

Core 52 – 39 Baptism A Family Devotional Guide for May 3rd

This devotional will give each of us a time to reflect on our baptism, and share with one another what we understood then, or understand now, or wish to know about baptism.

Ask each person to “Share what are important (to you) concerns and blessings that you have noticed God has provided you this week,” then **pray together**.

Discussion starter: Ask each one to recall a baptism you have witnessed, or perhaps your own baptism. Ask have you have seen more than one person baptized, or have you have seen a baptism in a place other than a church building and where was it? You can also share perhaps something humorous or emotional or unusual that happened at a baptism. What was the oddest time (of day, outdoor, season) of a baptism you’ve witnessed? Ask why do we often have a tradition to sing or pray after a baptism? What songs do you associate with baptism? Share with your family what was the most important thing you remember as to why you decided to be baptized.

On the day of Pentecost about 50 days after Jesus’ crucifixion Peter preached a sermon in Jerusalem to an international Jewish audience which moved 3000 of them to “Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:38,41 Share when you have been in a place where more than 3000 people were gathered. Try to imagine the baptism of 3000 people in one day! How long might that have taken? What would you have needed?

Try reading then saying Acts 2:38 together from memory. You can also take turns and read the sermon (no problem, it’s fairly short) that Peter preached that day from Acts 2:14-39. What incredible sin did Peter say the people had done (look at verses 23, 36). What did Peter say each would receive if they repented and were baptized (*they would receive forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit*)? Just like any wonderful gift you receive, it’s so much better if it’s bought from someone else’s bank account, and not out of your own); God’s gift of forgiveness and of the Holy Spirit cost someone else, Jesus, and doesn’t cost us.

Jordan Guy, a professor at Harding University put together a list of **14 Biblical Purposes for and Results of Baptism**. Here is his summary. You might choose a few of these Scriptures to read tonight and then discuss the questions following.

Divine Reasons (emphasize unity with God):

1. Imitate Christ in righteousness – Matthew 3:15
2. Reenact Jesus’ Death, burial and resurrection – Romans 6:3-7, 17-18
3. Put on Christ - Galatians 3:26-27
4. Identify with the Godhead – Matthew 28:19
5. Obedient response to the message of Jesus – Acts 8:12, 35-36

Personal Reasons (emphasize individual benefits):

6. Die to self – Colossians 2:11-3
7. Call on the name of the Lord – Acts 22:16
8. Have sin forgiven – Acts 22:16; 2:38
9. Receive the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:38-9; Ephesians 1:14
10. Be saved – 1 Peter 3:21

11. Receive a clear conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:21; Hebrews 10:22)
12. Be born again – John 3:5; Titus 3:5; Galatians 6:15
13. Be added to the church – 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Acts 2:41
14. Follow the example of others – Acts 2,8,9,10,16,18

Which of these 14 reasons did you know before you were baptized?

Which of these 14 are *reasons* for baptism; which are the *results* of baptism?

What do you think are people's greatest objections to baptism? If someone asked you, "Why should I be baptized?" in your own words, what would you say?

From your understanding at this time, is the biblical emphasis on baptism more on work that God promises to do for you, or what you do? (*Please emphasize that it is really all God's work – we do not deserve to be saved because of our obedience – our obedience now cannot make up, balance out or cancel out our disobedience past, present or future*)

Finally, read Romans 6:3-4 (or 6:3-14, if time permits) In some ways this is one of the most powerfully descriptive passages in *Scripture*. It says our baptism connects us literally with the most important event in the entire history of the world – Jesus death, burial and resurrection! Describe to one another what this means to you. How does baptism describe the work of Jesus or even "preach" without words?

Extra credit: Read Acts 2:41; 8:12; 10:48; 16:33; 22:16. What led up to each person being baptized?

Thank God for the forgiveness he promised us through Jesus.