

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

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INTRODUCTION:

- A. **Whenever someone has died or someone that was loved greatly is moving a long distance away, people often want to know what their last words are – Last words are extremely important aren't they!**
1. I know whenever a preacher is closing out a gospel meeting or getting ready to move to another place and preach, he often chooses carefully words that'd leave them encouraged & edified
 2. **Illustration** – Famous Last Words...
 3. Just before Jesus ascended back to Heaven, Jesus had some very important words for His disciples – These are His last words! What does he want them to do? Go preach, baptized those who believe making them disciples, and then teach some more! **(Mat 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16)**
- B. **This makes baptism a vital thing! So my question this morning is, "Who should be baptized?"**
1. Initially the answer to this question seems overwhelmingly obvious! EVERYONE SHOULD BE!
 - a. In the great commission we saw baptism was for men of all nations who want to be saved
 - b. On the day of Pentecost when the crowd asked the apostles what they must do, Peter said that every one of them should be baptized for the remission of sins **(Acts 2:37-38)**
 2. When we are talking about baptism in a generic sense, yes, everyone should be baptized; but, many of us realize this question runs much deeper than what it seems on the surface

I. LET'S SPEND OUR TIME THIS MORNING ANSWERING A VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION: WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED

- A. **Everyone who desires salvation but has never been baptized before should be baptized:**
1. The promise of salvation is an open invitation – Anyone and Everyone who will come to Him!
 - a. The promise of salvation is for whoever will call upon the name of the Lord! **(Acts 2:21)**
 - b. It's true the majority of the world will be lost and that the road to salvation is a narrow road... The problem isn't that more can't be saved, it's that they choose not to be!
 2. A failure to be baptized is a failure to complete the process of receiving the salvation of the Lord!
 - a. Jesus said belief plus baptism brings salvation – To stop at belief would be to stop short! Being half way saved is to be wholly lost! (Going halfway to Canada – Not there!)
 - b. The process of receiving salvation involves several things – Faith in God and the death and resurrection of Christ, repentance from our sins, confessing Jesus, and baptism!
 - c. Salvation from sins follows our baptism **(Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Pet 3:21; Col 2:13; Rom 6:4)**
 - c. While a person may live a very moral life and do many religious things, if they haven't obeyed the gospel there is no way they can say they are a Christian! **(Acts 11:21, 26)**
 3. What this also tells us is those who are unable to respond with faith, repentance, and confession are not subjects of the baptism we read about in the Bible! **(Colossians 2:12; Matthew 15:8-9)**
 - a. Many practice "infant baptism" – Is it immersion? Can he believe or repent? What sins is he seeking forgiveness of? This isn't a Biblical baptism... it must be man-made!
 - b. Also very young children – Are they old enough to understand it? To believe? To repent?
 - c. The same would apply to those with severe enough mental disabilities – But it's not for us to decide if they understand enough... If they express the desire, they should do it!
 - d. People want to use examples like that of Cornelius' household to prove infant baptism, but nothing is said there of young children or infants! It has to be read into it!
 - e. **Illustration:** Raccoon John Smith forcibly dragging preaching to the creek to be baptized
 4. Some have submitted themselves to something called baptism, but in reality, it's not!

- a. Some religious groups practice what is called sprinkling or pouring, calling this baptism
- b. Where's the example of a person being sprinkled or poured on for salvation? Why did those in the book of Acts inconvenience themselves by being immersed?
- c. Baptism is clearly said to be a burial which entails complete coverage! As most of us are already aware, the word itself literally means immerse! **(Romans 6:3-4)**

B. Some who have already been baptized, should be baptized again if it was for the wrong purpose:

1. Throughout this country, but especially the area known as "the Bible belt," it seems many people are baptized; but, their baptism is often for a different reason than the remission of sins:
 - a. Often a testimony of your faith, an outward sign of the inward man, or to join their church
 - b. When trying to explain the difference in their baptism and what believe God's word clearly teaches this becomes difficult because on the surface it often appears the same! It is immersion, there's a confession, and in the name of the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit!
 - c. These "non-denominational" churches are emphasizing baptism to more... Even to saying it's necessary (but not for salvation) – This makes it hard to teach people the truth!
2. In Acts we read about a group of people from Ephesus who were baptized a second time when they learned that their first baptism was not correct **(Acts 19:1-5)**
 - a. The first baptism had some common elements with the second: It was an immersion in water, it was about repentance, and belief was a necessary component
 - b. A difference in purpose: John's baptism was a baptism of repentance to prepare people for Jesus. The second was a baptism in Jesus' name to place people in Jesus Christ
 - c. Notice when these individuals learned their baptism was not correct they didn't object, "We've already been baptized before!" → They just submitted to the right one!
 - d. While they were wrong they were sincerely wrong... plus they'd been taught by a sincere Apollos who taught them all he knew... When they learned better, they changed!
3. If one is baptized for the wrong purpose it is the wrong baptism! **(Acts 2:38, 22:16; Gal 3:26-27)**
 - a. The purpose of baptism here is clear – For the remission of sins, to wash away our sins, and to put on Christ → If it's done for some other reason, then it becomes different!
 - b. **Illustration:** Wrestling in the pool... By strict definition one person is baptizing another, but is it the right baptism? What if two kids are imitating what they see in church?
 - c. What is the answer for the one who finds himself in this position? If your heart is right & you're sincere, you should have no problem being baptized again like the Ephesians!
4. Since the words spoken by preachers and teachers can often be confusing, consider some indicators that would let you know the purpose was wrong: **(Acts 8:36-39; 22:16; Acts 16:33)**
 - a. Were you called to receive Christ as your Lord and Savior, accepting Him into your heart, before you were baptized and told that at some later date you'd be baptized?
 - b. Did someone have you say "the sinner's prayer" and after saying this prayer, calling upon Jesus to save you & enter your heart, did you feel or were you told you were saved?
 - c. Were words like, "An outward sign of the inward man" or "to show you're already saved" or "I believe God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins" used before your baptism?
 - d. Were you told to wait several days, or even weeks, to get baptized at a baptismal service?

C. Others who have been baptized before, should be baptized again if it was with the wrong motivation:

1. Some people obey the gospel, becoming baptized, with a different motivation than true faith:
 - a. They reach a certain age and are under pressure from parents, preachers, elders, teachers,

- or concerned Christians and they do it basically to get people to leave them alone
- b. Sometimes a person will do it because a spouse has nagged them about getting baptized so much they feel a quick dunk under water is easier to deal with than the nagging
 - c. Some may do it just because all their friends are doing it – Often this happens in churches where there's a large group of young people the same age. One will do it and it starts a chain reaction – Not always, but sometimes it becomes the cool thing to do
 - d. One may choose to be baptized because they know that's what you are supposed to do & that's what's expected of them – They've heard it preached for years and know it's what God wants, but it's not from a heart that feels lost in sin & is seeking salvation
2. In baptism, it's not just about getting wet but the state of our hearts during the act: **(1 Peter 3:21)**
- a. Like with the type of worship that pleases God – It's not just about doing it in the correct form but with a worshipful heart – If our heart is not into what we are doing, than all we've done is sung, eaten, read, etc! But if our heart is there... We've worshipped!
 - b. Without the heart & proper faith baptism is a meaningless act! The most he could doing is taking a bath! It takes a penitent heart of faith that's seeking salvation from sin!
3. One "motivation" that shouldn't cause a person to seek to be baptized again is guilt from sin which occurred after their baptism: **(Acts 8:21-22; 1 John 1:7-9)**
- a. A person may be baptized for the right the reasons & in faith, but later go back to their life of sin. Some may even continue in it for years! But one day decide to return to God.
 - b. If you have followed God's plan for salvation in faith, please don't let your guilt from sin after you obeyed Christ's gospel, cause you to start doubting your baptism!
 - c. Some in this position may want to be baptized again to get a fresh start or they feel their guilt from sin outweighs their baptism so they need to redo it – Wrong motivation
 - d. You can still get a fresh start & God will forgive you ... but once you become a Christian, according to God's plan, we are to handle that by repentance, prayer, & confession!