

# Make Church a Part of Your Life

## WEEKLY SERMONETTE



### “Baptism” -Publicly Identifying With Christ

By Preacher/Teacher Terry Laughlin, CrossRoads Ministries

#### Important Step for the Christian

After accepting Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, the sacrament of water baptism is a very important step in the Christian's life. In Matthew 3:13-17 we read of Jesus being baptized. The Bible says, "...Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you.' Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now, it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.'" "Righteousness" (δικαιοσύνη dikaiosúnē) here is conformity to all of God's standards for the believer. (The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament)

Christ is the standard for Christians. Jesus was not being baptized for the repentance of sin, for He never sinned. (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26) This baptism for Jesus was an ordination, publicly fulfilling God's standard for Him, and thus opened the gates of heaven for the Holy Spirit's empowerment to accomplish God's will for Him. (Matthew 3: 16; 4: 1-11) Jesus' baptism forever changed the way His followers would

look upon the celebration of water baptism.

When we receive Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, through faith we become children of God; and we are baptized we are identifying ourselves with Christ publicly. (Galatians 3:26-29; Act 10:1-47; Acts 8:26-39) The bap-

tism celebration ceremony is a public proclamation of whom we are uniting ourselves with. A similar form of ceremony is performed at a wedding; specifically the exchange of a wedding rings, where witnesses observe to whom you are pledging yourself. Before a soldier can wear the uniform, a ceremony

is performed when a soldier makes a public proclamation of loyalty.

From the earliest time in church history to now, the body of Christ has used symbols to communicate her faith and life. One of the symbols of repentance and receiving the new life promised in Christ is water baptism. (Acts 8:36; 10:37) A wedding ring is a outward symbol that a person is married to someone, the person God has given them, to be their partner throughout life on earth, and is given in front of witnesses at the ceremony. A military uniform is an outward symbol that a person is involved with the armed forces-the type of uniform dictates which branch and division. There are regulations on the wearing and caring for those uniforms. Military personnel are expected - and required - to wear respective uniforms during appropriate occasions, just as Christians are expected to participate in baptism. The celebration of the Christian's baptism is a symbolic act saying, "I am dying to self-centeredness and sin-centeredness for the righteousness of God and Christ-centeredness."

#### Weekly Scripture Reading

- Galatians 2:1-21
- Galatians 3:1-29
- Galatians 4:1-31
- Galatians 5:1-26
- Galatians 6:1-18
- Joel 2:28-3:21
- Acts 2:1-28

Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society

### The Weed Eater

Weeding the garden is a chore; but if we procrastinate, those weeds will take over and choke out beautiful plantings. Mark 4:7 tells us, "...seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain." In our daily lives we must be vigilant for "weeds" like pessimism, negativity and fear. We don't want them to creep in and destroy the beauty and fruitfulness of our lives. Stay close to God and plant seeds of faith, hope and optimism! The gifts of the Spirit are great "weed eaters". Worship regularly—don't let the "weeds" take over.



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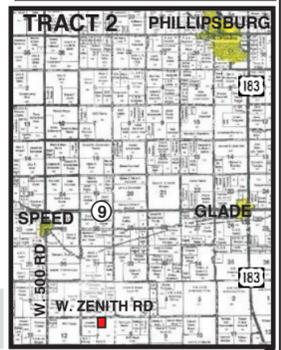
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9	1	7	2	8	3	4	6	5
4	8	3	6	5	1	7	2	9
2	6	5	4	9	7	8	1	3
1	4	8	7	3	6	9	5	2
7	3	9	8	2	5	6	4	1
5	2	6	1	4	9	3	7	8
8	5	2	3	6	4	1	9	7
3	7	4	9	1	2	5	8	6
6	9	1	5	7	8	2	3	4

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### Watery Conclusions

S	H	A	L	T	G	O	T	H	S	P	A	M	
B	E	L	O	W	A	B	B	A	T	O	N	I	
A	R	T	N	O	U	V	E	A	U	A	R	K	S
P	R	E	Y	L	I	T	T	L	E				
T	O	P	S	A	I	L	T	I	M	E	R		
E	R	R	O	R	S	M	O	N	I	C	A		
A	G	E	N	T	S	I	L	O	S	N	E	D	
S	A	S	S	S	A	L	A	D	S	T	A	R	
E	N	S	H	O	N	E	Y	S	I	E	G	E	
B	U	I	L	D	S	M	U	R	A	L	S		
C	L	U	B	S	T	I	S	S	U	E	S		
L	A	R	O	S	A	M	A	M	A				
I	D	E	A	C	L	E	M	E	N	C	E	A	U
N	E	A	T	T	I	R	E	N	O	T	I	T	
G	N	U	S	S	E	E	R	A	W	A	R	E	

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