


TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you?
...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?

Read the enclosed article, "*Baptism is Important*". What issues does it resolve for you?

- Have you observed a believers' baptism service? What impression did it make on you?
Did it strengthen **your** faith in any way? Tell us about that.
- What about Noah's ark make it a meaningful symbol of salvation (Genesis 6:11-18; 7:1-7; 8:13-22)?
- Luke 23:39-43 makes it clear that baptism is **not** essential to salvation, yet Matthew 28:18-20 makes it clear that baptism is **commanded** for all believers. What should we think about something that is commanded, yet not essential to salvation?
- A "symbol" is a representation of something else. What are some symbols in American culture?
How are symbols important/meaningful? What do they **accomplish**?
What would we be missing in our lives if we didn't have such symbols?
- Have you trusted in Christ to save you from your sins? Have you been baptized since you believed?

Application-Challenge

- If you have not placed your trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior, do so today!
- If you have not been baptized as a believer, you should be! (Matthew 28:18-20)

Sermon Summary Key Text: 1 Peter 3:21-22

First Peter was written to persecuted Christians who were scattered throughout what is now modern day Turkey. Peter wrote to encourage them to maintain their hope in the midst of their trying circumstances. Today we learn what Christian baptism symbolizes and role in Christian discipleship (1 Peter 3:18-22). In answering questions about baptism, it's important that we allow the Bible to be our authority, not what we were taught growing up. So, here are several important questions:

[1] How does Noah and the ark correspond to Christian baptism? I think that Peter is suggesting that God's deliverance of Noah and his family on the ark was a picture of the salvation that God would one day bring about for all of mankind through Jesus' death on the cross. Both involve saving people from God's judgment. This kind of foreshadowing is referred to as "typology". Peter saw Noah's ark as a "type" of Christ in that the ark corresponded in a physical way to what Jesus did for us spiritually (v. 21). Just as Noah and the ark pictures spiritual salvation, so does Christian baptism. And, they both involve the water. Baptism by immersion is a visual portrayal of what Jesus has done for us: when Jesus died, we died with him. When Jesus was buried, so were we. When Jesus rose from the dead, we rose from the dead with him to live a new quality of life.

[2] Is Peter saying that the physical act of baptism confers on us forgiveness of sin? At first glance, that seems to be what Peter is saying (v. 21a). But as we continue reading, Peter adds a clarifying phrase: "not the removal of dirt from the flesh". Baptism is "a response to God from a clean conscience which comes to us as a result of the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Baptism is a ceremony, a public confession of a commitment to no longer serve sin. Baptism, Peter clarifies, is a response to God flowing from a conscience that has already been cleansed by the Holy Spirit through faith. Just as Jesus proclaimed His triumph over sin and death through His own suffering and death on the cross, believers proclaim their triumph over sin and death through water baptism. Baptism itself doesn't save anyone; it is an outward expression of our faith in Jesus who died on the cross, was buried, and rose from the dead in triumph over sin and death (Acts 10:44-48; Ephesians 1:13-14). In Luke 23:39-43, Jesus promised heaven to an unbaptized believer.

[3] What is the proper mode of baptism? Everyone agrees that water is involved, but some churches sprinkle, some pour, and some immerse. The question is this. Which mode best reflects the biblical data? At TCC we teach baptism by immersion. Why do we do that? There are at least five reasons:

[a] Jesus himself was baptized by immersion. When Jesus was baptized, Jesus "came up from the water" (Matthew 3:16).

[b] The Ethiopian eunuch was baptized that way. (Acts 8:36-39)

[c] The basic meaning of the Greek word, baptizo, is to immerse. The Greek language has words for sprinkle and pour, but they are never used to describe baptism.

[d] Immersion best symbolizes a burial and resurrection. Baptism by immersion graphically portrays a person going down into the watery grave and then being raised to new life. Neither sprinkling nor pouring can adequately capture this symbolism.

[e] The founders of many denominations which now sprinkle or pour (Luther, Calvin, Wesley), acknowledge that immersion was the universal practice of the ancient church. *"Immersion, and not sprinkling, was unquestionably the original, normal form of baptism. Immersion shows the very meaning of the Greek word baptize."*

(Schaff's *History of the Apostolic Church*, p.568)

[4] Who are the proper subjects of baptism? This one is easy. Everyone who has believed in Christ, because the Biblical expectation is that all of us who profess faith in Christ will follow him in discipleship. The Scriptural order is always believe and then be baptized. Nowhere in the New Testament are infants commanded to be baptized nor is there a clear example of an infant being baptized in the New Testament. (So here at TCC, in keeping with the Scriptures, we do not baptize infants. We do however have child dedication services, where we dedicate both parents and their children to God's care and service. There is biblical support for that.)

[5] Should those where baptized before they exercised personal faith in Christ be re-baptized? That was my situation. I was baptized at a time when I didn't understand what it meant to be a Christian. In college I came to faith in Christ, and decided to be baptized by immersion. So as to whether you should be re-baptized, that's a decision between you and God, but if you ask me, I think you should go for it!

Talking To Others About This Week's Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asked you, "What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?", how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

Baptism is Important

by Leith Anderson

Important because of our obedience to Christ

Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." When we love Jesus Christ we want to do what He says. Love and obedience include baptism. Jesus was obedient to the Father, and to fulfill all righteousness was baptized. The disciples were baptized. The early Christians were baptized. In Peter's first sermon after Pentecost, he preached saying, "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38).

Obedience to Jesus Christ is a privilege, a joy, and also a responsibility. More important than our personal ideas about baptism is our Christian commitment to please Jesus Christ. And, Jesus commanded us to be baptized!

Our baptism is a powerful testimony to others

Biblical baptism is a commitment. Jesus said, "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:32,33). Baptism is a great expression of Christian discipleship.

Biblical baptism involves us with God's people the church. When we are baptized we are declaring our participation in the body of Christ. There is a mutual responsibility; the individual is responsible to submit to and love the church; and the church is responsible to love and nurture the one baptized.

Biblical baptism is a submissive act

When we are baptized we are humbly admitting that we are sinners who can't forgive our own sins. We admit we need Jesus Christ as Savior. It is an act of submission to God to be baptized in front of witnesses.

Therefore make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:19-20

Important because of our testimony to others

Baptism is a testimony of our conversion to Jesus Christ. In the Bible, baptism always demonstrates belief in Jesus Christ. First comes faith and then comes baptism as an outward symbol of faith. Salvation comes only through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8,9); therefore, baptism is not necessary for salvation. However, salvation is necessary before baptism. In baptism we are telling others that we are now Christians.

Baptism is a testimony of the gospel story. "Having been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12). Baptism is a witness (an acting out) of the gospel story Christ died and we are dead to sin through salvation; Christ was buried and we are burying our old sinful life; Christ was raised and we are raised to a new life in Christ.

When Jesus died, was buried and rose again he was buried in the ground. Baptism is a drama reenacting what Jesus did for us only it is in water and only for a few seconds. That's why we practice baptism by immersion at Triangle Community Church. The Christian is completely immersed in water in order to follow the Bible's practice as closely and meaningfully as possible. At Triangle Community Church, most baptisms are conducted in the baptistry in the multipurpose room, although outdoor baptisms sometimes are scheduled during the summer.

Baptism is a testimony of our identification

The original Bible word (in Greek), *baptidzo* literally means "to dip, to plunge, to place into a liquid." Just as a cloth placed into a vat of dye is "identified" with the dye, so in baptism a Christian is identified with Jesus Christ. You have "clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

We also identify with the church (the body of Jesus Christ), "for we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free and we were all given the one Spirit to drink" (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) is a simple way to study any passage.
Let's use it to learn more about Christian baptism...

Monday— Acts 8:26-40

Tuesday— Acts 16:22-34

Wednesday— Romans 6:1-14

Thursday— 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Friday— 1 Corinthians 12:13 & Galatians 3:26-29

Saturday— ***In preparation for worshipping your risen Lord tomorrow with your church family,*** study 1 Peter 4:1-6.

Need blank copies for doing more
"Five Question Bible Study"?
e-mail: Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) is it found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text?