

# Baptism — Does This Mean War?

April 29, 2018 | Wonderful Mercy Church

# Baptism

- BAPTIZO: to dip, immerse, wash, submerge, place into
- Countless battles have been fought among followers of Jesus about this word: what it means, how to do it, who can perform it, who can receive it
- Entire denominations have formed around a particular understanding and practice of baptism

# Baptism

- Signifies union with Christ, His Spirit, and His body, the Church
- Acts 19:4-5 NLT  
Paul said, “John’s baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus.” <sup>5</sup> As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

# Baptism

- Acts 2:38 NLT  
Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins, turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ to show that you have received forgiveness for your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

# Baptism

- 1 Corinthians 12:13 NLT  
“Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.”

# Baptism is Commanded by Jesus

- Matthew 28:18-20 NLT

Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. <sup>20</sup> 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.”

# The Meaning of Baptism

- It is a picture of death and resurrection, Christ's and ours
- Romans 6:3-4 NLT  
“Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? <sup>4</sup> 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.”

# The Meaning of Baptism

- Romans 6:11-13 PASSION  
“Since you are now joined with him, you must continually view yourselves as dead and unresponsive to sin’s appeal while living daily for God’s pleasure in union with Jesus, the Anointed One. <sup>12</sup> Sin is a dethroned monarch; so you must no longer give it an opportunity to rule over your life, controlling how you live and compelling you to obey its desires and cravings.



# The Meaning of Baptism

- Romans 6:11-13 PASSION

“So then, refuse to answer its call to surrender your body as a tool for wickedness. Instead, passionately answer God’s call to keep yielding your body to him as one who has now experienced resurrection life! You live now for his pleasure, ready to be used for his noble purpose.”

# The Meaning of Baptism

- It is not the rite of baptism that saves, it is what baptism *signifies* that saves: the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead
- 1 Peter 3:21 NLT  
“And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

# What About Infant Baptism?

- Baptism upon personal confession of faith is most clearly attested pattern in the New Testament
- Infant baptism was practiced in the apostolic age and throughout whole history of Church
- No explicit example of it in the New Testament, though there are instances of entire households (Cornelius in Acts 10 and Lydia in Acts 16) being baptized

# Sprinkling? Immersion? Pouring?

- Scripture doesn't prescribe how
- All were practiced in early history of church
- Immersion powerfully illustrates Romans 6:3-5
- The mode of baptism doesn't validate it

# Should I Be Re-Baptized?

- The inference of re-baptism is that:
  - it didn't work the first time
  - its effectiveness depends on our understanding
- Baptism, like salvation, *is once for all* — unrepeatable. You can no more be re-baptized than you can be re-saved, for baptism speaks of Christ's death once and for all for our sins

# Should I Be Re-Baptized?

- What I commend and practice instead is celebrating an affirmation of baptismal vows—saying yes with the faith we own now to the beautiful promises spoken over us long ago

# Conclusions

- Humility demands this acknowledgement: we know less than we think
- There is room for faithful followers of Jesus to come to different conclusions according to their conscience and understanding of Scripture
- Spoiling for a fight? There's the door. There is room in this church for more than one perspective — we won't divide over this issue, even if we disagree





# Baptism — Does This Mean War?

April 29, 2018 | Wonderful Mercy Church