

Genesis 8:13 NLT - 13 Noah was now 601 years old. On the first day of the new year, ten and a half months after the flood began, the floodwaters had almost dried up from the earth. Noah lifted back the covering of the boat and saw that the surface of the ground was drying.

Acts 7:36 NLT - 36 And by means of many wonders and miraculous signs, he led them out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and through the wilderness for forty years.

Jonah 2:5-6 NLT - 5 "I sank beneath the waves, and the waters closed over me. Seaweed wrapped itself around my head. 6 I sank down to the very roots of the mountains. I was imprisoned in the earth, whose gates lock shut forever. But you, O LORD my God, snatched me from the jaws of death!

The Reason We are Baptized

Acts 2:21 NLT - 21 But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.'

Romans 10:9 NLT - 9 If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Being baptized does not save you. Based on the verses above, what must we do to be saved? So why be baptized?

Matthew 28:18-19 NLT - 18 Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Baptism is part of Jesus' great commission in Matthew 28. Jesus himself commanded us to make disciples, and to baptize those who would follow Him; not because baptism saves them, but as a witness of their decision to become Jesus's disciple.

It is good to remember our baptism. When you were baptized, what were your thoughts and feelings? What was the reaction of family and friends?

"Baptism" *Deeply Rooted week #7*

INTRODUCTION

This week at New Life we celebrated with several who were being baptized. They were telling the world that they had chosen to follow Jesus and make Him Lord of their lives. As a family of believers, we welcomed them and support them in that decision. Let's take a close look at what baptism symbolizes and its importance in the life of a believer.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH – BAPTISM

We believe that Christian baptism, commanded by our Lord, is a sacrament signifying acceptance of the benefits of the atonement and incorporation into the Body of Christ. Baptism is a means of grace proclaiming faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. It is to be administered to believers indicating their full purpose of obedience in holiness and righteousness. As participants in the new covenant, young children and the morally innocent may be baptized upon request of parents or guardians. The church shall give assurance of Christian training. Baptism may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.

MEMORY VERSES

Romans 6:1-4 NLT - 1 Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? 2 Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? 3 Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? 4 For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD

We read the bible to be formed and transformed, not merely to gather information. Reading of the scripture in this way requires unhurried time and an open heart. Only God's Spirit can fully interpret God's Word, and as you meditate on His Word in *the memory verse above* the Spirit has the opportunity to give you personal insight. We can break it down into four parts:

- reading - This is a reflective, gently paced, one-bite-at-a-time kind of reading. As you read, ask God, "What are you saying to me just now?"
- meditate- Let's be clear, this is not an Eastern religious practice, it is our taking time to reflect on the passage and repeat it in our minds, and throughout our day. Speak it out loud, find ways to incorporate it into the thoughts, feelings and experiences of your life
- pray – a natural product of meditating on God's Word will be to communicate with God. As we find God addressing us directly through His Word, our hearts cry out to Him. Perhaps we feel joy and gratitude, or repentance and pain. But as God's Word penetrates our lives, our response will be heartfelt prayer.
- Rest – as a result of spending time reading, meditating and praying through God's Word, you can come to a place of sabbath-time rest in God's presence. Simply receive from Him by being with and near to Him.

Share with the group what God has shown you in this week's passage.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS –

Our Response to God's Love and Sacrifice

The more we learn about God's grace, His sacrifice and His amazing love for us, the more we are compelled to respond. But we don't respond in order to maintain God's favor. We cannot earn His love, and we do not gain salvation by our works. In our memory verse, Paul asks the rhetorical question, "Should we keep on sinning so God can show more grace?" That grace offered to us came at the price of Christ's life, suffering and death.

If you were asked, "What is the point of living our life for God if no works are necessary for salvation?" how would you respond?

2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT - 17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

In Rom 6:2 Paul says we have died to sin. Our old sinful nature died when we accepted Jesus as our Lord. (2 Cor 5:17) This doesn't mean we will never sin, but that sin does not characterize our way of life, and it is against the nature of our "new life" to sin. In fact, in Romans 6 verses 3 and 4 we see that baptism is itself a symbol of putting that sinful nature to death under the water and rising to that new life in Christ. We aren't just cleaned up versions of our old self, we are a totally new creations.

Many of us have thought of baptism as "washing away our sins". While it is true, we are cleansed of our sin, how does the image of washing differ from the idea of dying? Why do you feel it was necessary to die to the old nature rather than clean it up?

God's Rescue and Grace

The sacrament of baptism is the symbol of both our death to the old nature, and of God's grace offering to rescue us and give us as new life in Christ. We have seen the symbol of water used throughout the bible when God has rescued man and brought us from death to life.

For each of the following instances, what is the peril that threatens and what is the grace or new life that is offered on the other side of the water? How is this paralleled in baptism?