

## September 20,2020 James Gallaher - Baptism is Obedience

There is a difference between watching something and actually participating in it. When people are resilient to a task – they draw us in. Like the Apostle Paul who survived so much – shipwrecked, stoned, snake bitten, etc. Often in the church, Christians are intrigued by the life of Christ but not actually interested in living that life. Scripture says that we will have sufferings as Christ did when we follow Him.

Baptism is a simple step of obedience to Jesus. It is the first thing that Jesus calls us to after receiving Christ and His salvation.

**Acts 2:37** *Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

**Acts 8:12** *But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.*

**Acts 8:36-38** *As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him.*

**Acts 22:16** *Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.*

Scripture talks about baptism (about 77 times) as a response to salvation. The only prerequisite to being baptized is to be a believer of Christ, a Christian. We are just asked to walk through the same process as Christ did. Sometimes we know we should do something but put it off as something that can be done later. But often, delayed obedience results in disobedience.

Baptism is a declaration to the world that we are a follower of Christ. It was very important to New Testament Christians as it stood as the thing that separated them from others around. Baptism stands as a great witness to the world around us of what God has done on the inside of us so that people can see it on the outside. It is not required for salvation but is done in response to salvation. With scripture references of over 77 times, it is impossible to deny that baptism is a simple act of obedience to the call of God on a life. It is never too late or too soon to be baptized after salvation.

Making Jesus the Lord of your life, receiving Jesus' payment – His death on the cross - and forgiveness for sins is the first step. Nothing then stands in the way of being baptized. It doesn't matter how long you have been a Christian either.

**Luke 6:46** *Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? Not being baptized as scripture calls for can only be viewed as disobedience. An earthly father who sees his own children not following through on what they say they will do causes brokenness in the father's heart. We do the same by delaying obedience to our heavenly Father.*

Jesus wasn't bringing shame or guilt – Jesus is saying that if anyone is going to call Me Lord, then trust Me and follow Me. It is for our benefit. Obeying what He calls us to do releases blessing in our lives. God is faithful when we do what He has called us to do.

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God tells us that obedience is better than sacrifice. Today, people seem to focus on the sacrifice before walking in the fullness of our calling. The call of God is irrevocable. He has placed talent and purpose in our lives. Obedience allows us to walk in the fullness of what God is calling each of us.

The simplest act of obedience is baptism. All who call on the name of the Lord are to be baptized. There is nothing to do before being baptized – no classes, no amount of experience, no reservation, no amount of service...nothing. In the moment of conviction or clarity that Jesus died for us and we make Him Lord, is the moment we can obediently walk in baptism. Baptism is always connected to salvation. Salvation is always connected to an acknowledgement of who God is and who we are. Baptism is a person's acknowledgement that Jesus Christ is Lord and He is the only way for us to get to the Kingdom of Heaven.

**John 14:6** *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.*

Baptism is the response to the understanding of what Christ has done. It is that simple – a declaration of what Jesus Christ has done for me! I cannot save myself – I need Jesus to intervene.

Is the reason we don't understand God's Word because we complicate it? Jesus' commands are mostly very simple, but the problem is that we don't want to do them. It can be hard to walk these things out because we don't have the confidence that He is leading us to the blessings of following. Baptize means immerse. We try to make it more complicated. It is simply the physical representation of what Jesus did - Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead.

Jesus' final words matter. He gave two instructions: tell about salvation with Jesus and baptize. **Matthew 28:19** *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

God proclaims His satisfaction in Jesus' baptism. Is it an overlooked act for you? Do you feel it is out of reach? Baptism is simple and a reflection of salvation. Don't wait on hearing God's favor spoken to you. **Mark 1:14** *In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."*

Jesus will set us free. Surrender to Jesus. Don't delay. **Prayer of salvation:**  
*Dear Lord Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God. I believe that on that cross You took my guilt, my sin, and my shame and You died for it. You faced hell for me, so I wouldn't have to. And You rose again to give me a place in Heaven, a purpose on Earth, and a relationship with Your Father. Today, Lord Jesus, I turn from my sins to be born again. And now, God is my father, Jesus is my Savior, The Holy Spirit is my helper. And Heaven is my home. Amen.*

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Is something keeping you from following Jesus in baptism?

What does delayed obedience mean?

What excuse are you using for not following in a command of Jesus?

How have you heard God's favor over you?