

Series: A Healthy Church

"Why Baptism Matters"

Matthew 3:13 - 17

Big Idea: All believers in Christ should follow the Lord's example in baptism.

Matthew 3:13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

14 And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

15 But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

16 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Why was Jesus baptized?

When Jesus chose to be baptized, He was doing 3 very important things.

1. He Was Identifying with Us.

Jesus was never guilty of sin, which is how we know baptism does not produce salvation. He submitted to baptism as a means of recognizing the fact that He was fully human. Jesus didn't come to earth to be above us, but to be "God with us." So when Jesus approached John and allowed Himself to be baptized, He identified with the average person who sought the direction and will of God. That made Him different than the religious leaders who saw themselves as "over" the common people, and who believed that they were the sole authority on what the will of God was.

2. He Was Being an Example to Us.

Not only do Christians believe that God entered into a human body and lived as a man, but we also believe that He lived His life as an example for us. Jesus' did not just give orders, "Go and do this or that."

Instead He told people, "Follow me." Jesus came to earth to model the way we should live our life. One aspect of His model was that He was baptized. I think that's what Jesus meant when he explained to John "it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness."

The Bible clearly teaches that we are saved by grace through faith

in Jesus Christ. If somebody trusts water baptism for their salvation then they have done nothing more than gone for a swim.

Salvation is the work of God. Jesus did the work for our salvation by going to a cross and dying in our place. It's His blood that covers our sin and makes us clean, not baptismal waters.

3. He was beginning His earthly ministry as Messiah.

Before this point in Jesus' life, he was a construction worker, a craftsman, a carpenter. But this marked a change in direction. From this point on Jesus, in a very intentional manner, began to live out His role as Messiah. In O.T. times a prophet, priest and king was anointed with oil. Jesus was here anointed - symbolized by the Holy Spirit coming down upon Him like a dove.

Why should all believers be baptized?

1. To follow Jesus Christ's example

2. To obey one of His final commands

Matthew 28:19 So go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

20 Teach them to obey everything that I have taught you, and I will be with you always, even until the end of this age."

3. To identify with Jesus publicly in his death, burial and resurrection

Romans 6:4 When we were baptized, we were buried with Christ and shared his death. So, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the wonderful power of the Father, we also can live a new life.

5 Christ died, and we have been joined with him by dying too. So we will also be joined with him by rising from the dead as he did.

This passage is the only place in the entire Bible that explains how a person can be identified with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ at baptism. When someone accepts Jesus as their Lord and Savior this means that the life they live is not their own any more, it belongs to Christ. The Bible uses the language "Dying to self."

So what do you do with a dead person? You bury them. The waters of baptism symbolize that truth. A person dies to themselves, they are buried, but we don't leave them under the water till they bubble. They are resurrected from their watery grave to live a new life. Baptism symbolizes that they are a new person in Christ, old things are passed away and all things are become new.