

DISCIPLESHIP HANDBOOK

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RESOURCES



05

Lesson 5 | What is Baptism?

What is Water Baptism?

Water baptism is a public profession of a person's repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and a way of giving an outward testimony to an inward work of God.

(Definition of testimony: a public recounting of a conversion or experience)

The purpose of baptism is to show those around you what happened on the inside of you at the point of your salvation.

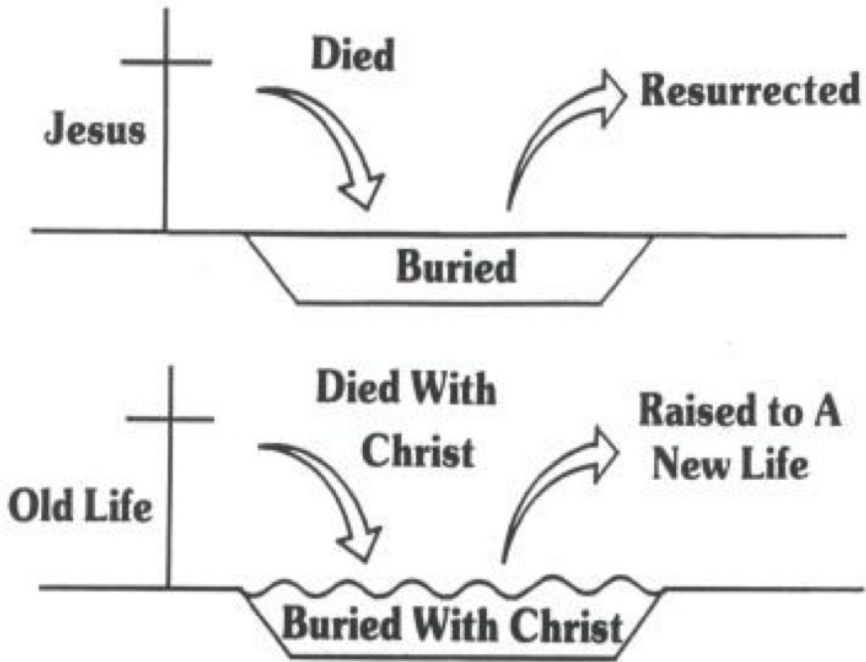
What Baptism is not: it is not an act that is necessary for your salvation (remember back in Lesson 1 – by grace you are saved, through faith, it is a gift of God).

So, What Does it Symbolise Exactly?

The symbolism of baptism shows that just as Christ died and was buried, so the person being baptised is submerged under water. And just as Christ rose again from death, so the person being baptised rises again from beneath the water.

- Under the water is the believer's old, dead, heavy, suffocating life.
- Out of the water, cleansed by the blood of Christ, is the believer's new, fresh, life with Jesus.

Romans 6:4 - Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.



Baptism is much like a wedding ring. The ring isn't the commitment, but it is a reminder and a symbol of it.

An Example

Acts 16:16-34 – the story of a Jailers repentance, salvation and baptism.

Paul and Silas are spreading the good news of Jesus and seeing miracles happen. Satan is using the servant girl to mock them.

“Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out

that very hour.”

Paul and Silas were persecuted for doing what God had asked them to do by setting the captives free. (Matthew 10:8 - Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.)

“But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or ob serve.” Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods.”

The jailer was told to keep them secure (Paul was a Roman citizen and had rights); however, he chose to harm and demean them by putting them in stocks (he was cruel). In this time, stocks were used as a torture device.

“And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.”

Paul and Silas still worshipped God despite their circumstances and God inter-vened.

“But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s chains were loosed.”

The jailer despairs, as he will be killed if the prisoners escape, so he is about to attempt suicide.

“And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the pris on doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.””

The jailer’s heart changes due to the love and compassion shown to him through Paul and Silas. He awakens to the reality of their God, and his desperate need for Him, he realises his sin, repents and is saved.

“Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to

be saved?" So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house."

The jailer and his family were baptised and began to walk in the ways of God and became a part of the local church. (The Church of Philippi)

"And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

Should I Be Baptised?

Matthew 28:19-20 - Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Jesus says to be baptised. Therefore, if you have recently become a Christian, then you should talk to your Pastor/Leader/Mentor about becoming baptised.

What are Some Reasons to be Baptised?

- It's an opportunity to show people that there is a reason for the change happening in you, and it's all about Jesus.
- It can show your friends and family that don't know God that you are committed to your faith.
- You are also showing your church family about your recent change so that they can come along side you to celebrate and give encouragement and support.

What is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

In lesson four we discussed that when you believe in Jesus and become a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes into our lives and becomes our helper, comforter and intercedes to God on our behalf. The Spirit working in our life changes us, leads us to be more like Jesus, and helps us with our weakness to trust and submit to God.

However, it shouldn't stop there. The baptism of the Spirit is an "immersion of the Spirit." When you are baptised with the Holy Spirit you will receive strength, power and boldness from God to accomplish your work and overcome sin in your own life.

When Jesus was baptised in the Jordan River, not only did God speak, but also the Holy Spirit descended on Him «like a dove», empowering Him to do His ministry (Luke 3:21-22).

50 days after His death and resurrection, in Acts 2 we read when the disciples were meeting together that the Holy Spirit came upon them like «tongues of fire». They all started to speak in tongues (which was different languages) and those around them heard it and marvelled. Many people believed that day and were added to the early Church.

How do I become Baptised with the Holy Spirit?

We first need to repent and believe in Jesus as our saviour, accepting His free Gift of salvation.

Acts 2:38 - Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus encourages us to ask in faith for the Holy Spirit.

Luke 11:13 - If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a one-off experience. We continually need to desire and ask for more of the Holy Spirit in our life. The Bible says we need to hunger and thirst for Him.

John 7:37-39 - On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive.

What Happens in Our Life When We Have Been Baptised with the Holy Spirit?

Just like the disciples were given the ability to speak in tongues and were given other giftings to empower them for the ministry Jesus had before them, we also can be given these gifts.

The gift of tongues is available to all and is especially used for building oneself up.

1 Corinthians 14:4 - Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church.

Jude 20 - But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit.

There are more gifts the Holy Spirit gives to equip us and empower us to show His love to the Church and the World! Some of those things are prophesy, healing, teaching, etc. You can read more about the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12

What is Communion?

Communion - also known as The Lord's Supper, The Lord's Table

Unlike baptism, which is a onetime event, communion is a practice meant to be observed over and over throughout the life of a Christian. It is a time we come together as one body to remember and celebrate what Christ did for us.

Different churches do communion differently. For some, it will be at every meeting, others might do it monthly.

The bread and the wine (sometimes referred to as "The Elements") are used as symbols, representing Christ's body and blood, in remembrance of His sacrifice.

Jesus introduces communion to us in three of the Gospels:

- Luke 22:14-20
- Mark 14:22-25
- Matthew 26:26-29

... but Paul expands on it further in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

The bread represents the Body of Christ which was broken for us.

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you;

Isaiah 53:5 Amplified Bible - But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was crushed for our wickedness [our sin, our injustice, our wrongdoing]; the punishment [required] for our well-being fell on Him, and by His stripes (wounds) we are healed.

The cup (wine/juice) represents Christ's blood which was shed for us.

In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,

Hebrews 9:22 - In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Ephesians 1:7 - In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

These symbols are taken in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

...do this in remembrance of Me...you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

When Was the First Communion?

Jesus chose to institute the Lord's Supper during the last Passover He celebrated with His disciples. Passover was a yearly celebration when Jews remembered God's deliverance (from slavery) of their nation from Egypt, and how the angel passed over those homes that had been marked with blood of a lamb.

You can find the story of the first Passover (the Exodus from Egypt) in Exodus 12.

(Definition of Exodus - a mass departure of people)

Jesus, through His actions at this supper, showed Himself to be that sacrificial lamb. As Jesus took the bread and shared it with His friends, He told them, "This is My body, which is given for you" (Luke 22:19). The bread represented is a picture of the body of Jesus (it was not actually the body of Jesus). He further

command in Luke 22:19 was, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

Is There a Wrong Way to Take Communion?

In a letter to one of the early churches, Paul addresses taking communion. The people of the Church in Corinth were not taking the Lord's Supper very seriously. There were divisions and fighting among the people and they were taking communion disrespectfully and mixing it with other celebrations that were not of God.

1 Corinthians 11:27-28 - Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

But what does that have to do with us now?

Communion is more than a ritual, but a way of Christian life. We are remembering Christ's forgiveness of us and allowing God to take us on our journey of forgiving others.

We should ask God to examine us and help us in those areas of weakness. In this way, we can be respectful and grateful of Christ's sacrifice.

Psalm 139:23-24 - Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

Dig a Little Deeper

Youtube Link - What is the importance of Christian Baptism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7rwXe8b-Ec>

Youtube Link - What is the importance of Christian Communion

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jfB23DmeWWw&feature=share&fbclid=I-wAR3xrN1_C-S_yB7vaTPbK6Pvfe6g5D5XII-3awFBISBZfCCzZgoBgtcJKbg

Questions & Notes

Lesson 5

- 1. What is the symbolism of baptism?**
- 2. Why is communion important?**
- 3. What should we do before taking communion?**

