

**STORYTELLERS**  
**What Hinders You?**  
**Acts 8:26-38**

Today, I want to teach you some of what Christ and the Apostles had to say about the meaning and value of baptism. I am afraid that there is much CONFUSION about this powerful symbol of salvation, and I hope to clear that up for some of you today. I have THREE GOALS in my message today. First, I want to ENCOURAGE BAPTIZED BELIEVERS to KEEP ON CELEBRATING (radically and loudly) the real meaning and wonder of baptism and what it REPRESENTS in the lives of Christ's followers. It is awesome! Second, I want to PLEAD with the UNBAPTIZED BELIEVERS in our midst to OBEY Christ RIGHT AWAY and get their baptism settled. There is NO REASON to delay this in your life. Now, you may say that you HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED, but I want to help you to MAKE SURE that you were BIBLICALLY baptized AFTER you gave your life to Christ. If you were not, then you will have an opportunity TODAY to get this done in your life. You will be so GLAD that you did, and it will have a marked impact on your spiritual life and growth. Third, I want to give a WARNING to those in our midst who may be BAPTIZED UNBELIEVERS. (Yes, it is possible to be a baptized unbeliever!) Maybe you will find yourself in one of these situations today. Our goal is NOT to see how many people we can run through the tank today at CHC so that we can boast about how many people we have baptized. Our goal is to press people toward OBEDIENCE in their spiritual lives. This is the basis of true HEALTH!

Brad's story is ONE picture of what often happens in people's lives when it comes to faith and baptism. My story is kind of messed up like his! (I will share it with you in a few minutes.) Your story might be a bit different. I would like to address a variety of situations that might describe your current state, and hopefully press you to DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT . . . TODAY! Let's begin by reading one story of baptism in the book of Acts. **READ Acts 8:26-35, 36 & 38 NIV**

**36** As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" ...  
**38** And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

This story is a very clear picture of the IDEAL MANNER in which a person ought to be baptized! This story also helps us to get our heads around WHY it is such a vital part of our walk with Christ. I want to use this story as a springboard to other passages to help us see just what Christ and the disciples TAUGHT about baptism.

**The MANDATE of Baptism: Who, When, and Why?**

**\*Who should be baptized, and when?**

-Baptism is ONLY for those who have given their lives to Christ.

\*Have YOU given your life to Christ? **Acts 8:12 NIV**

**12** But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

**-Baptism should happen as soon as possible AFTER salvation!**

\*The best obedience is INSTANT OBEDIENCE! **Acts 8:36 NIV**

**“Look, here is water! What stands in the way of me being baptized?”**

\*We PRESS those who accept Christ to write their story and get baptized!

\*Why are we SUSPENDING our BAPTISM VIDEOS for a short time?

-To REMOVE EXCUSES [Fear of Cameras, Embarrassment, Time, etc.]

-To CATCH UP TODAY with many who have been holding out!

\*What should you do if you were baptized BEFORE you were saved?

-MY STORY: I was waterlogged! But I finally got it right!

**-Baptism DOES NOT SAVE a person!** [Jesus was baptized!]

[Jesus never baptized anyone. Paul only baptized a few!]

**\*Did you think that baptism would save you?** [Church of Christ teaching?]

**\*Why should we be baptized?**

-Christ commanded it! [This is NOT a BAPTIST thing!] **Matthew 28:18-20 NLT**

18 Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

-Christ modeled it! **Matthew 3:13-17 NIV**

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. 16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

\*His obedience is our example! [It was the WILL OF THE FATHER!]

\*His baptism was done to **“fulfill all righteousness.”**

-PARTIAL OBEDIENCE is DISOBEDIENCE!

-Are YOU only PARTIALLY obedient to God?

-What do you think you are MISSING because of this?

\*It was a picture of Christ's IDENTIFICATION with sinful man!

-Likewise, our baptism is the SYMBOL of our identification with him!

**-Baptism is only an OUTWARD SYMBOL of an INWARD REALITY!**

\*Symbols make terrible SUBSTITUTES! [Wedding Ring Vs. Married life]

\*Symbols paint beautiful PICTURES! [Covenant Pictures]

-The Wedding Ring [The ring does not MAKE me married!]

### **The METHOD of Baptism: How?**

**\*Sprinkling** (Sprinkling was done in O.T. TIMES with the blood of animals.)

**\*Pouring** (Usually done 3 times – In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.)

**\*Dunking (Immersion)**

Why do we put people under water during baptism? **[We are people of the Word!]**

\*The word BAPTISE means, “to immerse, to put under.”

-It is a word used to describe the sinking of a ship!

-It is the only way that we see baptism described in scripture.

-It is the only SYMBOL that truly paints a picture of death and resurrection.

What happens to the salvation of one who is NOT IMMersed or not even baptized?

\*Nothing. You are still saved! Baptism is NOT ESSENTIAL to salvation. **Got that?**

### **So, why is baptism by immersion after conversion important?**

**The ACT, TIMING, and METHOD of baptism are not essential to SALVATION, but they are essential to OBEDIENCE!**

### **The MEANING of Baptism**

**\*I BELONG to God.**

-Like the wedding ring, it tells everyone that I BELONG TO SOMEONE!

-This is why baptism is a form of IDENTIFICATION! **Galatians 3:26-29 NLT**

**26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

Note first that it says that you become children of God “through FAITH in Christ Jesus.” Next, Paul says that baptism pictures the truth that we PUT ON Christ just like we PUT ON NEW CLOTHES when we are born again. We are clothed in HIS righteousness, and everything good and holy in our lives comes from him! Now you must realize that the real baptism is NEVER-ENDING. You “stay wet,” spiritually speaking! But the act of baptism is an external picture of being IMMersed into a living relationship with Christ. It COMPLETELY IDENTIFIES you with him. Jesus commanded his disciples to baptize every new believer. He WANTS to IDENTIFY with us.

**\*I am CLEAN.**

The “washing of regeneration” is not baptism, but the true cleansing of a soul by our heavenly Father. Please do not confuse the two! In fact, when Paul talks about his own baptism by Ananias, he says it this way:

**Acts 22:16 NLT**

The washing away of sins does not come because of baptism, but because of the fact that Paul CALLED upon the NAME of JESUS! We are saved in the same way. When

we have trusted Christ for our salvation, then we are made clean and holy in God's sight.

**\*I DIED. Romans 6:3 NLT**

**3 Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death?**

When you get saved, you DIE to your OLD LIFE. There are things that are no longer a part of your daily existence. The things that used to hold you captive now have no real power over you. You are dead to your old life of lust and greed and hatred and selfishness. Right? Well, the picture called baptism is one that God in the PROCESS of COMPLETING in you by sanctification! In this way, Baptism is a STATEMENT OF FAITH about what God says is ALREADY DONE in heaven and is IN PROCESS on earth! Paul is MATTER OF FACT about it. Just as Christ died, we died!

**\*I have been RAISED to a NEW LIFE in Christ. Romans 6:4-5 NLT**

**4 For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. 5 Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was.**

You are not only dead to some things; you are alive to other things that were not even an OPTION for you before you came to Christ! You get to experience PEACE in your daily life, and you have the POWER OF GOD within you to help you live a fulfilling life of HOLINESS and LOVE. YOU ARE ALIVE! **This is also a PROFOUND STATEMENT OF FAITH about your confidence beyond this life!**

**\*I will one day RISE from the grave.**

All of this is wrapped up in the beautiful, powerful symbol of baptism. Have you followed Christ in absolute obedience on this point?

- \*Have you given your life to Christ?
- \*Have you been baptized SINCE the day you gave your life to Christ?
- \*Have you been baptized by immersion as a picture of death, burial, and resurrection?

We have done everything necessary to take away any reason why you cannot get this issue right in your life right now TODAY!

- \*We have clothes and hairdryers and shirts ready for you.
- \*We have people ready to get you prepared for baptism today.
- \*We are not going to make you share your own story or say anything!
- \*We are going to make this as easy and simple as possible for you today!

**LOOK, HERE IS WATER. WHAT HINDERS YOU FROM BEING BAPTIZED TODAY?**