



Lesson Seven: Baptism

We are now beginning our second G, which stands for Grow. In this second G we want to move on from an introduction to drawing closer to our Savior, and the next few lessons are going to help us do just that. We do not want to just stay the way that we are, we want to grow in our walk with Jesus. The first step that we need to take in the Grow is baptism. In this lesson we are going to see what baptism is all about.

How Did She Know?

This past spring, our family went with another family out west to the Grand Canyon. On one of the days, my friend, Dusty and I hiked 7 miles down into the Canyon. Along the way a few people noticed my Hawkeye hat and sweatshirt, and said to me, "Go Hawks!". I talked to one lady, who asked me if I were from Iowa, and she told me that her husband was from Mt. Vernon just 15 minutes away from where I live. But how did they know that I was from Iowa? It's because I had identified with the Iowa Hawkeyes by wearing their logo on my hat. And we all know that you don't like the Hawkeyes if you aren't from Iowa. We all identify with different things. We are known for being someone's spouse or parent. Known for our jobs, hobbies, and a lot of other things. What is one thing that you are known for by the people in your life? _____

If we have come to know Jesus as our Savior, He wants us to be known as a follower of His. We do that by being baptized.

Can I See Some Identification?

In Acts 8, God tells a man named Philip to go out into the wilderness and talk to a man that is reading the book of Isaiah. Verses 32-33 tell us where he was reading from, "The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth." In the very next verse this man asks Philip a very important question about the verses that they were reading, "And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" In verse 35 Philip answers his question, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." What was it that Philip preached to him? _____ He showed him from the Scripture that Jesus was the Savior that would come and pay the price for our sin.

In verse 36 the eunuch has another question for Philip, "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" He wants to know what is stopping him from being baptized right then and there. "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." What did the eunuch have to do before he could be baptized? _____

He had to first believe that Jesus was the promised Savior that would come to pay the price for his sins, and he confesses his belief to Philip. Since he believed on Jesus for salvation, Philip baptized him in verse 38, "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."

Salvation always preceded baptism. In Matthew 28:19 Jesus gives a command to His followers, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" Now notice the order of this verse. He tells them that they are to first teach people that He is the Savior, and then once they believe, then they are to be baptized. What always precedes baptism in the Bible? _____

Now let's take a moment to look at that word baptize. The Greek word for baptize is baptizo. Baptize is a transliteration from the Greek language. In other words, they just gave an English equivalent for every letter in the Greek word. The word means "to submerge" and was often used to describe the process of dying garments from one color to another. For instance, if we wanted to take a white piece of cloth and change its color to purple, then we would submerge the cloth in a purple dye. When you dyed a garment, you changed its identity. What does the word baptize mean? _____ This is why we submerge people when we baptize them. Nowhere in the Bible do we find babies being sprinkled or people being baptized by having water poured on them. The very word means to put them under the water.

I had often wondered and you may be asking the question, "Why was Jesus baptized?" Look at Matthew 3:13-17, "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He wanted to identify with John's message that Jesus was the way of salvation.

Jesus was baptized because He wanted to publicly identify with the message that John was preaching. John preached that Jesus was the way of salvation. In John 1:29, we see John's message, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus then came to John and had John baptize Him because Jesus wanted to show everyone that what John was saying about Jesus was true. That is the same reason that we are to be baptized. We are to identify with Jesus as the way of salvation. Baptism is all about identification. It has nothing to do with salvation. Baptism publicly identifies us as a born-again follower of Jesus, and it does that by picturing a couple of things.

A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words

In Romans 6:3-4 we see that baptism pictures a couple of things, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The first thing that baptism pictures is what Jesus did for us. It pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Going down into the water pictures His death. Going all the way under the water pictures His burial. Being raised up from the water pictures His resurrection. So, when we are baptized, we are showing what Jesus has done to save us. What did Jesus do for us that baptism is a picture of? _____

Baptism is not just a picture of what Jesus did for us, but also what He did in us. It pictures the death and burial of our old life and the resurrection of our new life. Going down into the water pictures the death of our old life. Going all the way under the water pictures the burial of our old life. Being raised up from the water pictures the resurrection of our new life in Jesus. So, when we are baptized, we are showing what Jesus has done in us. It tells the world that I am different now. I am going to live my life for Jesus. Who I used to be is dead and gone, and now I am alive to serve Jesus. What did Jesus do in us that baptism is a picture of? _____

Conclusion

Have you trusted in Jesus, but have never taken this very first step of identifying yourself as a Christian? Then it is time for you to make this public profession of your faith. We have been commanded by Jesus to be baptized. That means that if I have trusted in Jesus but haven't been baptized, then I am being disobedient to Him. Your relationship with Jesus will not grow until you take the step of baptism.