

# BAPTISM

People have asked, "Why do you mention baptism when talking about salvation, hardly anyone else does?" While you may not hear it spoken of in the televangelism circles, the Bible has plenty to say about it and we talk about it, to restore baptism to its rightful place in the life of the Church.

Baptism is only for believers, as the New Testament reveals. It is for those who have believed in Jesus and repented of their sins. It is the last act of the new birth or regeneration process. As in natural birth, this process begins with the planting of the seed, which is the hearing of the word of God, and climaxes in a new person. Baptism is part of the response to God's grace that we refer to as Faith. Faith is believing in Jesus and then trusting completely in Him. Baptism is not a human work, but a working of God on us, to transfer us, as a new creation, into His kingdom, to cleanse us of our sins, and place us in Christ. \*Mk 16:15,16, Mt 28:18-20, Gal. 3:27, I Pet. 3:21, Acts 22:16, Titus 3:5, Col. 2:11-13. Baptism is an expression of the Christian hope of the resurrection and a reenactment, in symbolic fashion, of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Savior. \*Rom 6:1-9..

In baptism, we follow the example of Jesus, who came to the Jordan River to submit to John and fulfill all righteousness. We obey His command to be baptized. We follow the precedent set by those who received the gospel invitation of salvation through Christ as recorded in the book of Acts. After the initial presentation of the gospel by Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, he stated very clearly what the response to the message must be- "Repent and be baptized, every one of you for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38 The account of that day shows us that as many as received the message were baptized and added to the number of disciples.

Baptism is the ultimate demonstration of unity for Christians. It unites us with Christ and with one another. Paul mentions "one baptism" in his great unity passage- Eph 4, because while we may come from different social and economic backgrounds and have different abilities, everyone is the same in the baptismal pool, humbly submitting to God. It is the common act that binds us together in Christ's spirit and makes us a "Christian."