

- ***READ Colossians 2:11-13*** These verses should make it abundantly clear to us that baptism is not something that should be taken lightly. It is not something that we should treat as not having much meaning or not integral to our faith and obedience to God. It is, in fact, a powerful action of faith and obedience in which we see the powerful “working of God” taking place. Just as God used His power as deity to raise Jesus from the dead, so too are we raised from our spiritual grave. **(Romans 6:4,5)**
- It is quite unfortunate that such clear teachings are often ignored or misconstrued by many who claim faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. In their quest to proclaim the sovereignty of God they fail to recognize that God in His sovereignty has the ability to dictate that man must put his faith in Jesus and be baptized and raised in the likeness of His burial and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins. As we seek to simply speak the truth on the issue, we are often charged with putting an overemphasis on baptism. Some would say that we think there is something magical about the water, and that our faith is in the water and not in the Savior!
- Friends, I don’t know about you, but I know that this could not be further from the truth in my mind and heart. I am fully convinced that the power of baptism is not in the water, but it is in the grace of God that we access through our faithful obedience. **(Ephesians 2:8; Romans 6:17)** The power of God isn’t in baptism alone. There is no power in simply being dunked in water. The power comes from the culmination of God’s grace, our faith, and our obedience all working together so that we can be *“forgiven us all our transgressions.”* **(Colossians 2:13)** It isn’t as if baptism itself has God-like power.
- But what about the fact that in baptism the “working of God” is present? If God is working in baptism then can’t He do whatever He wants through that action of obedience. Of course He can and could, but that doesn’t mean that He has. In fact, I would suggest that Scripture teaches us that the power of baptism is limited and that there are some things that baptism just doesn’t do for us. Let’s explore this idea of the limited power of baptism and consider seven things that baptism will not do for us. We need to make sure that we understand and are able to show others that baptism isn’t this magical experience in which life radically changes simply because we are dunked in water. There are some other things that we need to consider in our lives, and there are some other misconceptions that people might sometimes have that we need to be sure that we can clear up if need be.

7 Things Baptism Will Not Do

I. It will not change the heart.

- A. The teachings of particular false doctrines would lead some to believe that upon going through a “salvation experience” that one is automatically changed from their very heart to be a completely different person. They will from then on out only seek to follow God. Their dark heart will be softened and holiness and righteousness will only be their course of action from there on out.
- B. While it certainly would be nice to believe and be able to teach that our righteousness switch is flipped on at the point of receiving salvation and the forgiveness of sins, we must remain honest to the Scripture and recognize that being baptized, even in faith, doesn’t automatically trigger a complete changing of our hearts to be as God would have them to be. Notice that Simon the sorcerer was a man who was baptized based upon his belief and he even continued on with Philip, yet his heart had not been fully changed simply because he was faithfully baptized. **(Acts 8:12,13)** *“You have not part of portion in this matter, for your heart is not right with God.”* **(Acts 8:21)**
- C. We must recognize that there truly isn’t some sort of magical, mystical, or supernaturally power in the water itself. There isn’t some switch in our hearts that is hit when we are baptized that suddenly transforms our hearts as God would have them to be transformed. **(Romans 12:2)** Instead, we must recognize that this transformation comes through our commitment from there on

forward to allow the Holy Spirit to guide our lives to live as God would have us to live.

(Galatians 5:22-25) This isn't something that happens in an instant, but it is a continual process of becoming like Jesus in everything that we do. Baptism doesn't change the heart, but God will through His Spirit and His Word.

II. It will not guarantee eternal salvation.

- A. There is much that we can learn from the example of Simon the sorcerer. We have already seen one and we will consider a few more throughout the lesson. The next one we will look at is the fact that baptism will not guarantee us eternal salvation. Jesus because we are baptized in faith does not mean that we will be able to go on throughout the rest of our lives living as we wish while simply relying upon our baptism as a means of eternal security.
- B. Considering Simon...if baptism is a means of guaranteed eternal salvation, then why was Peter so adamant that he repent and pray that he might be forgiven? **(Acts 8:22-24)** Why would Simon beg for Peter to pray for him so that nothing terrible would come upon him? If he was eternally secure, then what could he possibly be fearful of?
- C. The truth is that our baptism is the point in which we obtain guaranteed salvation no matter how we live our lives, but it is the point in which we begin to live in a different direction seeking to serve God and do His will. We can and will be saved eternally *IF* we continue to do as God would have us to do. **(Hebrews 3:6,13,14)** Simply being baptized does not guarantee us salvation...we can still be lost if we go on to live in disobedience to God.

III. It will not eliminate the need for repentance.

- A. These two points go hand in hand together as we recognize that baptism will no more guarantee our salvation as it will eliminate our need to lead changed lives because of our repentance.
- B. Think again about the man Simon in **Acts 8**. We read that this man made a living as a sorcerer. More than likely, this man practiced this trickery and slight of hand as a means to wow crowds into filling his pockets with lots of money and profit. Many magicians and sorcerers were simply greedy individuals who had come across this easy means of getting rich quick. Notice that even though Simon had been baptized in his belief, he still seemed to have a greedy heart that was looking for a way to gain notoriety and profit. **(Acts 8:18,19)**
- C. Simon may have been baptized, but it seems clear that he had not truly repented of his past sins, and he continued to live in them. We must recognize that God demands that those who come to Him in faith must be willing to change their lives. The one "who steals must steal no longer."**(Ephesians 4:28)** At the point of baptism, God expects for us to make a commitment to a different way of living. We are to live from that point on as people who are now "alive to God in Christ Jesus." **(Romans 6:8-13)** At the point of baptism a change should take place so that we no longer live as slaves of sin, but we live as slaves of God in righteousness.

IV. It will not prevent you from future sin.

- A. But this doesn't mean that at the point of baptism that we will never be able to sin, again. Baptism doesn't make it so that we cannot ever sin again, and we can see this once again in the story of Simon from **Acts 8:9-24**. The Scripture clearly tells us that Simon *"himself believed; and after being baptized continued on with Philip."* (**Acts 8:13**) This man had acted upon his faith and he was baptized for the forgiveness of his sins. He had made that commitment to no longer be a slave or sin, but a slave to God.
- B. However, we quickly turn around and find him guilty of wickedness through his efforts to buy the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter said that he was in need of repenting of his wickedness. (**Acts 8:22**) Even though he had been baptized, Simon was still guilty of this sin, but he isn't the only example of such. We can even look to the man who rebuked Simon for his sin as someone who fell into the trap of sin. Peter, an Apostle, was guilty of his own sin and was rebuke by Paul in **Galatians 2:11-13**.
- C. These examples are present to simply show that just because someone is baptized and commits their life to Christ doesn't mean that sin all the sudden becomes an impossibility. In fact, it is very possible for the baptized believer to sin and *"again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame"* (**Hebrews 6:6**), which is why it is so important for believers to stay alert.

V. It will not eliminate future temptation.

- A. What we must be alert for are the temptations that Satan puts before us in his efforts to cause us to fall. We must recognize that just because we have been baptized doesn't mean that future temptations will suddenly be alleviated from our lives, and this is a logical conclusion seeing as how we have established that Christians can sin. Per what is said in **James 1:14,15**, sin is a result of temptation, so if temptation is present then it is possible that we can sin.
- B. This concept of God's people having to deal with sin is seen well in what Paul says in **I Corinthians 13:1-10**. The children of Israel has been "baptized" in the cloud and in the sea. They had eaten spiritual food and drank spiritual drink, yet they still experienced temptation that lead many of them to die for their sins. Paul says that these temptations are the same as all men face, and that we must search out for God's way of escape so that we can overcome.
- C. At the point of baptism, we need to recognize that Satan will only crank of the heat as far as his temptations go. He will do everything the can to cause the child of God to fall, but we must lean upon the strength of God and be disciples who resist Satan's temptations to sin against God.

VI. It will not guarantee a problem-free life.

- A. Bpatism will not create for us a life that is free from temptation and sin, and we also need to recognize that baptism will not guarantee us a problem-free life. In fact, this morning we considered the truth that our faithfulness to God and commitment to good behavior will often create difficulties for us in this life.
- B. In **I Peter 3:13-16**, we see Peter encouraging disciples to remain resolved against the difficulties that those of this world might throw at them because of their doing what is right. Those who live ungodly lives might very well even malign us because we don't run with them in their wickedness (**I Peter 4:4**), but that is just the way that it has to be if we are seeking to live godly in a dying world.
- C. The truth is that being baptized into Christ might actually create new problems in our lives that we didn't have before. Regardless, the best decision we can make is to join in the death and resurrection of Jesus. It doesn't mean that our lives will suddenly because problem-free, but it does mean that we will have the ability to our lives with a good and clear conscience.

VII. It will not erase all consequences of past actions.

- A. Finally, let's consider that while baptism will wash away sins (**Acts 22:16**), it won't wash away and erase all consequences of our past actions. Consider an example that isn't perfectly parallel, but is still one that illustrates the point. Consider the thief on the cross. While this man didn't go through the same process of salvation as we have under Christ, he was still forgiven of his sins by Jesus and was told that he would join Jesus in Paradise based upon his faith and repentance. (**Luke 23:43**)
- B. Recognize that even though this man was penitent, even though Jesus forgave him, and even though Jesus said that he would be in Paradise with him on that very day...this man still died on the cross on which he hung. He had been forgiven of the guilt of his sin, but he still had to suffer the consequences for what he did in this life.
- C. This is something that we must recognize about baptism. While baptism will cleanse our standing before God as far as our guilt goes, we must recognize that it doesn't alleviate any consequences that might be incurred by our actions. If I cheat on my wife and she puts me away for such, then just because I might be baptized after the fact doesn't mean that I all the sudden have the freedom to remarry lawfully. If I murder someone, but come to Jesus while in prison, I don't get to appeal to my newfound faith as a reason for my sentence of death to be erased. Yes, God forgives me, but I must still suffer the consequences of my poor decisions in this life.

While God might be powerfully working at the point where we put our faith in Jesus and are baptized for the forgiveness of our sins, we must recognize that baptism isn't a silver bullet that will make our lives perfect. Instead, we must recognize that baptism is that point of change. No longer will we live for self. No longer will we rely upon our own strength to overcome temptation and sin, but we will take those things head on with the help of our God who will be powerfully working within us through His Spirit and the Word He inspired men to write. Let's keep working and serving to grow into mature men and women of Christ.

PRAYER *Our loving Father, we thank You for the opportunity to have our sins forgiven. We thank you for the blessing of being joined together with Jesus in His death and resurrection. We thank you that you promise to be with us as we strive to live lives that are pleasing to you. Help us to be ever diligent to be committed to righteousness and faithfulness, and help us to lean upon You firstly and also one another as we seek to make it home to be with you. Bless us as we go throughout this week, and may all things we do be done to Your glory alone. In Jesus's most holy name we pray...amen.*