



1. BURYING THE PAST AND STARTING OVER

There was a dedicated priest living in the Philippines. He loved God and served his fellow man. But this particular priest had committed a secret sin while he was in seminary. Nobody knew about it, but him. Even though he had confessed it, repented of it, and felt remorse for many years, he still had no sense of peace.

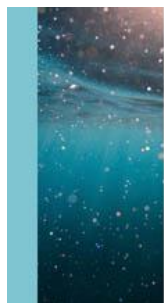


2. In his parish, there was a woman who claimed to have visions from God. The priest was skeptical of her claims, so he decided he was going to test her visions. He said to her, *"Next time you have a vision from God, I want you to ask God something for me. Ask Him what sin your priest committed while he was in seminary."* The woman agreed to do so.



3. A few days later, she came back to the parish. The priest asked her, *"Did you have another vision?"* She said, *"Yes."* *"Did you ask Him what sin your priest committed in seminary?"* *"Yes,"* said the woman, *"I did."* *"Well, what did He say?"* The woman replied, *"He said, 'I don't remember.'"*

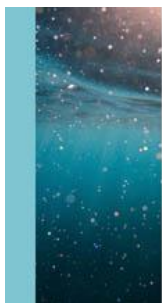
Now friends, that is a beautiful illustration of what God does with our sins when we choose to accept Jesus Christ as our Savior.



MICAH 7:18-19

"Who is a God like You,
pardoning iniquity ... ? He will
again have compassion on us,
and will subdue our iniquities.
You will cast all our sins into
the depths of the sea."

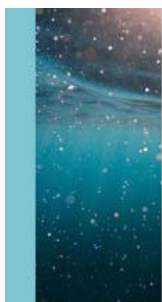
4. That's why it says in Micah chapter 7 verses 18 and 19, *"Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity ... ? He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."*



MICAH 7:18-19

"Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity ... ? He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

5. What a beautiful promise! You see, my friends, all of us have done things we wish we'd never done. Said things we wish we'd never said. Made decisions we wish we had never made. All of us have had those moments in life where we wish we could press the rewind button and just do it over again. I've had a few of those moments in my life. Then, there are people who come along and say, "Sorry, not possible. You can't change the past. You just have to live with the shame and the guilt." But actually, that's not true.



MICAH 7:18-19

"Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity ... ? He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

6. Do you know that God has given us a way to bury the past? Do you know that God has given us a way to start over again, to have that sense of shame and guilt and regret wiped away? You say, "Really? How does that happen?" It's through the experience of accepting Jesus as your Savior and being baptized. Baptism is God's way of taking the shame and guilt of the past and washing it away so we can start on a new path. And that, my friends, is what we're going to study about tonight.



MICAH 7:18-19

"Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity ... ? He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

7. You may ask, "Why would you want to study about baptism in a prophecy seminar? We're supposed to be studying prophecies with facts and figures, dates and timelines, end time signs and symbols, and things like that." That's an excellent question, and there are two answers to it.

Number one, we have learned night by night that the whole point of prophecy is to point us to Jesus, to help us to focus on His ultimate sacrifice on the cross of Calvary.



MICAH 7:18-19

"Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity ... ? He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

8. If I open up the pages of prophecy and all I'm worried about is facts, figures, and prophetic charts, but these don't lead me to actually surrender my heart to Jesus, then I have missed something. Even though the dates are important, even though it's nice to have charts and it's good to understand the interpretations, all those things don't save me. Information doesn't save. Only Jesus saves me, and prophecy needs to point me to Him. Prophecy teaches me to surrender control to Jesus. Prophecy teaches me I can trust Him.



MICAH 7:18-19

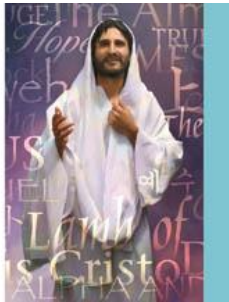
"Who is a God like You,
pardoning iniquity ... ? He will
again have compassion on us,
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You will cast all our sins into
the depths of the sea."

9. Too many people study prophecy because they want to come up with fantastic, exciting sci-fi interpretations that tickle the ears. Too many people study prophecy because they are looking for wild conspiracy theories to spread around. But friends, the whole point of prophecy is to point me to Jesus.

The other reason we study baptism in a prophecy seminar is because baptism is one of the first things mentioned in the Book of Revelation? Did you know that?

REVELATION 1:5

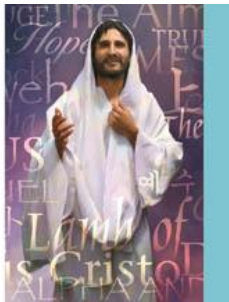
"... and from Jesus
Christ, the faithful
witness, the first-born
from the dead, and the
ruler over



10. I want to take you to Revelation chapter 1 and verse 5 and show you something that perhaps you've never noticed before. The Bible says, "*... and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler over*

REVELATION 1:5

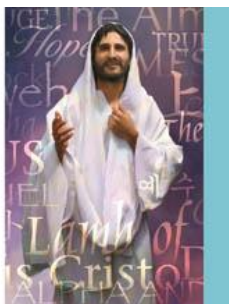
the kings of the earth.
To Him who loved us
and washed us from
our sins in His own
blood. . ."



11. *the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. . ."*

REVELATION 1:5

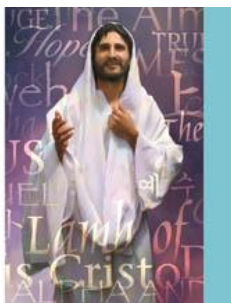
the kings of the earth.
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12. Did you catch that? Right there in the first chapter of Revelation, it says, He "washed us from our sins in His own blood." Now, friends, the washing away of sins is a clear illusion to baptism. Before John goes into any of the apocalyptic prophecies, he gives us a picture of baptism. Before he tells us about seven churches and seven seals, before he tells us about seven trumpets and seven last plagues, before he tells us about anti-christ and the mark of the beast, the first thing John leads us to is how Jesus washes us in His own blood.

REVELATION 1:5

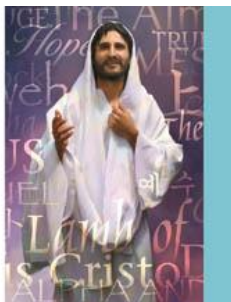
the kings of the earth.
To Him who loved us
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our sins in His own
blood. . ."



- 13.** My friends, that is exactly what we're going to spend time talking about tonight. I don't want anyone to come to this prophecy seminar, and say, *"Well, he told me a lot about facts and figures. He showed me a lot of fancy prophecy charts, but he never gave me a chance to accept Jesus. He never invited me to be baptized."* I don't want that to be said with this series.

REVELATION 1:5

the kings of the earth.
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blood. . ."



- 14.** So, I'm letting you know ahead of time that at the end of our program tonight I am going to be inviting you to make a decision for Christ. If God has been speaking to your heart and you have sensed conviction in your mind, perhaps God is preparing you to make a decision to accept Christ as Savior and be baptized. Perhaps all the prophecies we have studied so far has prepared you for this moment.



IS BAPTISM REALLY NECESSARY?

- 15.** So, let's begin our journey tonight, by asking the question, Is baptism really necessary? The first place I want us to go is Matthew, Chapter 28, beginning in verse 18. Now, these are the final words of Jesus just before He ascends and goes back to heaven.



MATTHEW 28:19-20

"Go therefore and make
disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the
name of the Father and
of the Son and of the
Holy Spirit,

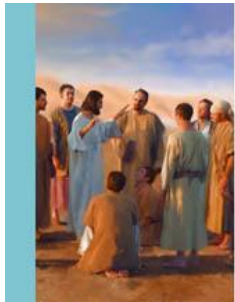
- 16.** The Bible says, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*



MATTHEW 28:19-20

teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."

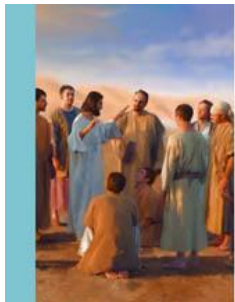
17. *teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."*
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MATTHEW 28:19-20

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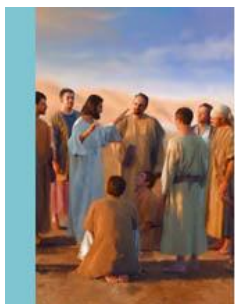
18. These are some of Jesus' final words. Have you ever been with someone speaking their final words? When they took their last breath before they passed on and died? If you have, then you recognize that final words are extremely important because final words usually reveal what was nearest and dearest to the person's heart.
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MATTHEW 28:19-20

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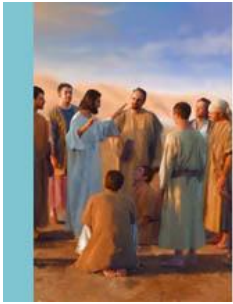
19. That's why for so many people, their final words are about heart issues--- usually about friends and family that they love so much. You rarely hear people in their final words talking about the business world, or their bank account, or their material possessions, because they know that stuff doesn't matter in the end. They talk about the things which are most important.
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MATTHEW 28:19-20

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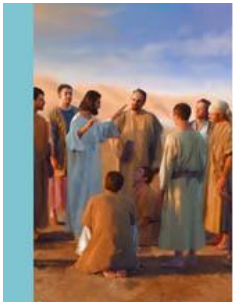
20. In His final words, Jesus talks about two of the most important things. Number one, He talks about mission. He tells those disciples that their job is to take the gospel to all the world, to help people understand that He is not an angry God they have to appease, but that there is a Savior who will cover their sins and can change their life. He told them to take that message to every nation, tribe, tongue and people. Jesus is telling them, *"Don't worry about the color of their skin. Don't worry about what language they speak. Don't worry about what religion they belong to. You need to teach them about Me."*



MATTHEW 28:19-20

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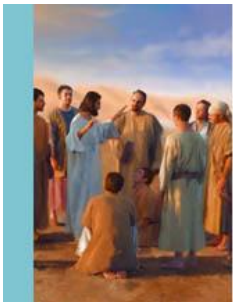
21. Friends, what that tells you and I is that Christ wants us to be about the work of saving souls. You see, in our world today it is so easy to look at the church as though it is a social club. As though this social club is made just for me—to feed me and to entertain me. But the truth is, the church exists not to be a social club, but to be a center of missionary activity.



MATTHEW 28:19-20

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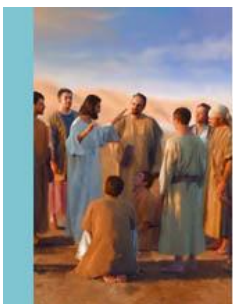
22. Jesus wants to use you to make a difference in the life of someone else. You see, today it's popular to say, *"It's the pastor's job to share the gospel. That's why we pay him or her a salary."* But you realize nothing could be less Biblical, because in the Scriptures everybody is a missionary for Jesus. When a person is baptized, they are basically being ordained to ministry, to go out and win someone to Christ.



MATTHEW 28:19-20

teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."

23. Now I'm going to say something tough, and I hope you'll still love me— but do you realize the church is not for you? The church is not for the members! Oh, certainly there are members there, and they are blessed by what happens at church, but the focus of the church is to seek and to save the lost.



MATTHEW 28:19-20

teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."

24. If my Christian experience consists of just going to church, so that the church can entertain me, give me nice programs, and give me social functions— but I'm not involved in the work of ministering to others, then I'm missing something important in my Christian experience. There are people that your pastor will never ever meet, but they're going to meet you. God has placed them in your path, and you have an opportunity to be a missionary, to be a witness for Jesus.



MATTHEW 28:19-20

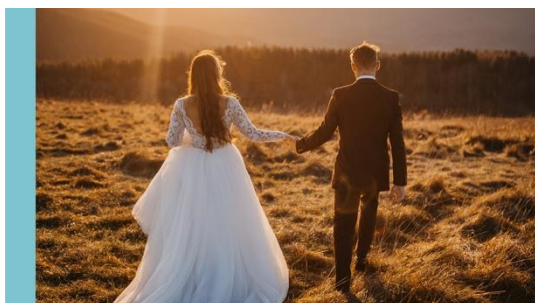
teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."

25. The second important thing Jesus talked to His disciples about in His final words is baptism. Of all the things He could have talked about with His disciples, of all the teachings He could have reviewed, of all the new things He could have taught them, He reminds them about the importance of baptism. He says, *"When you share the gospel with others and they make a decision to accept me as their Savior, the next step for them is to be baptized."*

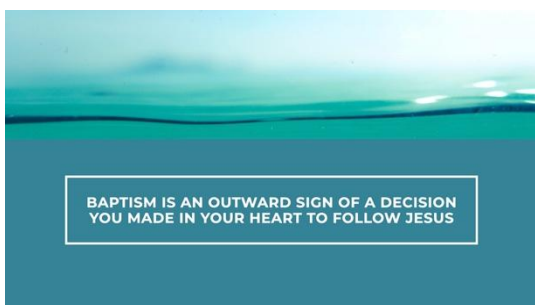
WHEN A PERSON IS BAPTIZED, THEY ARE DECLARING WHOSE SIDE THEY ARE ON



26. When persons are baptized, they are declaring whose side they are on. They are taking a stand that they have chosen to follow Jesus and His teachings. That doesn't mean they're perfect, and that doesn't mean they'll never make a mistake, but it does mean that they have made the decision who they want to follow.

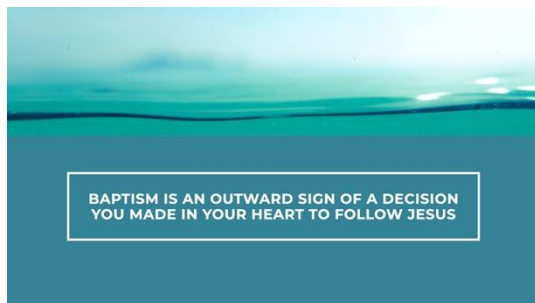


27. In many ways, the Bible compares baptism to getting married. It's a bit like a wedding. If you're married, do you remember your wedding day? *[You can tell the story of your own wedding and use your spouse's name]*. I remember mine. Most people do because it is a very special day. Now I wasn't a perfect spouse at that point, and I'm still not, but I knew I wanted to be with him/her. I knew I loved him/her. I was making that commitment in front of friends and family. We were beginning a new part of our relationship. It was a new phase in our life. The wedding was an outward sign of the love we both had in our hearts toward each other.

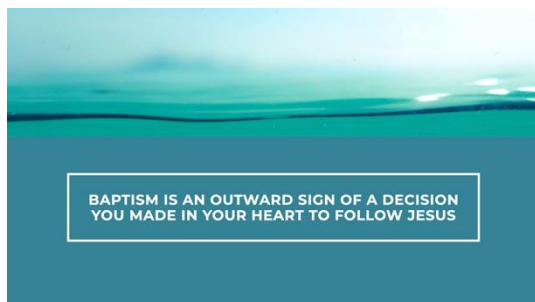


BAPTISM IS AN OUTWARD SIGN OF A DECISION YOU MADE IN YOUR HEART TO FOLLOW JESUS

28. That's what baptism is like. Baptism is an outward sign of a decision you made in your heart to follow Jesus. It's an outward sign of the love you have in your heart for Him. When one gets baptized it's the beginning of a new relationship with Jesus. You're going to make mistakes. You're going to have ups and downs. But when you're baptized, you are declaring, "I love Jesus Christ. I want to follow Him. And though I will have ups and downs, I know that in the long run I want to stay in the path of following Jesus. I trust Him as my Savior. This is the stand that I'm taking today." Friends, there are many of you here tonight who need to take that stand.



29. Now, sometimes people ask the question, *"Can't I just accept Jesus without getting baptized?"* I think Jesus just answered that question very clearly. Let's look at it this way. Ladies, let me ask you a question. If there was a man who was dating you for 10 years and he kept telling you that he loves you with all of his heart and he wants to spend his life with you. But every time the subject of marriage came up and making a public commitment, he just kept skirting the issue—for 10 years!



30. Wouldn't that raise a red flag in your mind? If he really loves you, why won't he make a public commitment? Wouldn't you wonder if something's going on deep down inside the heart? If I say I love Jesus and I want Him to be in control of my life, why would I not want to take that public stand? Why wouldn't I want to say, "I choose to follow Jesus"? "I'm choosing to be baptized." And hopefully, my decision will be an influence in someone else's life.

ROMANS 6:3-4

"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him



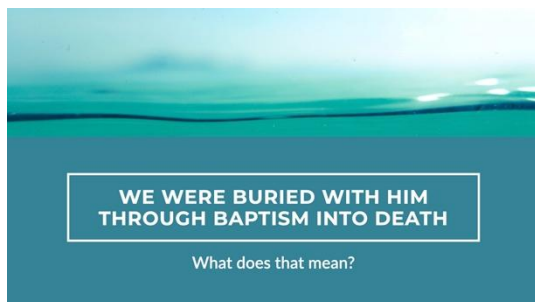
31. But let's talk about the deeper meaning of baptism. To do that, we're going to go to one of the clearest texts of the Bible on what baptism truly represents. I want to invite you to turn to Romans chapter 6, verses 3 and 4. The Bible describes it like this. *"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him*

ROMANS 6:3-4

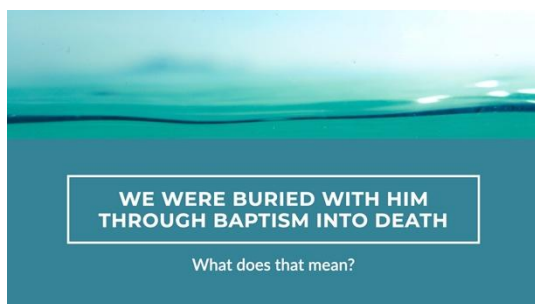
through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."



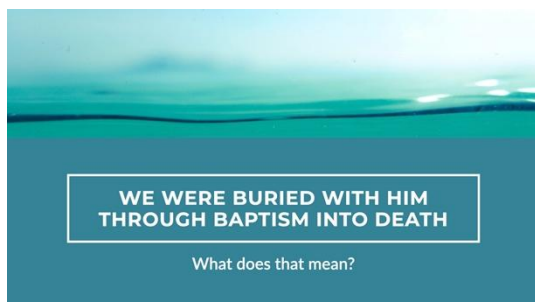
32. *through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."*



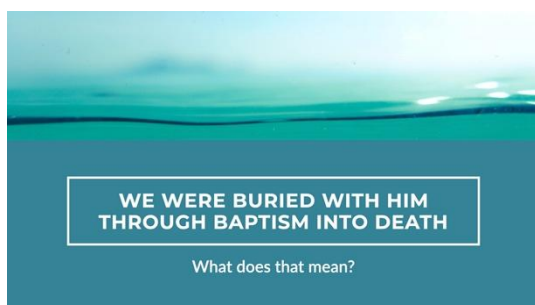
- 33.** Now, let's pause here. This text has some very powerful things to say. Verse 4 says we were buried with Him by baptism. You might think, *"What does that mean? I'm buried with Him?"* When I choose to follow Jesus and get baptized, I'm burying my old life of sin. I'm putting it to death. It's being buried in the waters. Because when a person dies, what do we do? We bury them in the ground. So, when I choose to follow Jesus, I am saying that I want to bury the old life I was living without Jesus.



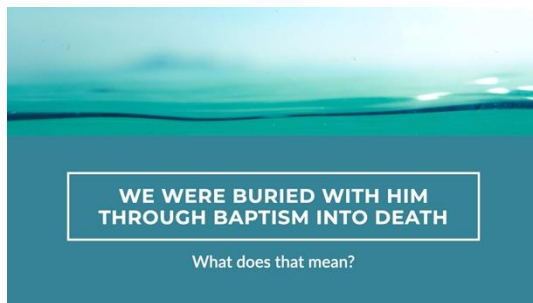
- 34.** The old life where maybe I wasn't very forgiving, or I wasn't very kind, or very tender hearted. Maybe I wasn't very honest at work. Maybe I wasn't very true in some of my relationships. I'm saying, *"I don't want that path anymore. I don't want that kind of life."* So, symbolically in baptism, I'm burying it. I'm telling Jesus, *"I want it to be put to death."* And I want to rise out of that water to a new life following Christ where honesty is important. Where integrity is important. Where being faithful is important.



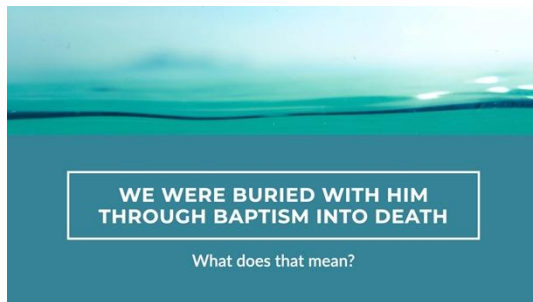
- 35.** Rising out of that water represents how Jesus rose out of the grave. You see, baptism actually represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It represents the full plan of salvation describing what Jesus wants to do in my life. Think about it. Jesus died on the cross, was buried in the tomb, and rose to new life on the third day. That's what Christ wants to do for me. He wants to take my old life, bury it so that I die to it, and then raise me to a newer life, a happier life, a fuller and more complete life, where I follow the principles of Jesus and He has a hold of my heart. Can you say, Amen?



- 36.** That reminds me of a story that has always touched my heart. There was a woman who had lived a very sinful life. She had been involved in prostitution—she had been associated with the Mafia—she had even been involved in schemes to murder. Somewhere along the line, she had heard about a revival happening in a local church, a bit like this seminar. So, she decided to go. She figured, what did she have to lose?



37. She heard the stories of Jesus changing the lives of people like Matthew, Mary Magdalene, and Zacchaeus. People who had a shameful past. People that others had given up on. Deep within her heart, she thought, "If Jesus can do it for them, is it possible there could be hope for me? Maybe I'm not going to be stuck in this life forever like I thought. Maybe there's a way out for me from this pit. Maybe I can find in Jesus what these people found." As the Spirit of God worked on her heart, in that divine, supernatural, unexplainable way, at the end of that revival series she decided to accept Jesus as her Savior, go down a new road in life, and she wanted to be baptized.



38. As the preacher prepared her for baptism, she made a special request of the minister. *"Pastor," she said, "you know what kind of life I've lived. Now, when you baptize me, when you put me underneath the water, I want it to last for a while. I want to remember this moment. So, Pastor, I've practiced holding my breath. When you put me under that water, I want you to hold me there for about 20 seconds. I want to feel the water washing over my body. I want to silently pray and give thanks to God. So, Pastor, will you please hold me under for about 20 seconds?"* The preacher had never had that kind of request before. But he understood why, and he was happy to do it.



39. So, when the day came for her to be baptized, standing in the water together, the minister lifted up his hand and said, "I now baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and lowered her into the water." Looking through those clear waters, he could see the joy just radiating on her face as her lips moved and she was offering silent praises to God.



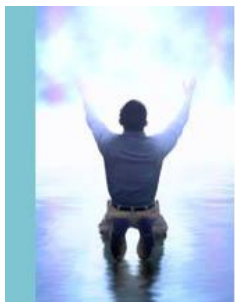
40. The minister, however, forgot to tell the deacons in the front row about the lady's special request. So, while he's holding her under the water, time is passing—5 seconds, 10 seconds, 15 seconds. The deacons are getting nervous. They think maybe the pastor hurt his back and can't pull her up and she's going to drown. So, they rush to the front of the stage. The minister says, *"No, it's okay. I've got her!"*



JESUS WASHES OUR SINS AWAY

- 41.** And then, when he pulls her up out of the water, she lifts her hands in the air and she says, *“Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Now pull out the plug and let all my sins be washed down the drain!” Amen!*

That was a woman who knew what baptism was all about. Now, I know your sins aren't literally washed down the drain, but baptism is symbolic that Jesus washes you and that He makes you clean.



2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

- 42.** That's why it says there in 2 Corinthians 5:17, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he [or she] is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”*



2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

- 43.** You see, when you know Jesus—when you give your heart to Him—life does become new. Now of course, you may still have your same life. You're still going to have your same family, you're still going to have your same house, you'll probably still have your same job. But what becomes new is your heart, your mind. The Holy Spirit does a work in our lives that I can't fully explain. It's that divine, providential work of changing my heart, changing the way I think, changing my desires.



2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

- 44.** It's hard to explain how a human heart is changed. Science can't explain it. Psychiatry can't explain it. Psychology can't explain it. It's a divine, providential act that Jesus does for us when we surrender ourselves to Him. We can't change ourselves, but God can. Baptism is part of that process. It's the beginning part of the journey.



2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

- 45.** Friend, do you want to become a new creation? Do you want to experience an unexplainable transformation that only God's Holy Spirit can do for you? Then, friends, perhaps God is speaking to your heart that it's time to make a decision to be baptized, to put your life in His hands.

Now when it comes to baptism there are sometimes some extreme views that people have.



- 46.** Some people treat baptism like a life insurance policy. They figure, *"I don't really know if I believe, but I'm going to go ahead and get baptized because it's the thing to do. That way, if God is real, if the Bible is true, if this whole thing is serious, then since I'm baptized that means I'm automatically saved. I'm covered."* Baptism doesn't work that way. Baptism is not a life insurance policy. If I don't truly believe, if I haven't accepted Jesus as my Savior, all I'm doing is getting wet. Baptism is simply a symbol of what Christ is doing in my heart. By itself, it doesn't save you. Baptism is the step which shows you've given your life to Christ.



- 47.** Now, the other extreme is perfection. You say, *"Well, what do you mean?"* Some people feel they have to be perfect before they're baptized. They think they have to overcome every sin, every weakness, every character flaw in their life. Some people have been taught that baptism is a reward for reaching a certain level in their spiritual life. Nothing could be further from the truth. Baptism is a beginning.



- 48.** If we had to be perfect, then we'd never get baptized. It's really insane to say, *"I've got to fix my life before I come to Jesus."* It's an impossibility. I can't fix my life without the power of Christ in my life. So, my first step is coming to Him as I am with all my faults and weaknesses.



49. (You could use your own story her)

This was illustrated in a very powerful way during a revival meeting near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. There was a church in the suburbs that invited a pastor to do a revival for them. That's where he met a man, and we'll just call him Bob. Bob came to the meetings every night. He had been attending church there for a while. The pastor knew he was close to making a decision to be baptized. So the pastor had a chance to visit with Bob in his home and listen to his story.



50. As they sat there on the couch and talked together, the pastor could tell it was time for Bob to make a decision. So, he gave him an invitation. He said, *"Bob, I've listened to your wonderful story, and you sense Jesus' calling in your life. You've been going to this church for a while. Bob, I want to invite you to make the decision to be baptized. We're going to have a baptism at the YMCA in a few days. I want to invite you to be part of it."*



51. Bob looked at him and said, *"Pastor, I would really like to—but I'm not ready yet. I got some things I need to take care of, and I want my family to follow me."* Well, the pastor understood that. He wasn't one that believes in pressuring people. It's got to be their decision. So, he gave him time to thank and pray through it. He was hoping at the end of the meetings, he might choose to be baptized, but he chose to wait. Of course, the pastor was disappointed.



52. A year later he was asked by the same church to come back and to do another series of revival meetings. So, he did. During those meetings the found himself sitting in the same home, in the same chair, having the same conversation with Bob. He said, *"Bob, you know it's been a year now. Remember our conversation last year? God's been doing some wonderful things in your life. You've been attending church here for a while. Bob, is it time for you now to make that decision to be baptized? We're going to have a baptism in a couple of weeks. I'd love to invite you to join us."*



53. Bob looked at him and said, *“Pastor, I really want to, but I can’t. I’ve got some things I need to take care of. I want my family to join me.”* Now, the pastor was concerned. He understood the importance of a person wanting his family to join him, but when someone puts off baptism, puts off making the decision for a year, the pastor knew that’s not good.. Because the more you say no to the Holy Spirit, the more you delay, the harder it is to make that decision. If we keep saying no to the Holy Spirit, sometimes that voice becomes softer and softer, and softer, and we get distracted by the world.



54. So, this time he pushed a little farther, and said, *“Bob, I understand. I know you got some things to take care of, but Jesus invites you to come just as you are. He’ll empower you to take care of whatever those things are. And Bob, I understand you want your family to join you. That’s noble, but Bob, have you ever considered this? Maybe your family’s not going to take that step until they see you take that step first. Maybe they have to see that this is real to you, that it’s meaningful to you, that it’s changed you. If you will step out and lead your family, they will follow behind.”*



55. Bob looked at him and said, *“Just not ready yet, Pastor.”* When they conducted a baptism a couple weeks later Bob wasn’t there. Another year later, the pastor was asked to go back to the same church and hold another set of revival meetings. He found himself sitting in the same house, in the same chair, and having the same conversation with the same Bob. His answer was the same. *“I’m not ready yet Pastor, I want my family to join me.”* It’s now 20 years later and we don’t know if Bob ever made his decision, or if he is still waiting for his family to join him.



56. My friends, if God is speaking to your heart, don’t delay. The decision you make today is going to be an influence on the people around you, whether it’s family, whether it’s friends, whether it’s coworkers. Don’t wait until you feel that you are perfectly ready. If you love Jesus, if you’ve chosen to follow him, if you want to follow the truths of His Word, and you sense conviction in your heart, it’s time to take that step.



57. Now, some people ask, *“Is there a certain way I’m supposed to be baptized? How exactly does this work?”* Well, we’ve learned we live in a confusing world. Remember, Jesus said in the last days there’d be deception and confusion in the religious world. If you called up 10 churches right now and asked them what baptism is or how it should be done, it’s possible you could get 10 different answers.



TYPES OF BAPTISM

58. Some people believe that baptism should be done by sprinkling. Some people think it should be by pouring. Some use oil. Some believe in baptism by immersion. Some believe in baptism by telephone, though I’m not exactly sure how that works. Some even say you can be baptized for another person—that’s called proxy. But the real question is, what is the Biblical way? Or does it even really matter?



TYPES OF BAPTISM

59. Some people look at things like this and are tempted to say, *“What’s the big deal? It doesn’t matter. Do it any way you want.”* But we have to be careful. That phrase, *“It doesn’t matter”*, can be a very slippery slope. That phrase, *“It doesn’t matter”*, can be a way to just simply excuse or do away with some of the truths of God’s Word.



TYPES OF BAPTISM

60. Think about it. When it came to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, was eating a piece of fruit really a big deal? Did it really matter which tree they ate from in the Garden? It did matter. It’s what that choice represented that was important. Adam and Eve chose to not trust God. They listened to another voice. When they surrendered to another voice, instead of to God’s Word, it opened the door for the enemy to deceive them.



TYPES OF BAPTISM

61. I need to be careful of getting into a pattern where I tend to look at God's Word and I say, *"You know what? That's no big deal. It doesn't matter because that's inconvenient for me", or "I don't like that part of the Bible, or I don't like that commandment."* Then we begin to excuse things away and we just pick and choose what we want.



TYPES OF BAPTISM

62. Probably the area I see that happen a lot is with the Sabbath. Earlier in the seminar, we learned the beauty of the Biblical seventh-day Sabbath, how God gives us that special day, that 24-hour period from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday to set aside our secular labors, to worship and honor Christ as our Savior and Creator.



TYPES OF BAPTISM

63. And many times, we're tempted to say, *"We can pick any day we want. It really doesn't matter."* Even though God was specific when He said, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God." It may not seem like a big deal, but when I compromise something that's so clear in the Bible, it becomes easier when I come to something else in the Word that I want to excuse away.



TYPES OF BAPTISM

64. Think of Moses when they built the tabernacle. God went into such excruciating detail on how that tabernacle should be built. He gave detailed instructions on the kind of cloth to be used, the kind of tapestry, the imagery that would be put on it, because everything in that tabernacle represented something about Jesus and the plan of salvation. If God is specific about something that means there's a blessing in it.



TYPES OF BAPTISM

65. So, let me ask you, of all those options listed on the screen, which of them do you think is the Biblical form of baptism? Which of them represents the full plan of salvation: death, burial and resurrection? It's actually not that hard to figure out. The one that's correct is baptism by immersion.

BAPTISM MEANING

baptizo (From Greek)

/bap-tid'-zo/

verb

To dip, to immerse, or to plunge under water.

66. In fact, the Greek word for baptism is "*baptizo*", and it literally means "to dip, to immerse, or to plunge under water." When you think about it, that is the only form of baptism that fully represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It's the only form that represents the full plan of salvation. I die to an old life, like Christ died on the cross. I'm buried underneath the water, like Jesus was buried in that tomb. I rise up out of the water to new life, just like Jesus rose to new life on the third day. There is very significant symbolism to this baptism by immersion.

BAPTISM MEANING

baptizo (From Greek)

/bap-tid'-zo/

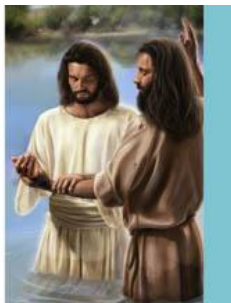
verb

To dip, to immerse, or to plunge under water.

67. But do you know what the best thing is that we can do? Let's just look at the example of Jesus' baptism. It doesn't matter what I say. It doesn't matter what tradition says. It doesn't matter what the biggest church in town says. It doesn't matter what the person says who's written the most books. All that matters is what does God's Word say, and what is the example of Jesus? When you follow the example of Jesus, we can never go wrong.

MATTHEW 3:13-17

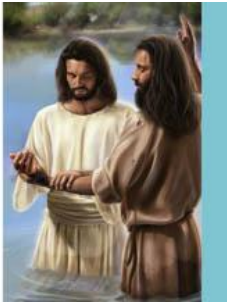
"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You



68. Let's take a look here at Matthew 3 and verse 13. The Bible says, "*Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You*

MATTHEW 3:13-17

coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so for now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then, he allowed Him.



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MATTHEW 3:13-17

And when He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God



70. *And when He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God*

MATTHEW 3:13-17

descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'



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MATTHEW 3:13-17

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72. I want you to picture this for a second. It is both a serious scene, but also a bit of a humorous one. Can you imagine what John the Baptist is thinking? He sees Jesus coming towards him at the Jordan River. The Holy Spirit reveals to him, "This is the Man you've been preaching about. This is the Messiah." And Jesus says to John, "I need you to baptize Me." What do you think John was thinking? He was no doubt shocked. He basically says, "Are you kidding me? You need to baptize me, and You want me to baptize you?" But Jesus responds, "Let it be so for now, because we're going to give an example of righteousness."

MATTHEW 3:13-17

descending like a dove
and alighting upon Him.
And suddenly a voice
came from heaven
saying, 'This is My
beloved Son, in whom I
am well pleased.'



- 73.** Did Jesus have to be baptized? If baptism represents having your sins washed away and beginning a new life, did Jesus have any sin that needed to be washed away? Certainly not. But He did it as an example to you and me. He did it to show you and I that this is the important step we must take in our Christian experience.



"CAME UP IMMEDIATELY
FROM THE WATER."

- 74.** Then it specifically says in verse 16 that Jesus "came up immediately from the water." Well, the only way you could come up out of the water is if you went down into the water. Jesus Himself gives us the example of baptism by immersion. Death, burial, resurrection to a new life.



"CAME UP IMMEDIATELY
FROM THE WATER."

- 75.** Then, the Bible says He was filled with the Holy Spirit. That's the experience that Christ wants to give you. You can be baptized as Jesus was. You can experience the Holy Spirit doing a marvelous work in your life. He can do a new thing in your heart and mind. He can make dry spiritual bones live again. If you sense that your bones have been dry, if you sense you need a revival in your life, the Holy Spirit is ready, waiting and eager to do it if you will submit to that conviction and say, "Lord Jesus, I want to follow You. I want to be baptized."



- 76.** It reminds me of another story, and one that has always made me chuckle, but it makes a really good point. There was a missionary who was teaching the Bible to some of the native people in another land. He was talking to them about Jesus. Eventually, it was time for him to go back home on furlough for a few weeks. Now, many missionary organizations have what is called a furlough, which means missionaries can go back home for a little while, see their family, have rest and relaxation, then they return to the mission field.



77. So, this missionary went to the chief of the village and said, *"It's time for my furlough. I need to go back home for a few weeks. I'm coming back, but in the meantime, I want you to bring your people together every night and read portions of the Bible."* The chief agreed.



78. As they're doing this night by night, they begin to read the part that talks about baptism. And the chief realizes that they're supposed to be baptized. So, when the missionary comes back from furlough, the chief goes to him and says, *"We have read Bible. We are supposed to be baptized."*



79. Oh man, is the missionary excited? I mean, he goes away on furlough, he comes back and they're ready to be baptized! So, the missionary builds a little pulpit and a couple of days later they have a special baptismal service. The chief is right there in the front row. He's going to be the first one to be baptized. Except, this particular missionary didn't quite understand the Biblical teaching about baptism by immersion. He believed in baptism by pouring or sprinkling. So, right there on the pulpit, he had a cup of water that he kept referring to.



80. During his sermon, the missionary noticed the chief seemed to be getting a little nervous. He had a confused look on his face. The chief's eyes kept going from the missionary to that cup of water, and from the cup of water back to the missionary. The missionary started to get fidgety. He thought, *"I'd better cut this sermon short because this guy is getting nervous and he might back out."*



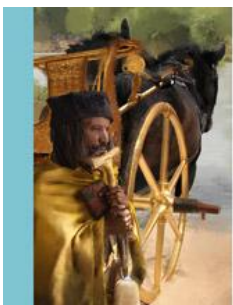
81. So, he ended his sermon, made his appeal and said, *“The chief is the first one that’s going to get baptized.”* But the chief backed away and said, *“No, no! I cannot be baptized!”* The missionary said, *“Why not? You said you wanted to be.”* The chief looked at him, pointed to the cup, and said, *“Chief too big, cup too small!”*



82. You see, the chief understood from his Bible that baptism was by immersion. He couldn’t figure out how the missionary was going to stuff him into that little bitty cup. The missionary learned an important lesson that day of always making the Bible your guide.



83. You say, *“Pastor, are there other examples of baptism in the Bible?”* Oh, there are many. Let me show you one more before we answer a few more questions. It’s in Acts chapter 8 verse 35. Let’s read a story about a divine appointment between the disciple, Philip, and a traveling government leader from Ethiopia. They crossed paths traveling on the road to Samaria.



ACTS 8:35-39

“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water.

84. The Bible says, *“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water.”*



ACTS 8:35-39

And the eunuch said,
'See, here is water.
What hinders me from
being baptized?' Then
Philip said, 'If you
believe with all your
heart, you may.'

- 85.** *And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?' Then Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.'*



ACTS 8:35-39

And he answered and
said, 'I believe that
Jesus Christ is the Son
of God.' So he
commanded the chariot
to stand still and both
Philip and eunuch went

- 86.** *And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' So he commanded the chariot to stand still and both Philip and eunuch went*



ACTS 8:35-39

down into the water
and he baptized him.
Now, when they came
up out of the water..."

- 87.** *down into the water and he baptized him. Now, when they came up out of the water..."*

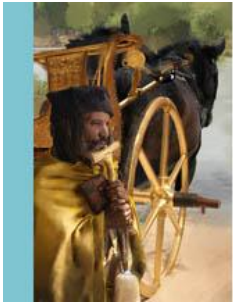
Let's stop there. Now, I neglected to give you the background of this story. Philip is traveling to Samaria. As he's walking along the hot, dusty road there is a chariot in front of him. This chariot is carrying one of the leaders of the Ethiopian Kingdom, an eunuch. In this chariot, this Ethiopian leader is reading the prophecies of Isaiah which speak about the coming of the Messiah.



ACTS 8:35-39

down into the water
and he baptized him.
Now, when they came
up out of the water..."

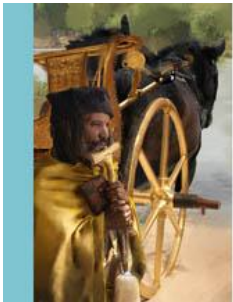
- 88.** This man doesn't understand what he is reading. He is wondering, *"Who is this Messiah?"* The Holy Spirit convicts Philip and says, *"I want you to go run up beside that chariot."* I don't know what Philip was thinking because it would shake me up a little bit if I sensed the Spirit saying to me, *"You know what? I want you to go by that car and just roll your window down and say something."* I'd be tempted to say, *"Why would you want me to do that Lord?"* But Philip didn't argue, he just did it. And he found out why.



ACTS 8:35-39

down into the water
and he baptized him.
Now, when they came
up out of the water..."

89. Here was a searching soul—a man whose heart was open to truth. So, he invited Philip up into the chariot. They went through the prophecies of the Old Testament to learn that this Man, Jesus, is the Messiah that Isaiah's talking about. When the Ethiopian eunuch realized this, he said to Philip, "*I want to be baptized.*" The Bible specifically says they stopped at a place where there was much water and Philip baptized him. You don't need much water unless you're doing baptism by immersion. They went down into the water, and the Ethiopian eunuch came up out of the water. Death, burial, and resurrection, the full plan of salvation.



ACTS 8:35-39

down into the water
and he baptized him.
Now, when they came
up out of the water..."

90. But there's also something else significant in that passage. Did you catch it? The Ethiopian leader asked a penetrating question to Philip.



WHAT'S HINDERING YOU FROM
BEING BAPTIZED?

91. He said, "*What hinders me from being baptized?*" His heart was convicted. He wanted to follow Jesus. He knew he needed to take that step. He initiated the question to Phillip, "*What hinders me from being baptized?*" What a powerful question!



WHAT'S HINDERING YOU FROM
BEING BAPTIZED?

92. Friends, what about you? What is hindering you from making that decision for Jesus? What is hindering you from surrendering your heart to Him? Maybe you've come to the seminar and you've learned many things that perhaps you didn't know before. You sense the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart and to your mind. You sense his convictions that it's time to give your heart fully to Jesus, that it's time to be baptized, or it's time to make a recommitment to Christ. Are you that Ethiopian eunuch of the 21st century?



WHAT'S HINDERING YOU FROM
BEING BAPTIZED?

- 93.** Here's a very important point in the story. It was no accident that Phillip was on the road to Samaria at the same time that Ethiopian leader was traveling. It was a divine appointment. God brought them together. In the same way, I don't believe it's an accident that you are at the seminar. It's no accident that you received a flyer in the mail, or saw an ad on the internet. It's no accident that someone invited you to be a part of these meetings.



WHAT'S HINDERING YOU FROM
BEING BAPTIZED?

- 94.** God has already been working in your life. I've heard some of your stories. Some of you have been searching for truth. Some of you have been yearning for a closer walk with Jesus. Some of you have been longing to understand the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. God knew this seminar is exactly what you needed in your spiritual journey.



WHAT'S HINDERING YOU FROM
BEING BAPTIZED?

- 95.** Maybe the Holy Spirit is tying things together in a way that you didn't comprehend before. Maybe you're finding yourself drawn closer and closer to Jesus and all that He teaches. Maybe you're understanding the prophecies better than you ever have. You realize Jesus is coming soon and you want to be right in your heart with Him. So, I'd like to pose the same question to you.



WHAT'S HINDERING YOU FROM
BEING BAPTIZED?

- 96.** What's hindering you from being baptized? What's hindering you from taking that step and saying, "*Lord, I'm choosing to be baptized very soon*"? Why not make that decision today?



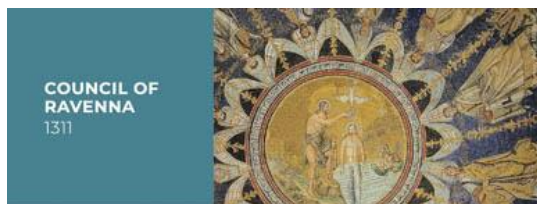
WHAT'S HINDERING YOU FROM
BEING BAPTIZED?

- 97.** (If you need to shorten the message, you can skip the section on discoveries of baptistries in early century Christian churches and go straight to the Steps To Baptism)

You say, “Pastor, I get it. I just have a couple questions. If the Bible is so clear about baptism, why do we have so many traditions and doctrines about it?” That’s a good question. The truth is, in the early New Testament church baptism was always by immersion. We saw that from the examples we just looked at.



- 98.** In fact, when archaeologists have excavated churches from the first 1300 years of Christian history, many times there was a baptistry to show baptism immersion.



It was in the Council of Ravenna that the church of the Middle Ages officially accepted sprinkling and pouring as equally valid as immersion.

- 99.** But that changed in the year 1311. It was in the Council of Ravenna that the church of the Middle Ages officially accepted sprinkling and pouring as equally valid as immersion. You may wonder, “How did that happen, because that’s not what the Bible says?” You must understand that in the church of the Middle Ages, tradition was lifted up above the Bible. It was councils of men that made decisions of what truth is. It was a time when the Bible was banned as an illegal book. You were supposed to follow the traditions of the church. So many false doctrines came in to being at that time.



- 100.** If you ever look at pictures from the Middle Ages, you notice that priests and clergy wore heavy robes and vestments. They were really inconvenient to take off when baptizing someone in the water, so sprinkling became much easier and more convenient. In addition to this, some believed that if a baby dies before being baptized, it will be lost. That scared a lot of parents. Hence, baby baptism or infant baptism came into existence. And since they didn’t want to put a baby under water, baptism by sprinkling or pouring was introduced.



101. What's interesting is when you read the Scriptures, you never find one example of infant baptism in the Bible. There's a reason for that. We just read how baptism represents a person making their own individual decision to surrender their hearts to Jesus. Can a baby make a decision to follow Jesus? A baby can't do that. The parents are making a decision for that baby. The baby has no say in it and knows nothing about it. They don't even remember it. When you are baptized as a baby, it's not your decision. Baptism is for someone who believes and has made a choice to give themselves to Jesus.



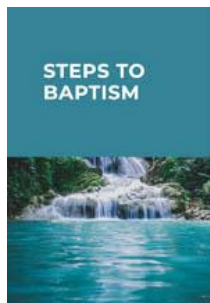
102. Now, there is something called baby dedication. We can see in the Bible how Mary and Joseph, on the eighth day, brought Jesus to the temple to be dedicated to the Lord. There are a number of churches—and I've done it many times myself in churches I've pastored—where we have a baby dedication. Parents will bring their babies upfront and the preacher lays hands on the child and has a special prayer that God will bless the child, fill him or her with the Holy Spirit, help them grow up to know Jesus as their Savior, and reach the age when they can make a decision to follow Jesus. No one can make a decision for you about accepting Jesus.



103. Rightly understood, baby dedication is really parental dedication. It is the parents making the commitment that they will teach their child about Jesus. That they will bring the child to Bible study classes. That they will get their child to be part of a good Bible believing church so they can be taught and come to the point where they make their own decision.



104. At this point, another question may come to your mind. "Pastor, I was baptized as a baby. Did I do wrong? Did my parents do wrong?" Oh, my friends, I'm sure your parents were living up to all the light and truth that they knew at that time. And God honors that.



1. Belief & Acceptance of Jesus Christ as a Personal Savior
2. Repentance (or Desire) To Turn From Sin
3. Basic Knowledge of His Teachings

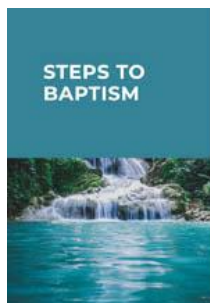
105. Some people ask, “*Are there any requirements for baptism?*” The Bible basically gives three steps to being baptized. They’re on the screen right now.

There are three simple steps. Step number one, belief in Jesus Christ as Savior. You must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God—that He died for your sins—and you have accepted Him as your Savior. Step number two, repentance from sin. The word “repentance” means to turn around.



1. Belief & Acceptance of Jesus Christ as a Personal Savior
2. Repentance (or Desire) To Turn From Sin
3. Basic Knowledge of His Teachings

106. This doesn’t mean you must overcome all your sins and weaknesses before you are baptized. Remember, we come to Jesus as we are. This means we have the desire to turn from sin and we want God to put us on a new path. He’s already making changes in your life. You are starting the process.



1. Belief & Acceptance of Jesus Christ as a Personal Savior
2. Repentance (or Desire) To Turn From Sin
3. Basic Knowledge of His Teachings

107. Step number three, a knowledge of the basics of faith. In other words, you understand who Jesus is and what He teaches. It doesn’t mean that you have to be a scholar, but that you understand the basic principles of the Christian faith.

As I’ve read out those three steps, if God has spoken to you and said, “You fulfill those three steps. It’s time to make that decision and be baptized”, I want to encourage you in that choice tonight.



WHAT ABOUT RE-BAPTISM?

108. (If you need to shorten the message, you can skip the section on re-baptism and go to the section on John 3:5 about being born of the Spirit)
Finally, one of the questions that people sometimes ask is, “Is there ever a time when someone should be rebaptized?” The answer is yes. But you don’t want to get to a point where a person keeps getting baptized five, six, and seven times. You don’t get rebaptized every time you make a mistake. That’s why you have communion. The communion service really, in a sense, is showing our recommitment and giving ourselves all over again to Jesus.



ACTS 19:1-5

"And finding some disciples he said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' So they said to him, 'We have not so much as heard

109. However, there is a case of rebaptism in the Bible. I'm going to share it with you because this may relate to someone's experience tonight. In Acts chapter 19 verse 1, Paul is in the city of Ephesus. He meets a group of believers and they have an interesting conversation. The Bible describes it like this, *"And finding some disciples he said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' So they said to him, 'We have not so much as heard*



ACTS 19:1-5

whether there is a Holy Spirit.' And he said to them, 'Into what then were you baptized?' So they said, 'Into John's baptism.' Then Paul said, 'John indeed

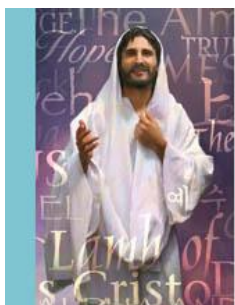
110. *whether there is a Holy Spirit.' And he said to them, 'Into what then were you baptized?' So they said, 'Into John's baptism.' Then Paul said, 'John indeed*



ACTS 19:1-5

baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.'

111. *baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.'*

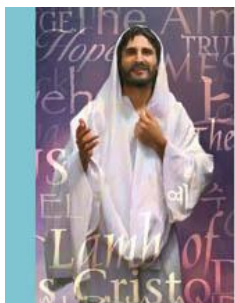


ACTS 19:1-5

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

112. *When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."*

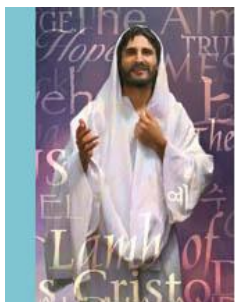
Let's pause there. Paul is visiting Ephesus and runs into some believers. They get into a conversation and Paul asks them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit?" They look at him confused and replied, 'The Holy Spirit? What's that? Never heard of it.' And Paul is stunned.



ACTS 19:1-5

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

113. He's thinking, "*What kind of believer has never heard of the Holy Spirit?* He senses that something is wrong here. So, he says, "How were you baptized?" Then they told him their story. Apparently, these were believers who went down to Jerusalem when John the Baptist was preaching. They must have taken a trip there. They heard John the Baptist talk about repenting because the Messiah is coming soon. And so, they let John baptize them. But then they went back to Ephesus, far from Jerusalem, and they missed the whole story of Jesus—His life, death, and resurrection.



ACTS 19:1-5

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

114. So, now Paul tells them the rest of the story and says, "*The one that John the Baptist was talking about, that was Jesus. Let me tell you about Him.*" And when they heard the rest of the truth, they decided to be rebaptized by Paul to show their desire to follow the significant new truth that they had just learned.



1. You were once baptized but fell away from Jesus
2. You learned significant new truth.

115. So, there are two general reasons to be rebaptized. One, maybe someone was baptized before, but they fell away from Christ for a period of time and now they want to return to Jesus. They feel it's significant if they are rebaptized to show their recommitment. That's perfectly acceptable, and that's a personal decision between God and the person.



1. You were once baptized but fell away from Jesus
2. You learned significant new truth.

116. The other reason would be what we just read. Someone who is already a believer has a new spiritual experience and they learn significant new truth from the Bible. As a result, they choose to be rebaptized to show their commitment to follow that truth. That's what happened to these believers in Ephesus.

REASONS FOR RE-BAPTISM

1. You were once baptized but fell away from Jesus
2. You learned significant new truth.

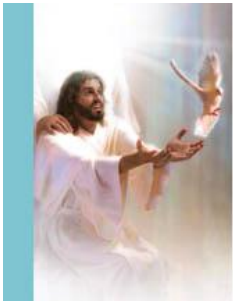
117. Friends, maybe that's what you're considering tonight. Maybe you've had a revived spiritual experience in this seminar. Maybe your eyes have been opened to beautiful new truths you hadn't realized before, and you sense the conviction to be baptized and recommit yourself to Jesus and His truth.

JOHN 3:5

"... Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."



118. Before we end tonight, I want to share with you a beautiful promise that Jesus gives us in the book of John where He says, "*... Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*"

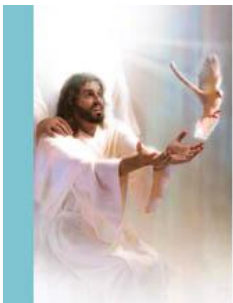


JOHN 14:6

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever. . . ."

119. Then He says in John 14:6, "*And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper [the Holy Spirit], that He may abide with you forever. . . .*"

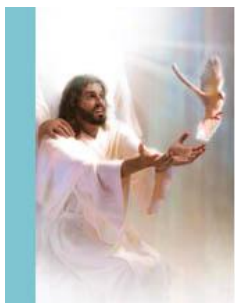
Jesus talks about being born again here. He talks about being born of water, that's baptism. Then He talks about being born of the Spirit. When we're baptized, Christ doesn't say to us, "*I've led you to the waters of baptism, but after you baptized, you're on your own.*" Jesus has a plan for you.



JOHN 14:6

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever. . . ."

120. After you're born of the water, then you're born of the Spirit. You say, "*What does that mean?*" It means Jesus wants to send you a Helper. He wants to send the Holy Spirit to help and empower you to live for Him on a daily basis. He walks with you on your new path through this Holy Spirit. You are not alone!



JOHN 14:6

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever. . ."

121. You see, Jesus wants to fill your heart with His Holy Spirit. You may wonder, "How do I become filled with the Holy Spirit? Is there anything I can do to allow God to fill me?" Yes, there is something you can do.



1. Ask Jesus to give you the Holy Spirit daily
2. Spend time with Jesus every day reading His Word.

122. Number one, ask Jesus to give you the Holy Spirit. Tell Him you desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit.



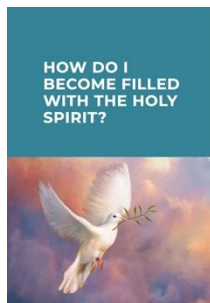
1. Ask Jesus to give you the Holy Spirit daily
2. Spend time with Jesus every day reading His Word.

123. Number two, spend time with Jesus every single day. As you spend time in His Word in a daily devotional life, as you spend time in prayer, as you spend time assembling with fellow believers, the Holy Spirit begins to do a marvelous work in your life. He begins to change you to be more like Jesus. You see, I can be born of the water in a moment. But being born of the Spirit is something that happens on a regular, daily basis, because Jesus empowers us to keep living for Him even after we are baptized. And that is the experience that Jesus wants to give to you.



1. Ask Jesus to give you the Holy Spirit daily
2. Spend time with Jesus every day reading His Word.

124. You say, *"I don't know how to have a daily devotional life. I don't know how to read the Bible effectively. I'm don't know how to pray and talk to God like a friend."* I understand. Many people struggle with that. I want to give you an invitation. Please come see me after the meeting tonight. Or we can make an appointment together. I'd be happy to share a few things that will help you have a meaningful devotional life. In fact, if there's enough people interested, I might be able to teach a class on it during the seminar.



1. Ask Jesus to give you the Holy Spirit daily
2. Spend time with Jesus every day reading His Word.

125. There is also a resource at the registration table you might be interested in purchasing on how to spend time with Jesus through a meaningful daily devotional life. It's a book called *It's All About Him* which talks about how to know Jesus personally and have a daily devotional life. I would encourage you and your family to read through it together.



1. Ask Jesus to give you the Holy Spirit daily
2. Spend time with Jesus every day reading His Word.

126. *[If you have other resources available at the registration table, make sure to explain to the audience how to get it. If you don't have the book available, tell the audience where they can order it, likely at adventistbookcenter.com or on Amazon. If anyone comes to you ask how to have a devotional life, it is a good opportunity to make an appointment with them if possible.]*



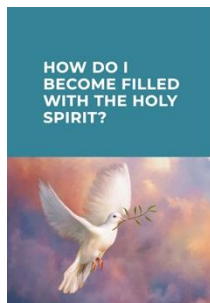
1. Ask Jesus to give you the Holy Spirit daily
2. Spend time with Jesus every day reading His Word.

127. Is it your desire, tonight, to say, "*Lord, I want that experience. I want to be baptized. I want to be born of the water, and I also want to be born of the Spirit?*"



1. Ask Jesus to give you the Holy Spirit daily
2. Spend time with Jesus every day reading His Word.

128. As you've gone through this series, you've learned that Jesus is coming soon, and you've seen that end-time prophecy is being fulfilled. You desire to be ready for the coming of Christ. You desire to have His law written upon your heart. You desire to honor His commandments. You desire to give your life to Him. You want a new experience, and God has spoken to your heart. Won't you make that choice tonight to experience what so many others have, the experience of being baptized?



1. Ask Jesus to give you the Holy Spirit daily
2. Spend time with Jesus every day reading His Word.

129. Tonight, I want to give you the opportunity to make a decision. When you came in this evening, you were given a special card. It looks like this. [Hold up the card or put a picture of it on the screen.]



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

130. If you did not receive one, please raise your hand and an usher will quickly bring you one. Keep your hand raised and the usher will bring it to you. [Pause for a moment]. Does everyone have one now?



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

131. You see, when you talk about baptism and surrendering your heart to Jesus, I believe it is essential to give people the opportunity to respond. I am certain there is someone here tonight who is sensing the moving of the Holy Spirit on their heart. Would you be silently praying right now for those who need to make that decision? Or pray for yourself to make that decision.



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

132. Let's review the card together. Let God lead as you decide how to mark this card. At the end, we will collect the cards and I'll have a special prayer of blessing over them.



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

133. Let's start with line number one. It says, *"I know that Jesus is my Savior and I desire to follow Him with all my heart."* If you believe Jesus is your Savior, if you want Him to lead your life and you desire to follow Him, I invite you to check that box. You may be a new believer who is accepting Jesus for the first time, or you may be a believer for many years, but you want to keep on following Jesus. Either way, I invite you to check that box if God is speaking to your heart.



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

134. Line number two says, *"I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon."* In other words, you want to show your love for Jesus by being baptized. Maybe you've never been baptized before. Maybe you've never made that public commitment. Maybe you've never had the joyful experience of going under the water and knowing that Jesus has washed your sins away—that Jesus has made you clean. If that's the desire of your heart, then I invite you to check that box.



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

135. Or maybe you were baptized as a baby, and now you want to be baptized as an adult. You want it to be your decision. You want to remember the experience. You want to be baptized the way Jesus was—by immersion. Or maybe you were baptized by some other form of baptism, but now you want to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and experience Biblical baptism by immersion. If God is leading your heart in that direction, then I invite you to check that box.



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

136. Line number three says, *"I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized."* Maybe you once followed Jesus. Maybe you used to be a believer, but then the difficulties and challenges of life turned you away. Maybe other things in life caused you to neglect your spiritual life. Or maybe you've made some mistakes, or a series of bad choices and you found yourself on a road you never expected. But yet, you are here at this seminar. God has been working on your heart to draw you back to Him. He loves you. He's reached out His hand to say, *"My son, my daughter, let's start over again."*



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

137. You have the opportunity to do just that. You have the opportunity to come back to Jesus and start over again. You have the opportunity to respond to His love again. He will welcome you home. Don't waste any more time on the foolishness of this world. Don't waste any more time being separated from your Savior. If God is speaking to your heart, I invite you to check that box.



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

138. Line number four says, "I would like someone to study the Bible with me." Maybe your heart has been stirred by studying God's Word in this seminar. You've learned so much. You've learned new truth you didn't know before, and you're hungry for more. Your heart yearns to learn truth. This church has some Bible instructors who love to study the Bible with people. If you so desire, they can get together with you once a week and go through a set of special Bible lessons with you. It could be a personal Bible study with just you, or a small group of your family or friends. It can be wherever you are comfortable—in your home, at a restaurant, at a church, wherever you like.



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

139. I would encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity. People's lives have been changed by having once a week Bible studies. It's even better than a sermon because you get to dialogue and ask questions. Even when this seminar is over, you can still experience the joy of discovering new and powerful things in the Word of God. If that is the desire of your heart, I invite you to check that box, and someone will be in touch with you shortly.



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

140. Line number 5 says, "I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team." If you'd like to sit down and spend some time together, or if have some questions you'd like to ask, we will make time for you. We can visit together at the place of your choosing. Just check box number 5.



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

141. As you are filling out your card, the ushers are going to give each row a bucket where you can place your card. Please pass the bucket across the row to the center aisle. An usher will then pick up the buckets and bring them to me up front. I want to close our meeting tonight be having a special prayer of blessing over these cards. These cards represent decisions people are making. They represent the names of people and families in whom the Lord is working. So, I want to lift them up I prayer as we our meeting tonight.



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

142. Ushers, please go ahead and collect the buckets and bring them to me. Please pass the buckets to the center aisle so the ushers can easily collect them. While the ushers are collecting the buckets, we'll have some inspirational music playing so you can meditate.



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

143. [You can have music playing in the background while the ushers collect the cards, or you can ask someone to sing a special music during this time. If you can, put all the cards in one bucket, hold it in your hands, and have a prayer of blessing. If you choose to collect the cards in a different way, be sure to explain it the audience clearly. Another option would be to have ushers stand at the door with buckets and ask the people to place their cards in the buckets as they exit].



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

144. Dear Lord, thank you for being present in our meeting tonight. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to bury the past and have your sins washed away through the joyful experience of baptism. Lord these cards represent people whom You love very much. They love You too, Lord. They are making decisions for You. Some may be battling with challenges. The enemy may be putting obstacles in their path. But You are stronger than the enemy. I ask you to fight for them and give them the courage to move forward in their decision. Give them the assurance You are near.



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

145. *Bless their homes. Bless their marriages. Bless their families. Fill them with Your Holy Spirit. Draw them close to You. May they experience the joy of your presence in their lives. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

146. OPTION WITH ALTAR CALL

(Another option would be to have an altar call by inviting people who marked their cards for baptism to come forward for a special prayer. You would do this after reviewing the card with the audience].



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

147. Now I want to do something special before we close tonight. I want to have a special prayer of blessing for those who are deciding to be baptized or who are thinking about being baptized. If you marked your card to be baptized, I want to invite you to come forward and join me up front for a moment, so I can have a special prayer with that group.

[Come down from the platform and stand on the same level with the audience].



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

148. Don't be afraid. I'm not going to ask you to do or say anything. I'm simply inviting you to respond to the conviction of your heart and allow me to offer a special prayer of blessing for the those who come forward. So, if you desire to follow Jesus and be baptized, or you desire to be re-baptized, or you haven't decided yet but you're thinking about being baptized, I want to invite you to come forward as we sing our closing song.



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

149. I'll be standing here while the congregation is singing. At any time, during the song, just come forward and stand here with me. You don't need to say anything. Just come forward. Come as you are. Come to Jesus. I'll be standing here during the song. When the song is over, we'll have a special prayer together.

[You can choose an appropriate song like Amazing Grace. Have a song leader lead the congregation in singing, or have someone do a special music].



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

150. I am so thankful for those of you who have come forward. God's Spirit has been moving tonight. If there is anyone else who'd like to join this group and say, "Yes, I want to be baptized soon" or "I'm thinking about being baptized. Please pray for me", then I invite you to come forward at this time. Is there anyone else? Let's pray.



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
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- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

152. Bless their homes. Bless their marriages. Bless their families. Fill them with Your Holy Spirit. Draw them close to You. May they experience the joy of your presence in their lives. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.



- ☒ I know that Jesus is my Savior & I desire to follow Him with all my heart.
- ☒ I would like to experience Bible baptism by immersion one day soon.
- ☒ I have strayed from the Lord and would like to be re-baptized.
- ☒ I would like someone to study the Bible with me.
- ☒ I would like to speak to a member of the pastoral team.

153. [After the prayer]. For those of you who still have your cards, there will be ushers standing at the door with buckets. Just drop your card in one of the buckets, and we will pray for you too. Or if you marked your card for baptism but you were too nervous to come forward, feel free to place your card in the bucket too. You can also hand them in at the registration table if you like.



154. My friends, God bless you and wonderful night. We'll see you at our next meeting on _____ night. Good night, everyone.

[Be sure to personally greet anyone who came forward for baptism and collect their cards so you know who they are and can follow up].