

Introduction:

- As a child, we all loved games that involved connecting the dots. I always thought it was so fun to start off with a bunch of dots that appeared to be random and watch the mystery be solved as the dots were connected. Application: Growing in one's faith is also like a game of connecting the dots. That's because it involves a process of discovering the relationship between the things Christians are supposed to do and the meaning behind those things. Take the Communion and Baptism as an example. On their own, they're like a floating dot. Bread and wine are but bread and wine, waiting to be connected to something. That's exactly what Jesus did on the night He was betrayed when He connected the passover meal to His death. This connection made their meaning clear. Of course, in the game of connecting the dots, there is always the danger that we might connect the wrong dots. Likewise, in the Christian life, we must avoid connecting God's dots to the wrong things. For example, some have mistakenly connected the baptism dot to their salvation when what it should be connected to is—The Great Commission. When we make the right connection, we understand that it's supposed to be a witness to a watching world, performed by those who have already been saved. Once the dot of baptism is connected to the right thing, God's intentions become evident.
 - Baptism is our subject today and following the service we are going to baptize 3 adults and 4 children.
 - Lets begin with Gods word...
- John's message was repent! (Mt 3:2). And he was baptizing in the Jordan River. *"Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins."* (Matthew 3:5-6, ESV)
- Jesus Baptized. *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented."* (Matthew 3:13-15, ESV)
- Early Church. Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* NKJV

I. What Baptism Is Not

- A. Baptism is not the way to salvation. Nor does it add to salvations grace. There are some churches that teach that you must be baptized in order to get to heaven/find salvation. The problem with that is there are not scriptures to support it, especially in context of scripture as a whole.
 1. Repentance and faith in Jesus Christ is how a person is born again.
 2. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."* (Ephesians 2:8-9, ESV)
Salvation is by grace that is received through faith.
 3. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16, ESV)

4. Acts 15 and Romans 4 make no mention of baptism being essential to salvation but repentance and faith are critical to salvation.
 5. If you have not repented and placed your faith in Christ when you are baptized, then all you are getting is wet! No salvation in getting wet.
- B. Baptism is not for the salvation of infants and young children.
1. The proof text is Col 2:11-12. But it just does not stand. Since baby boys are circumcised it is implied that baptism is for babies.
 2. If you follow the logic then baptism would only be for baby boys.

II. His Name Was John, The Baptizer

- A. His name was John and he was called the baptizer...John the Baptist. Baptist wasn't his last name. Nor was Baptist his denomination.
1. He earned his name because of the number of people he was baptizing. And the number of people he was baptizing was a result of the message he was preaching.
 2. His message was repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.
 - a) John was preaching a message of repentance to cause people to receive something greater than their 'Jewishness.' They were being directed to enter into the Kingdom of God through repentance.
 - b) (For those being baptized...) Repentance was not just a turning away from what one had done wrong but a turning to God with all your heart, mind and strength. Baptism followed this act of repentance and faith. *"This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven."* (Mark 1:4, NLT) The call to "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matt. 3:2; 4:17) is an urgent invitation to reorient our values, habits, loves, thinking, and behavior according to Biblical understanding, one rooted in the revelation of God's nature and coming reign. In short, repentance means, "Become a disciple of Jesus!"
 - c) Baptism was a sign of a persons dedication (wholehearted obedience) to following after God. The intent of the Jewish people regarding baptism was to signify their willingness and readiness to follow the will of God. They understood baptism as a whole hearted commitment to God. Baptism therefore comes as a result of repentance and faith signifying whole hearted obedience and devotion to God. Baptism was for those having a sense of heart-deep, faithful obedience to God.
- B. Jesus came to be baptized by John. This Kingdom of God message was so big that...
1. Jesus came from Galilee to be baptize by John. John, at first does not want to do it. Jesus says, *"Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* What does this mean? John's message is repent, but Jesus has no sin to repent of and secondly, how does Jesus being baptized fulfill all righteousness?
 2. Jesus' baptism showed that He identified with sinners. His baptism symbolized the sinners' baptism into the righteousness of Christ, dying with Him and rising free from sin and able to walk in the newness of life.

3. His perfect righteousness would fulfill all the requirements of the Law for sinners who could never hope to do so on their own. When John hesitated to baptize the sinless Son of God, Jesus replied that it was proper to “fulfill all righteousness” (Mt 3:15.) By this He alluded to the righteousness that He provides to all who come to Him to exchange their sin for His righteousness: *“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”* (2 Corinthians 5:21, ESV)
 4. In submitting to John’s baptism Jesus is showing himself to be the good and obedient Son who does God’s will perfectly. Jesus “fulfills all righteousness,” not merely by the physical act, but by the spiritual implications of it.
- C. What is baptism?
1. It is an outward sign of something that God has already done in your heart through faith. In scripture it follows after what takes place on the inside of the heart of a man.
 - a) If you get baptized without the heart change, all you get is wet. That is why I want to explain baptism to you using the word of God.
 - b) Baptism is an action where a person is identified with Christ's death and resurrection. *“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”* (Romans 6:4, ESV)
 2. The word baptism comes from a Greek word meaning to immerse. Most baptisms are by immersion. We may sprinkle someone if it is impossible for them to be immersed in water. IE. Maybe they are in hospital or have some kind of condition that prevents it.

III. Why Should A Person Be Baptized?

- A. Baptism is a public announcement of our faith and our decision to live for Christ. Mk 1:4; Acts 2:38; Mt. 28:19-20 Our being baptized is an encouragement for others to start following Christ.
- B. Because Jesus was baptized. He chose to be baptized and in so doing He identified with us. When we are baptized we are choosing to identify with Him; his death burial and resurrection. Baptism becomes a symbol/prophetic act of our baptism into His death, burial and resurrection.
 1. When we go down into the water, we’re reminded of Jesus’ death on the cross and His payment for our sins. Baptism speaks of being buried with Him Rom 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.* NKJV
 2. We consider our old life dead. IE. Can’t offend a dead man.
 3. But when we come out of the water, we’re reminded that three days later, Jesus rose from the dead! 2Cor 5:17 tells us that if we’re in Christ, we’re new creations. Baptism reminds us that the old is gone, and the new has come!
 4. Remember: getting baptized is important, but not because it saves you. The grace of God through faith in Jesus is what saves us.
- C. Scripture instructs us to do so: Mk 1:4; Acts 2:38; Mt. 28:19-20; Samaria Acts 8:12-13; Acts 8:36-39; Lydia baptized. Acts 16:14-15; Peter and Cornelius family. Acts 10:47.

- D. Baptism is a symbol of our faith (See: Acts 8:12-13). The model we see in the New Testament is that when someone became a new believer (demonstrating faith in Jesus), they repented and were baptized. Baptism serves as a vital step for those declaring their faith in Jesus.
- E. Baptism is a sign to the believer like circumcision was for the Jew. It is entering into the New Covenant of Christ, a celebration of who we now are know by...Christ, himself. IE. In Christ you have a new land Lord! The old land lord, the devil, can no longer charge you rent.
- F. IE. Baptism is a lot like getting married and putting on a wedding ring.
 - 1. Does putting on a wedding ring make me married? No.
 - 2. But if I am married and I accidentally lost my ring, would I no longer be married? No, I'd still be married.
 - 3. Even though the ring isn't what makes me married, I still wear it all the time. Why? Because I want the world to know I've committed to spend the rest of my life with her. My wedding ring is a symbol of my commitment to my wife. Baptism shows my commitment to Christ.

IV. What Do I Get From Baptism?

- A. Wet! Often in scripture the Holy Spirit fell on those who were baptized. IE. Happened to Jesus.
- B. A New Family. The family of God! 1 Cor 12:13-14 **For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.** NKJV
 - 1. It is a supernatural work! The Holy Spirit places you into the Body of Christ.
 - 2. The NT compares the work of baptism like entering a new family.
 - 3. Family is to be the place where we get our education.
 - 4. Family is where we learn our cultural values.
- C. A New Identity.
 - 1. You have been adopted by the family of God! Freedom is your new family.
 - a) God is your Father
 - b) We are your brothers and sisters
 - c) Jesus is your big brother. He is the son of God we are sons of God. By adoption.
 - 2. You have a new name - Christian - Acts 11:26 **And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.** NKJV Christians are those who have chosen to make Jesus their Lord.
 - 3. You have a new culture – that screams Freedom! No more bondage! Oneness, connectedness.
- D. It is your right of passage, your initiation. It Loudly declares you belong, you cannot be denied.
 - 1. This culture threatens political empires.
 - 2. Romans killed those who were baptize
 - 3. Many communist/Arabic countries killed you when you were baptized.
 - 4. Baptism insists on a new allegiance!

5. When the church again recovers the significance of its culture Baptism will again take on a new form. When the church takes itself seriously baptism is charged. We are an alternative culture!
6. It is a culture that is life giving. Jn. 10:10.

Conclusion:

- We need our hearts washed or made clean because of the wrong/sins we have committed in life.
 - Romans 3:23 **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**, NKJV We have all sinned. I have never in all my years met a person who has not sinned.
 - The result of sin is tragic. Romans 6:23 **For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.** NKJV
 - A wage is something we deserve, we earned it.
 - That death not only refers to death in the natural but spiritual death—eternal separation from God.
 - That is man's dilemma, we are separated from God. How do we bridge that gap?
 - IE. Isaiah 53:6-ff **We all like sheep have gone astray.** ...
- God desires everyone to know Him and to love Him. 2 Peter 3:9 **The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.** NKJV
- The Ethiopian Eunuch Acts 8:36 " *What hinders me from being baptized?*"
"*Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?*" (Acts 10:47, ESV)