

Upside Down Part 1

The Power of Baptism: What is Baptism and Why Does it Matter?

INTRO: *Easter is the greatest day in history. While it was the end of the power of sin and death. It was the beginning of power in the life of believers. We are journeying through the book of Acts to learn how God does the extraordinary through ordinary people like you and me.*

- Acts of the Holy Spirit not of the apostles.
- In every chapter, something supernatural happens.
- In Acts 1 Jesus tells them not to leave until the Father sends the Holy Spirit.
- He had told them about the gift the Father would send. He said that it was better that He went to Heaven so that the Holy Spirit could come.

Acts 17:6 (TLB)

“Paul and Silas have turned the rest of the world upside down, and now they are here disturbing our city,”

The Holy Spirit is God’s gift of power to fulfill our purpose.

- Imagine being in that room that day. They prayed like they had prayed before. But this day, the Holy Spirit filled the room.
- **The purpose for the power:** The powerful move of the Holy Spirit was bigger than just them. It was about something He wanted to do through them.
- The Holy Spirit filling them was the prerequisite to their purpose. To fulfill the assignment, He had for them to do.
- He showed up in power but then they rushed out into Jerusalem to tell people about Jesus. 150K would have gathered for Pentecost, 15-20K in this area. It was 9a prayer time and the place of baptism.

Show Picture of Southern Steps

The Birth of the Church

Acts 2:5-8; 12-14

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans?” ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.” ¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

- Peter, the one who denied Jesus, is the one who now boldly proclaims Jesus this day.
- He could have opted out because of what he had done. You might think he should have been disqualified from being the keynote speaker that day. Maybe even Peter thought this.
- Don't believe the lie that what you've done disqualifies you from God's best in your life. He believes in you! Your history doesn't have to determine your destiny.
- God doesn't hold our past against us, He holds our future in front of us.

Acts 2:37-38 (NIV)

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 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.

- Repent means to turn. To turn from all other directions to God. To follow His plan and purpose. Salvation isn't just a prayer. It's forsaking all other ways and following Jesus.

Acts 2:41 (NIV)

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

- We read throughout the Bible that people believed in Jesus and were baptized. Notice, baptism follows personal faith in Jesus. (Infant baptism might be meaningful to the parents and family but this is different)

Mikveh: *The Jewish ritual bath for cleansing. [Show Picture](#). The Southern steps were full of these baths so that people could be cleansed before entering the temple to worship. Problem: By the time they got inside, they were dirty again. **Jesus transforms a ritual bath into a relationship bath!** Before the cross, people were cleansed to get to the presence of God. After the cross, people are cleansed by faith in Jesus so the Presence can get to us.*

Baptism isn't an acute ceremony, it's a defining declaration.

3 Declarations of Baptism

1. "I Believe in Easter."

Romans 6:3-4 (Message)

When we went under the water, we left the old country of sin behind; when we came up out of the water, we entered into the new country of grace—a new life in a new land!³⁻⁵ That's what baptism into the life of Jesus means. When we are lowered into the water, it is like the burial of Jesus; when we are raised up out of the water, it is like the resurrection of Jesus.

- The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ! ***One set of steps down into the pool and another set of steps out of the pool.***
- It's not just a Spring holiday. It is the greatest day in History! It's what we build our lives on. If it didn't happen, nothing matters. Because it did, everything matters.
- It's personal! Because of His power of sin and death, I have life and life eternal.
- When we are baptized, we are giving a picture of Easter to the world.

2. "Out with the Old - In with the New."

Colossians 2:12 (Message)

Going under the water was a burial of your old life; coming up out of it was a resurrection, God raising you from the dead as he did Christ.

- This is the burial of your old life. Old sins, past mistakes, and where sin was in charge. Now you have a brand-new life. (A new car compared to the new car smell.)
- For Israel this was a constant reminder that they were no longer slaves but free sons and daughters.
- You are no longer in a relationship with sin, you are in a relationship with the Holy Spirit.
- This doesn't mean you will never have challenges with sin or other stuff, it now means His power is at work to transform you into the character of Jesus.
- When the old you pops up, you recognize it and submit to the power of the Holy Spirit. "I don't want that old life. I choose the new life in Christ and I'm choosing to walk with Him, one step and one day at a time."
- Baptized=Pickled. You taste different.

3. "I Follow Jesus."

Galatians 2:20 (TPT)

My old identity has been co-crucified with Christ and no longer lives. And now the essence of this new life is no longer mine, for the Anointed One lives his life through me— we live in union as one! My new life is empowered by the faith of the Son of God who loves me so much that he gave himself for me, dispensing his life into mine!

- Identification: Jesus was baptized to identify with you. You get baptized to identify with Jesus! Baptism doesn't save us, but it testifies to the salvation we have received. It's an outward declaration of an inward decision.
- For the early church, baptism was the way they identified with "The Way" the way of Jesus.
- We kind of get this in our culture today. People identify with different sports teams. Wear the colors, join chants, pack stadiums, even paint their bodies.

Fan or Follower?

- o Fans admire Jesus, Followers want to be like Jesus.

- Fans are in it for themselves, Followers are in it to please the Lord.
- **Fans observe while followers participate.** (*What began on the Southern Steps that day continues through our steps today*)

Ex. *Timbo is a Braves follower, not just a fan. He said the other day, “Why do we need seats, we’ll be standing the whole time.”*

- When we get baptized, we are joining team Jesus. And if there’s one thing people know about us, let them know we’re followers of Jesus.
- It’s not about belonging to a church; it’s about belonging to a Savior. I’m His, and He is mine!

Let’s reembracing the power of baptism today!

Galatians 3:27 (Message)

Your baptism in Christ was not just washing you up for a fresh start. It also involved dressing you in an adult faith wardrobe—Christ’s life, the fulfillment of God’s original promise.

If you believe in Jesus but have never been baptized, what are you waiting for?

- “I don’t know if I’m physically able.”
 - We’ll find a way.
- “My faith is private.”
 - While your faith should be very personal, it shouldn’t be private. Jesus doesn’t need secret admirers.
- “How many times?”
 - Until it takes. It’s evidence of God’s power at work. Celebrate the new you and new season.

Show Baptism Slide: Sunday, April 21st