Notes on Churched: We are Baptized (Acts 2:37-41 and other references)

- We are learning that it matters how we think, belief and act in the Lord's church. One area of faith practice is baptism, one of two ordinances (other is the Lord's Supper) the Lord has given His church to practice.
  - Throughout the history of Christianity, both ordinances have been embroiled in controversy at various times and in different ways
  - **The questions** that tend to swirl around the practice of baptism are:
    - Is baptism a "*means of grace*" by which a person is forgiven and saved?
    - Are infants' or preschool children valid candidates for baptism?
    - Does the mode of baptism matter?
  - Due to the various ways churches choose to teach and practice baptism, the church has come to be represented by two distinct groups:
    - **Baptized unbelievers** (those sprinkled as infants, but never had a personal faith in Christ)
    - **Unbaptized believers** (those sprinkled as infants, yet later became followers of Christ including those who came to Christ as adolescents or adults and think they were biblically baptized before they were saved)
  - Some observations from Acts 2:37-41
    - This is the first day (Day of Pentecost) of the first church
    - Baptism is commanded in response to the first gospel message (v. 37-38)
    - The promise of salvation is promised to "*you and your children...as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself*" (v. 39).
    - 3,000 people were saved and 3,000 people were baptized (v. 41)
1. **There's a clear mandate for baptism** (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38; 10:47-48; 22:16)
- The idea of an unbaptized believer is completely foreign to the NT church (Acts 8:12-13, 16, 36-38; 9:18; 10:44; 16:15, 30-34; 18:8; 19:1-5)
  - Why the **confusion**? Satan loves to confuse believers about a key aspect of our faith (our union with Christ). If you neglect the first step of obedience, it will become easier to be less vigilant about your ongoing life of compliance to the Lord.

- **Why the non-compliance?** John MacArthur offers five possible reasons: 1-ignorance (never taught or mistaught); 2-indifference (not a priority or big deal); 3-pride (too embarrassed or too humbling); 4-defiance (flat-out refusal); 5-unbelief (not a true believer)

## 2. **There's a clear meaning for baptism** (selected Scriptures)

- The two verbs (baptizo; baptisma) and one noun (baptismos) all mean to immerse, dip completely, drown; submerge; to dye a cloth
- Baptism is a visual aid that illustrates a rich meaning:
  - a. Baptism illustrates our unique connection with the Lord's death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12). We are buried with Christ and raised to walk in newness of life
  - b. Baptism illustrates our unique clothing with Christ (Gal. 3:26-27): Baptism symbolizes putting on Christ like clothing.
  - c. Baptism illustrates our unique cleansing from sin (Acts 2:38; 22:16): Baptism doesn't save like any other work (Eph. 2:8-9)
  - d. Baptism illustrates our unique covenant pledge to God (1 Pet. 3:21): Water didn't save Noah, but water was a tool of judgment. Baptism is not a physical act for the removal of dirt, but "an appeal to God for a good conscience" by a public affirmation.

## 3. **There's a clear mode for baptism** (selected Scriptures)

**Distinct definition of baptism necessitates immersion:** The word "baptism" always means to immerse and the verbs are never used in the passive form ("the water baptized on someone" like sprinkling or pouring do)

**Unmistakable symbolism of baptism necessitates immersion:** Every symbol God uses for baptism is best depicted by immersion and any other mode of baptism confuses the significance of the symbol. The New Covenant practice of baptism is never represented as a replacement for the Old Covenant sign of circumcision.

**Notable sequence of baptism necessitates immersion:** The order of the Great Commission is go, baptize and teach, not baptize, then go and teach. Candidates for baptism are those who can hear and understand the gospel, repent of their sins,

believe in Christ and confess Him openly. Infants or preschoolers are unable to do this.

**Known absence of infant baptism necessitates immersion:** Infant baptism is just not found anywhere in Scripture. The belief that “household” baptisms in the New Testament must have include infants falls short as it is an inference and the references and context reference those who are able to hear, believe, and repent of their own accord (Acts 10:44-48; 11:14; 16:14-15, 31-32; 18:8; 1 Cor 1:16)