

Message Discussion Guide

BAPTISM: IDENTIFICATION WITH THE NEW COVENANT

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

March 22, 2009

Acts 2:36-41

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Invite learners to describe a time when they joined an organization or a team or worked at a company that required them to wear a uniform or something that identified them with the organization or company. Invite them to answer the following questions:

How did you feel when you first received your uniform?

How did you feel when you wore that uniform?

How did your uniform provide an association between you and the organization?

Explain that today we will be discussing how baptism identifies us with Christ and His Body.

Option 2

Invite learners to share what their understanding of baptism was when they got baptized, whether as a child or adult. Encourage them to describe if their understanding has changed any since that time.

Explain that today we are going to discuss baptism and its meaning.

Review the Message . . .

The Importance of Baptism...

The church comprises a covenant community of believers who have
_____ identified _____ with Christ through baptism.

Discussion Questions

- Invite four learners to read Acts 2:38, Acts 8:16, Acts 10:48, and Acts 19:5. What is the phrase that is repeated in these four verses?
- What does that phrase mean?
- What does this phrase indicate about baptism?

Application . . .

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- What is the primary reason that we should be baptized?
- Why is identifying with Christ through baptism a difficult action for many to take?

The Questions About Baptism...

WHY should I be baptized?

- To follow the _____ example _____ of Christ.
- To obey the _____ command _____ of Christ.
- To unite with the _____ body _____ of Christ.

Discussion Questions

- Enlist a learner to read Matthew 3:13-17. Remind learners that John the Baptist had been preaching a message of repentance to the Jewish people and that the baptism they experienced was an illustration of their repentance.
- Because baptism with John was about repentance, why would Jesus seek to be baptized by John? How did Jesus' baptism help to identify Him with humankind?
- Read Matthew 28:18-19. What did Jesus command His followers to do?
- Why was baptism included in Jesus' command to His followers? How would baptism help accomplish Jesus mission to the world?
- Invite a learner to read 1 Corinthians 12:12-13. How does baptism signify the unity of Christ's body?
- According to this passage, why was the Church intended to function as a body instead of individuals?

Application . . .

- How does Jesus' baptism provide an example for believers?
- How can we incorporate baptism in our idea of God's mission?
- Why do people often not want to associate with "organized church" but do want to associate with Christ? How does this idea contradict the idea of the church as the body and bride of Christ?
- How does the individualistic society of North America often decrease the value of unity and community?

WHAT is the meaning of baptism?

- A celebration of the _____ grace _____ of Christ.
 - He died on a cross as our _____ substitute _____.
 - He rose from the grave as our _____ Savior _____.
- An illustration of the _____ Gospel _____ of Christ.
 - _____ Into _____ the water = Identification with His death.
 - _____ Out of _____ the water = Participation in His resurrection.
- A proclamation of the _____ glory _____ of Christ.

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- In the _____ church _____.
- To all the _____ world _____.

Discussion Questions

- Invite a volunteer to read Romans 6:1-7, 10.
- Looking specifically at Verse 10, how did Christ's death provide a substitution for us?
- How does this passage clearly indicate that baptism illustrates and celebrates the Gospel of Christ?
- How did baptism proclaim Christ to unbelievers who witnessed these events?

Application . . .

- What emotions do we often associate with baptism? Why?
- Do you view baptism as a witnessing opportunity for unbelievers or just a celebration for believers? How is it both?
- If baptism identifies us with Christ, what is the significance of us identifying with His death and resurrection?

HOW should I be baptized?

- The most biblical mode of baptism is _____ immersion _____.
 - The _____ precedent _____ of Christ...
 - The _____ pattern _____ of early church leaders...
 - The _____ picture _____ of the Gospel...

Discussion Questions

- Explain that the word used for baptism in the New Testament literally meant to submerge or dunk.
- Looking back in Matthew 3 when Jesus was baptized by John and in Romans 6 when Paul describes the picture of baptism, how does immersion best describe those events?
- Enlist a learner to read Acts 8:36-39. What are the words used to describe how Philip baptized the Eunuch?
- What mode of baptism appears to be primary in the New Testament?

Application . . .

- How can the mode of baptism best illustrate what baptism represents?
- If the mode of baptism has no effect upon our salvation or the certainty of our baptism, why is it important?

WHO should be baptized?

- Everyone who has been _____ born _____ again _____.

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Discussion Questions

- Read Colossians 2:11-12. Remind learners that circumcision was the external mark performed on Jewish infant boys as a sign that they were God's people.
- How does spiritual circumcision in this passage differ from the physical circumcision performed in the old covenant with God's people?
- When does a person receive this "new circumcision, circumcision of the heart?"
- If a person only becomes a member of God's people after a decision to follow Christ, why should they wait to receive the mark of the new covenant, baptism, after being born again?

Application . . .

- How could we provide false spiritual identification to a person by promoting baptism prior to being born again?
- How do we make baptism a spiritual marker for believers?
- How can we better celebrate the spiritual birth into the spiritual community through baptism?

WHEN should I be baptized?

- As soon as you trust in Christ for salvation.
- As soon as you can best publicly proclaim your salvation.

Discussion Questions

- In the passages that we have read today, when did new converts seek baptism?

Application . . .

- Why do we often negate the importance of baptism for believers?
- Have you been baptized? Do you need to be baptized?
- What would keep you from being baptized and identifying with Christ? Is that more important than obeying Him?

The Beauty of Baptism...

Baptism is an essential and joyful declaration to the world
that we belong to Jesus.

Remind learners that although baptism does not make us right before God (justification), it does demonstrate the repentance offered through faith in Christ alone and our identification with Christ through that faith. It is also important for our sanctification as we walk in obedience and learn to trust Christ.