

# Make Church a Part of Your Life

## WEEKLY SERMONETTE



### “Baptism” -Publicly Identifying With Christ

By Preacher/Teacher Terry Laughlin, CrossRoads Ministries

**Modes of this Christian Celebration**

Jesus and His disciples spoke of the importance of baptism. However, the New Testament is not altogether clear as to the methodology of this Christian celebration. Baptism ceremonies are performed in fonts, baptisteries, in lakes, streams and even the oceans. Christians throughout history have been water baptized through different methods, including but not limited to sprinkling, the pouring of water over the head three times, immersion going straight down, forward and backwards, et cetera. The key significance is that the person has accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord by faith. (Acts 18:8; Ephesians 2:8-10) The person to be baptized has in repentance (Act 2:38; 3:19; 17:30) turned from his or her old life and put on the new one in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). The new believer craves to be taught the things of God and has asked to be baptized. (Acts 8: 26-39)

What is spiritually significant to enjoying a baptismal service is the motive of the person's heart in the baptism ceremony, not the method. How do we know this?

There is much debate within Christianity on the proper mode of baptism. Personally, I agree with many denominations where immersion is the best method of Christian baptism. I am in agreement with Rev. Matt Slick, “we should be careful to assert that baptism can only mean immersion...” in regard to the Christian baptism ceremony. This is especially important when we look at the whole of Scripture in regards to being adopted in the family of God, becoming children of God, and accepted by God through the shed blood of Christ. A true student of God's Word will consider the whole of Scripture in regard to being saved through the blood of Christ, meaning we are purchased through Jesus, who gave His life on the

Cross for the redemption of our sins. There is one Scriptural indication that baptize (baptizo), meaning “to immerse or dip,” was translated as (baptismos) in Hebrews 9:10, meaning “various washing” and it is connected to the sprinkling of blood, for it is through the shedding of Jesus' blood, Christians are redeemed. Biblically, the prototype of sprinkling of blood on certain items was the symbol of being sanctified to God, or rather covered by the blood of Christ. In his teaching on modes of baptism, Rev. Robert Harch

pointed out several Scriptural references regarding purification and dedication unto the Lord being performed through the sprinkling or pouring of blood or water. (Exodus 12:22; Hebrews 11:28; Exodus 24:6-8; Hebrews 9:10, 13, 14 19, 21, 22; Leviticus 4:6; 9:9; 14:6-7; Numbers 19:18-21) The sacrament of water baptism is a beautiful illustration of the cleansing of God's elect from all their sins through the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son. I believe Satan works hard to distract Christians by provoking debates over the method of

baptism, thus preventing them from grasping the heart of water baptism.

The symbolic act of water baptism is symbolizing outwardly, the inward dying to the sinful nature to take up a new life, one full of the Lord's leading and blessings. Water has been used symbolically many times in the Old and New Testament to represent God's cleansing power. I love that truth proclaimed by Ezekiel, who is writing on behalf of God, explaining the new birth, I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and laws. (Ezekiel 36:25-26) Jesus said you must be born of “water and Spirit...” (John 3:5)

Rev. Robert Harbach writes, “The reformed and Presbyterian churches do not [re-baptize] members who have been baptized by immersion. Their baptism is [regarded] as valid.” If churches that sprinkle or pour at their water baptism celebration services can regard immersion baptisms as valid, then churches that perform immersion baptisms should respect baptisms that are done differently. The Lord is not looking at methods; He wants His children to publicly identify with Him as an expression from their heart, for when approached through a heart of repentance and performed in the names of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, all methods of water baptism should be regarded as valid. The doctrine of man should submit to the grace of God. Any church seeking to enjoy a baptismal service to its fullest, will cast off the caners of traditionalism, denominationalism, and legalism, so the person being baptized may be Holy Spirit illuminated of the joy of the Lord.

## Child's Play

Time shared by a father and child is special; when they play together the baby watches his father's actions and reactions. Dad is role-playing...his child will learn to treat others by the way his father treats him. What a challenging role! Proverbs 22:6 tells us...“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” God's Word can be a constant source of strength and wisdom, our Heavenly Father is the ultimate example. May we honor fathers everywhere as we worship as a family this week.

**Weekly Scripture Reading**

Jeremiah 31:23-40

Jeremiah 33:1-26

Lamentations 3:22-58

Hosea 1:1-2:1

Hosea 2:2-23

Hosea 3:1-4:10

Hosea 4:11-5:15

Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society

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