

LESSON 4 – BAPTISM: A DEEPLY MEANINGFUL ACT OF OBEDIENCE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS LESSON

The purpose of this lesson is to help the participants gain a biblical understanding and appreciation of the Christian baptism, so as to inspire and motivate those who have not been baptized to commit to baptism with eagerness and gladness.

1. THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

The Christian baptism is an act of obedience to Jesus (Matt 28:19-20). It is an outward physical expression of an inward spiritual and volitional (and choice of the will) truth. In the spiritual aspect, baptism symbolizes the dying to our old godless self and the rebirth of a new life in Christ (Rom 6:3-4, Col 2:12). In the volitional aspect, it symbolizes a choice and a commitment to follow Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. It is a public ceremony of declaration (similar to a wedding) that we now live a new life following the living Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

MATTHEW 28:19-20

“19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

ROMANS 6:34

3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?
4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

COLOSSIANS 2:12

12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

2. THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM

Baptism is commanded and modeled by our Lord Jesus (Matt 28:19-20, 3:15-17). It is a formal public declaration of our faith in Christ (Rom 10:10, Matt 10:32-33). The practice of baptism is also commanded by the early church Apostles (Acts 2:38). While baptism is not required for salvation (Eph 2:8-9, Lk 23:39-43) or for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in every true Christian (Eph 1: Acts 10:44-48), it is designed to be a deeply meaningful act that is closely linked with our salvation (Mk 16:16) and aids in the growth of our faith in Christ.

MATTHEW 3:1517

15 Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented. 16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

ROMANS 10:10

10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

MATTHEW 10:32-33

32 “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.
33 But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.”

ACTS 2:38

38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

EPHESIANS 2:8-9

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

EPHESIANS 1:13-14

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

ACTS 10:43-48

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.
45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. 46 For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, 47 “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” 48 So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

MARK 16:16

16 “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF BAPTISM

Most of the baptism examples recorded in the Bible happened right at or very near the point of conversion (Acts 8, 16:30-33, 22:16). Baptism should be the starting point of our faith. It is the “initiation/registration” of our journey of faith, not the “graduation”. It does not matter how long you have been a Christian, how much you know about the Bible, or how mature in the faith you are. The key is to believe in the Lord Jesus and the desire to follow Him.

THE METHODS OF BAPTISM

In our church we practice believer’s baptism by emersion. We only practice believers baptism (baptizing only those who have come to faith in Jesus) but will respect and honor those who have had infant baptism and believes clearly and firmly about the validity and the meaning of their baptism (Infant baptism are practiced by our brothers and sisters from some denominations because they believe it is a sign of a covenant with God like circumcision in the OT).

In terms of the actual procedure, there are many methods of baptism (emersion, sprinkling, pouring, etc.) The Bible does not specify one procedure of baptism, as long as it is done in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, and in public with a sincere faith, it is valid.

We practice emersion because we believe that it expresses best the symbolism of dying to self and living a new life in Christ.

THE PREPARATION OF BAPTISM

Often right before baptism, the baptism candidates may experience more intense forms of spiritual attack, this is due to the fact that Satan is not happy with anyone who chooses to publicly declare their faith and allegiance in Christ. It is a good idea to spend more time in prayer and in the Word with the Lord to prepare your heart for baptism. It is also a good time to ask the Lord to help you “clean house” and have a good new start by confessing any known present or past sins. For reference, please use the “7 Steps to Freedom in Christ” process attached.

7 Steps to Freedom in Christ

(Adopted and Modified from “The Bondage Breaker” by Neil T Anderson)

Please find a quiet place, set aside a good amount of time to be alone with the Lord Jesus, and follow the instructions and pray aloud the prayers with a focused mind and sincere heart.

Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, I acknowledge Your presence in this room and in my life. You are the only omniscient (all-knowing), omnipotent (all-powerful), and omnipresent (always present) God. I am dependent upon You, for apart from Christ I can do nothing. I stand in the truth that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to the resurrected Christ, and because I am in Christ I share that authority in order to make disciples and set captives free. I ask You to fill me with Your Holy Spirit and lead me into all truth. I pray for Your complete protection and ask for Your guidance. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Declaration

As a child of God seated with Christ in the heavenlies, and in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command Satan and all evil spirits to release me in order that I can be free to know and choose to do with will of God. I commit myself to do the will of God, and I submit my body to my heavenly Father as a living sacrifice, an instrument of righteousness. I refuse to be intimidated by Satan’s lies, or to give in to any physical harassment. I am a child of God and the evil one cannot touch me.

Step 1: Counterfeit Versus Real

Renounce previous or current involvements with satanically inspired occultic practices or false religions.

Dear heavenly Father, I ask You to guard my heart and my mind and to reveal to me any and all involvement I have had either knowingly or unknowingly with cultic or occultic practices, false religions, and false teachers. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Write down everything God brings to mind.

Lord I confess that I have participated in _____. I ask Your forgiveness, and I renounce _____ as a counterfeit to true Christianity.

Step 2: Deception Versus Truth

Dear heavenly Father, I know that You desire truth in the inner self and that facing this truth is the way of liberation (Jn 8:32). I acknowledge that I have been deceived by the father of lies (Jn 8:44) and that I have deceived myself (1 Jn 1:8). I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that You, heavenly Father, will rebuke all deceiving spirits by virtue of the shed blood and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And since by faith I have received You into my life and am now seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph 2:6), I command all deceiving spirits to depart from me. I now ask the Holy Spirit to guide me into all truth (Jn 16:13). I ask You to “search me, I God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way” (Psa 139:23,24). In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

(Doctrinal truth affirmation declaration prayer by using our doctrinal statement with “I believe...”)

Step 3: Bitterness Versus Forgiveness

Most of the ground that Satan gains in the lives of Christians is due to an unforgiving spirit. Forgiveness is not forgetting. Forgiveness is a Choice, a crisis of the will. Forgiveness is agreeing to live with the consequences of another person’s sin. Forgiveness is costly; we pay the price of the evil we forgive. Forgive from the heart: acknowledge the hurt and the hate.

Dear heavenly Father, I thank You for the riches of Your kindness, forbearance, and patience, knowing that Your kindness has led me to repentance (Rm 2:4). I confess that I have not extended that same patience and kindness toward others who have offended me, but instead I have harbored bitterness and resentment. I pray that during this time of self-examination You would bring to mind only those people that I have not forgiven in order that I may do so (Matt 18:35). I also pray that if I have offended others You would bring to mind other those people from who I need to seek forgiveness and the extent to which I need to seek it (Mt 5:23,24). I ask this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.

Step 4: Rebellion Versus Submission

Towards: Civic Government (Rom 13:1-5; 1 Tim 2:1-4; 1 Pet 2:13-16), Parents (Eph 6:1-3), Husband (1 Pet 2:1,2), Employer (1 Pet 2:18-21), Church Leaders (Heb 13:17)

Ask for God’s forgiveness.

Dear heavenly Father, You have said that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry (1 Sam 15:23). I know that in action and attitude I have sinned against You with a rebellious heart. I ask Your forgiveness for my rebellion and pray that by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ all ground gained by evil spirits because of my rebelliousness would be canceled. I pray that you will shed light on all my ways that I may know the full extent of my rebelliousness and choose to adopt a submissive spirit and a servant’s heart. In the name of Christ Jesus my Lord. Amen.

Step 5: Pride Versus Humility

James 4:6-19; 1 Peter 5:1-10

Dear heavenly Father, You have said that pride goes before destruction and an arrogant spirit before stumbling (Prov 16:18). I confess that I have not denied myself, picked up my cross daily, and followed You (Matt 16:24). In so doing I have given ground to the enemy in my life. I have believed that I could be successful and live victoriously by my own strength

and resources. I now confess that I have sinned against you by placing my will before Yours and by centering my life around self instead of You. I now renounce the self life and by so doing cancel all the ground that has been gained in my members by the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that You will guide me so that I will do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but that with humility of mind I will regard others as more important than myself (Phil 2:3). Enable me through love to serve others and in honor prefer others (rom 12:10). I ask this in the name of Christ Jesus my Lord. Amen.

Prideful areas:

- 1) Stronger desire to do my will than God's will
- 2) More dependent upon my strengths and resources than God's.
- 3) Sometimes believe that my ideas and opinions are better than others'. 4) More concerned about controlling others than developing self-control. 5) Sometimes consider myself more important than others.
- 6) Tendency to think I have no needs.
- 7) Find it difficult to admit I was wrong.
- 8) Tendency to be more of a people-pleaser than a God-pleaser.
- 9) Overly concerned about getting the credit I deserve.
- 10) Driven to obtain the recognition that comes from degrees, titles, positions.
- 11) Often think I am more humble than others.
- 12) Other ways you may have thought more highly of yourself than you should.

For each of theses that has been true in your life, pray aloud:

Lord, I agree I have been prideful in the area of _____. Please forgive me for this pridefulness. I choose to humble myself and place all my confidence in You. Amen.

Step 6: Bondage Verse Freedom

James 5:16

Dear heavenly Father, You have told us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lust (Rm 13:14). I acknowledge that I have given in to fleshly lusts which wage war against my soul (1 Pet 2:11). I thank You that in Christ my sins are forgiven, but I have transgressed Your holy law and given the enemy an opportunity to wage war in my members (Rm 6:12,13; James 4:1; 1 Pet 5:8). I come before Your presence to acknowledge these sins and to seek Your cleansing (1 Jn 1:9) that I may be freed from the bondage of sin. I now ask You to reveal to my mind the ways that I have transgressed Your moral law and grieved the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' precious name I pray. Amen.

Pray through Gal 5:19-21.

Prayer for sexual sins (pornography, masturbation, sexual promiscuity) or sexual difficulty and lack of intimacy in your marriage:

Lord, I ask You to reveal to my mind every sexual use of my body as an instrument of unrighteousness. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Renouncing sexual sins:

Lord, I renounce (name the specific use of your body) with (name the person) and ask You to break that bond.

Now commit your body to the Lord by praying:

Lord, I renounce all these uses of my body as an instrument of unrighteousness and by so doing ask You to break all bondages that Satan has brought into my life through that involvement. I confess my participation. I now present my body to You as a living sacrifice,

holy and acceptable to You, and I reserve the sexual use of my body only for marriage. I renounce the lie of Satan that my body is not clean, that it is dirty or in any way unacceptable as a result of my past sexual experience. Lord, I thank You that You have totally cleansed and forgiven me, that You love and accept me unconditionally. Therefore, I can accept myself. And I choose to do so, to accept myself and my body as cleansed. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Specific Prayers: (Use the ones that applies to you)

Homosexuality

Lord, I renounce the lie that You have created me or anyone else to be homosexual, and I affirm that You clearly forbid homosexual behavior. I accept myself as a child of God and declare that You created me a man (or woman). I renounce any bondages of Satan that have perverted my relationships with others. I announce that I am free to relate to the opposite sex in the way that You intended. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Abortion

Lord, I confess that I did not assume stewardship of the life You entrusted to me, and I ask Your forgiveness. I choose to accept Your forgiveness by forgiving myself, and I now commit that child to You for Your care in eternity. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Suicidal tendencies

I renounce the lie that I can find peace and freedom by taking my own life. Satan is a thief, and he comes to steal, kill and destroy. I choose like in Christ, who said He came to give me life and to give it abundantly.

Eating disorders or cutting on yourself

I renounce the lie that my worthiness is dependent upon my appearance or performance. I renounce cutting myself, purging, or defecation as a means of cleansing myself of evil and I announce that only the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ can cleanse me from my sin. I accept the reality that there may be sin prôt in me because of the lies I have believed and the wrong use of my body, but I renounce the lie that I am evil or that any part of my body is evil. I announce the truth that I am totally accepted by Christ just as I am.

Substance abuse

Lord, I confess that I have misused substances (alcohol, tobacco, food, prescription or street drugs) for the purpose of pleasure, to escape reality, or to cope with difficult situations resulting in the abuse of my body, the harmful programming of my mind, and the quenching of the Holy Spirit. I ask Your forgiveness, and I renounce any satanic connection or influence in my life through my misuse of chemicals or food. I cast my anxiety onto Christ who loves me, and I commit myself to no longer yield to substance abuse but to the Holy Spirit. I ask You, heavenly Father, to fill me with Your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen.

After confessing all known sin, pray:

I now confess these sins to You and claim through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ my forgiveness and cleansing. I cancel all ground that evil spirits have gained through my willful involvement in sin. I ask this in the wonderful name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Step 7: Acquiescence Versus Renunciation

Renouncing sins of your ancestors and any curses which may have been placed on you (Ex 20:4,5).

Declaration

I here and now reject and disown all the sins of my ancestors. As one who has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, I cancel out all demonic working that may have been passed on to me from my ancestors. As one who has been crucified and raised with Jesus Christ and who sits with Him in heavenly places, I renounces all satanic assignments that are directed toward me and my ministry, and I cancel every curse that Satan and his workers have put on me. I announce to Satan and all his forces that Christ became a curse for me (Gal 3:13) when He died for my sins on the cross. I reject any and every way in which Satan may claim ownership of me. I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, who purchased me with His own blood. I reject all other blood sacrifices whereby Satan may claim ownership of me. I declare myself to be eternally and completely signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. By the authority that I have in Jesus Christ, I now command every familiar spirit and every enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ to leave my presence. I commit myself to my heavenly Father to do His will from this day forward.

Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, I come to You as Your child purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are the Lord of the universe and the Lord of my life. I submit my body to You as an instrument of righteousness, a living sacrifice, that I may glorify You in my body. I now ask You to fill me with Your Holy Spirit. I commit myself to the renewing of my mind in order to prove that Your will is good, perfect, and acceptable for me. All this I do in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sample Prayer Resources:

Daily Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, I honor You as my sovereign Lord. I acknowledge that You are always present with me. You are the only all-powerful and only wise God. You are kind and loving in all Your ways. I love You and I thank You that I am united with Christ and spiritually alive in Him. I choose not to love the world, and I crucify the flesh and all its passions.

I thank You for the life that I now have in Christ, and I ask You to fill me with Your Holy Spirit that I may live my life free from sin. I declare my dependence upon You, and I take my stand against Satan and all his lying ways. I choose to believe truth, and I refuse to be discouraged. You are the God of all hope, and I am confident that You will meet my needs as I seek to live according to Your Word. I express with confidence that I can live a responsible life through Christ who strengthens me. I now take my stand against Satan and command him and all his evil spirits to depart from me. I put on the whole armor of God. I submit my body as a living sacrifice and renew my mind by the living Word of God in order that I may prove that the will of God is good, acceptable, and perfect. I ask these things in the precious name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Bedtime Prayer

Thank You, Lord, that You have brought me into Your family and have blessed me with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ. Thank You for providing this time of

renewal through sleep. I accept it as part of your perfect plan for Your children, and I trust You to guard my mind and my body during my sleep. As I have meditated on You and Your truth during this day, I choose to let these thoughts continue in my mind while I am asleep. I commit myself to You for Your protection from every attempt of Satan or his emissaries to attack me during sleep. I commit myself to You as my rock, my fortress, and my resting place. I pray in the strong name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Cleansing Home/Apartment

Remove and discard all articles of false worship from the home!

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that You are Lord of heaven and earth. In Your sovereign power and love You have given us all things richly to enjoy. Thank You for this place to live. We claim this home for our family as a place of spiritual safety and protection from all the attacks of the enemy. As children of God seated with Christ in the heavenly realm, we command every evil spirit, claiming ground in the structures and furnishings of this place based on the activities of previous occupants, to leave and never to return. We renounce all curses and spells utilized against this place. We ask You, heavenly Father, to post guardian angels around this (apartment, condo, room, etc) to guard it from attempts of the enemy to enter and disturb Your purposes for us. We thank You, Lord, for doing this, and pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Thank You, heavenly Father, for a place to live and be renewed by sleep. I ask You to set aside my room (or portion of a room) as a place of spiritual safety for me. I renounce any allegiance given to false gods or spirits by other occupants, and I renounce any claim to this room (space) by Satan based on activities of past occupants or myself. On the basis of my position as a child of God and a joint heir with Christ, who has all authority in heaven and on earth, I command all evil spirits to leave this place and never to return.

I ask You, heavenly Father, to appoint guardian angels to protect me while I live here. I pray this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.