

when God has rescued man and brought us from death to life. (The flood, Noah, Jonah, parting the Red Sea...)

We choose to be baptized as a public declaration that we have made Jesus Lord of our life. We show we have put to death the old nature as we go under the waters and were raised to new life through the power of the Holy Spirit as we emerge from the water. In the early church new converts were eager to publicly declare their faith through baptism.

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. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." - Matthew 28:18-20 NLT

When we are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we declare our allegiance to God over all else in our lives. Jesus commanded His disciples to make disciples, to baptize and to teach, and He gave them the authority to do so. We are not merely making converts or generating supporters. Disciples are transformed as they learn about Jesus, and His commandments and apply them to their lives as they advance the kingdom by making more disciples.

WRAP-UP

The kingdoms of this world try to pit us against each, but those who enter the kingdom of God are drawn together. We choose to love God and one another, even those we don't agree with. We do this because we are being transformed into the image of Christ. We are disciples who are called and authorized by Jesus to carry on the kingdom by making more disciples. We bring good news, the kingdom has come.

MEMORY VERSE

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.
- Matthew 28:19 NLT

Challenge

Next weekend we will have baptisms. If you know someone who might need encouragement to make their commitment to Jesus public, let them know this is their opportunity.

Known For Good News

Known For It #4

INTRODUCTION

There seems to be a lot of bad news lately. But as we conclude our sermon series on what Christians are known for, we end on a hopeful note. We are the bearers of good news. In fact, we have the best news of all. Jesus died in our place and rose from the dead so that we can have eternal life in God's Kingdom. But we don't always act like we have good news. Jesus commanded us to make disciples, baptize and teach His commandments. We want to do that well so that we will be known as the messengers of Good News!

Ice Breaker

Have you heard anything in the news lately that you would consider good news?

Key Passage

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. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

- Matthew 28:19-20 NLT

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the Good News?

3 "Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?" 4 Jesus told them, "Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen-- 5 the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.

- Matthew 11:3-5 NLT

John the Baptist was in prison, soon to die. But he wanted to know if he was wrong about Jesus before that happened. So, he sent his close followers to ask Jesus if He was the Messiah.

What do you think made John doubt? What do you think he was expecting the Messiah to do that he hadn't seen Jesus do? Are there things you expected Jesus to do in your life that haven't happened as you anticipated? Did those things cause you to question your faith?

*4 Say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, and do not fear, for your God is coming to destroy your enemies. He is coming to save you." 5 And when he comes, he will open the eyes of the blind and unplug the ears of the deaf. 6 The lame will leap like a deer, and those who cannot speak will sing for joy! Springs will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams will water the wasteland.
- Isaiah 35:4-6 NLT*

Jesus' response to John's disciples was a reference to Old Testament prophesy. Isaiah was one prophet who foretold what would happen when God came.

What Good News does Isaiah 35:4 tell us about God's coming? What enemy has been destroyed in your life and in what way have you been saved by Jesus coming into your life?

Jesus also said "*the good news is preached*" to the poor. In the original Greek text that phrase is one word, euangelizō, from which we get the word evangelize. Its definition is "to bring good news, to announce glad tidings" and especially is used of the coming kingdom of God or the Messiah. The Kingdom of God was being opened to the helpless, the beggars, and the destitute who had not known good news often, if ever, in their lifetime.

Who in our culture who may not have any good news in their lives? How different do you think the response is to Good News for those who recognize their neediness compared to those who think they have no need? Who can you share that good news with?

2. What's Your Identity?

You might not consider yourself an evangelist. Most of us don't. But are you a Christian? What does that mean to you? It should be more

than just believing in Jesus. Do you consider yourself a disciple of Jesus? That would mean you follow Him closely so that you can be like Him.

Paul explained to the church in Rome what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

*1 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice--the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. 2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect
. - Romans 12:1-2 NLT*

What do you think it means to be a living and holy sacrifice to God? How does verse 2 reveal the results of living in this way? In what ways has your thinking been transformed since you became a Christian? Are there behaviors and customs of the world that you still find yourself copying? What sort of change in your behavior would reflect God's good, and perfect will for you in those areas?

We can only be witnesses of Jesus when our behaviors reflect a transformed life. If we are no different than the world around us, why would anyone consider what we have to say as good news?

3. Why Baptism?

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

This may surprise you, but being baptized does not save you. According to the verses above, what must we do to be saved?

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