

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Requirement for Church Membership: One must be baptized.

Lesson for Sunday, November 17, 2024

INTRODUCTION: *Don't forget to start on page three with the story from Baptist history!*

- ⇒ Start this lesson by sharing when you were baptized. Tell about what you remember and why it is important to you.
- ⇒ This lesson covers the second requirement for church membership in Baptist churches. The first is that one must be born again, and the second is that once saved they must be baptized.
- ⇒ We refer to baptism as an “ordinance” or order/command. Jesus exemplified baptism (Matthew 3) and commanded baptism (Matthew 28) during His earthly ministry.
- ⇒ Baptism is a rich illustration of the saving work of Christ and the new spiritual relationship between Him and His people.

### BIBLE STUDY:

1. The Pictures of Baptism
  - a. It is a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:3-5).
    - i. Baptism is the clearest picture of the Gospel. In our church, the candidate stands under the cross.
    - ii. They are then buried in the water as Christ was buried in the tomb.
    - iii. Then they are resurrected to a new life in Christ, just as Jesus was resurrected from the dead.
    - iv. Baptism is the Gospel!
  - b. It is a picture of obedience (Acts 2:38).
    - i. The message of Scripture is clear: Repent and be baptized!
    - ii. Obedience is a true test of one's conversion experience.
    - iii. Although it can be frightening for someone to be baptized, the willingness to obey is evidence that they are sincere in their decision to follow Christ. Remember John 14:15.
  - c. It is a picture of identification with Christ and His Church (Matthew 3:13-15).
    - i. True believers belong to Christ. They identify with Him, stand with Him, represent Him, love Him, live for Him and they are faithful to Him.
    - ii. In being baptized, we follow the Lord's example, doing exactly what He did. Baptism is a wonderful expression of our unity with Christ and with all His interests.
    - iii. At the same time, it is our way of identifying with the rest of God's people who have made the same decision.
2. The Mode of Baptism
  - a. It is by immersion.
    - i. The word *baptize* is transliterated from the Greek *baptizo*, which means to push under the water, or to immerse.
    - ii. A large quantity of water seems to have been important to John because he was baptizing in a chosen location because there was plenty of water there (John 3:23). Only immersion requires a lot of water.
    - iii. When Philip baptized the Ethiopian, they both went down into the water, and both came out of the water (Acts 8:38-39).
  - b. It is for the saved, not infants.
    - i. Many churches baptize infants; Baptists do not.

- ii. The reason Baptists do not is that the only baptism described in the NT is believer's baptism. This means that the one being baptized has come to the personal decision to trust Christ for salvation.
  - iii. This is made clear in the wording of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20. We are to "go" and "teach" all nations, then baptize them.
  - iv. The word "teach" is literally "make disciples." The first step in becoming a disciple is to become a believer in Jesus Christ.
  - v. You can't make a disciple of someone who is incapable of understanding what a disciple is (like a baby).
3. The Importance of Baptism: What makes baptism so important?
- a. It inspires the church.
    - i. When one is baptized, it gives a clear declaration to that local church and to the world around that this new believer is ready to obey and serve the Lord.
    - ii. The individual is identifying publicly with the Lord and His church.
  - b. It helps believers to solidify and express their own testimony.
    - i. There is a benefit for the one baptized in that it impresses their conversion upon their minds so that their assurance is strengthened.
    - ii. It also reminds the person that while their salvation is a personal decision, it is to be lived publicly within the church and before the world.
  - c. It presents a powerful message to unbelievers.
    - i. Baptism can have a powerful impact on the lost world.
    - ii. We don't see this as often in the USA, but in other parts of the world, baptism is a major statement to a lost and watching world.
    - iii. For many, baptism is a step of separation away from the world and often family and past tradition and into a new relationship with Jesus.

#### APPLICATION:

- ⇒ Remember that salvation and baptism are two separate things, but we can't ignore that they are closely related. In the NT, an inseparable link between the two exists. When there is a conversion, baptism soon follows (Acts 8:36-38).
- ⇒ In addition, Jesus never gives us an arbitrary command.
- ⇒ Think of baptism as a wedding ring. The ring represents the marriage status of the one who wears it. The ring doesn't make the person married; it is merely a symbol.
- ⇒ To continue the picture, the ring does not reveal what kind of husband or wife the person may be. In like manner, baptism does not make a person a Christian.
- ⇒ Ask your class: Have you been Scripturally baptized? The right way and in the right order? If they have questions, offer to talk with them this week.

## Baptist Persecution for Baptism

Baptists faced significant persecution in the 16th and 17th centuries for their practice of believer's baptism by immersion. One notable story comes from 16th century Switzerland.

In 1525, a group of Anabaptists led by Conrad Grebel began practicing believer's baptism by immersion in Zurich. This put them at odds with the Protestant reformer Ulrich Zwingli and the Zurich city council, who viewed the practice as heretical.

On January 21, 1525, Grebel and a small group gathered for prayer. At this meeting, George Blaurock asked Grebel to baptize him upon his profession of faith. Grebel did so, and Blaurock then baptized the others present.

The Zurich authorities, under Zwingli's influence, were outraged by this act. In March 1526, they issued an edict ordering that all Anabaptists who continued to practice believer's baptism were to be drowned. This cruel punishment was a mockery of the Anabaptists' practice of immersion baptism.

Felix Manz, one of the early leaders alongside Grebel, became the first martyr under this edict. On January 5, 1527, Manz was taken by boat onto the Limmat River. His hands were bound, and he was thrown into the icy waters to drown.

Despite this severe persecution, the Anabaptists continued to practice believer's baptism by immersion, viewing it as *a biblical mandate worth dying for*. Their courage in the face of such opposition reminds us today of the importance of believer's baptism by the prescribed biblical method. It is also convicting to think that some would refuse to be baptized in days like ours where there is such little persecution for doing so.