

“ POOL PARTY ”

The Epistle to Rome (Romans 6:3-7)

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I. INTRODUCTION

II. BAPTISM 101

A. Defining Baptism

1. Definition: Baptism is a Christian symbolic act of ceremonial washing from sin and covenantal welcoming into the community of Christ that involves the dunking of a committed believer in water before others.
2. Common phrase: “Baptism is an outward sign of an inward reality.”

B. Unpacking Baptism

1. Baptism is a Christian act, rooted in the Jewish act of mikvah
 - a. Mikvah parallels (immersion, etc.)
 - b. Mikvah differences (Gentile inclusion)
2. Baptism displays ceremonial washing signifying repentance and conversion.
 - a. Repentance *from* sin (“washing of sin”)
 - b. Conversion *to* God (by faith alone in Christ alone)
3. Baptism displays covenantal welcoming signifying acceptance and identification.
 - a. Covenantal welcoming into God’s people
 - b. Acceptance from God (cf. the doctrine of justification)
 - c. Identification with the person and work of Christ (“in Christ”)
4. Baptism is an outward sign and not a means of grace.
 - a. It is an ordinance and an act of worship (not a sacrament)
 - b. It is an outward sign to be proclaimed, enjoyed and celebrated.

III. CONCLUSION

A. Have you been baptized as a believer in Christ?

B. Have you received Christ and the forgiveness of sin?

C. The gospel – Christ died for sinners (that’s you)!

- ① Truth about reality is knowable and it is true that there really is one God, who eternally exists as three co-equal and distinct persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- ② God is both loving and powerful, so He made humanity to enjoy Him in loving relationship and to display His glorious power.
- ③ God is both just and righteous, so He punishes sin, that which defies Him and His righteous standard.

- ④ We have all sinned (in fact, we are fallen) so we’re in trouble because God is just and hence there’s a penalty for sin (death and ever-lasting conscious condemnation). No amount of goodness, religion, spirituality or works can save us.
- ⑤ God so loved the world that the Son – though not ceasing to be God - irreversibly became a human, the historical Jesus (a figure promised and prophesied to Israel), to graciously reach out to the fallen world, train disciples, fulfill prophecy, die for sinners and save us.
- ⑥ Jesus satisfied justice by perfectly obeying the law of God, shedding His innocent blood and dying in our place for sin as the substitute, settling the penalty for those He would save by grace through faith.
- ⑦ Those who by faith receive Christ, have been saved from the penalty they deserved and have received the Holy Spirit, freeing them from the power of sin and drawing them into a life of love and repentance.
- ⑧ Though our human bodies may die, our souls last beyond the grave in one of two realms – with Christ or apart from Him.
- ⑨ One day Christ will return to raise dead bodies, rejoining them to their souls, and He will offer total and complete justice to the unpardoned who have willfully sinned against God.
- ⑩ Here’s the personal invitation: Trust Jesus and come to Him in prayer: confess your sins, repent, and proclaim your allegiance to the Lord.

COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS:

Icebreaker: What was your favorite television show growing up? Why?

1. Go through the ten points on this outline explaining the gospel. Why are each of these points necessary for the true gospel of Jesus?
2. Read Acts 16:30-31. In light of this passage and the gospel as discussed in question #1, why is it heretical for some “Christian” groups to say that if you are not baptized you are not truly saved? Discuss the doctrines of *sola fide*, *sola gratia* and *solus Christus* in your answer (if you don’t know what these mean, go to www.theopedia.com and look them up).
3. While baptism is not necessary for salvation, there is something misplaced about a Christian who refuses to be baptized. Ultimately, baptism is a command (ordinance), because Jesus commanded us to be baptized in water. Why do we tolerate Christians ignoring this command and yet other commands like adultery or homosexuality we are so firmly against? Is this hypocritical of us?
4. Baptism is something that people did in the Bible shortly after becoming believers in Christ. Why then do so many Christians wait so long before being baptized? How long did you wait before being baptized and why?
5. In baptism we identify ourselves with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. How has the work of Christ’s resurrection impacted you this past week? How will you walk in His resurrection power in the days ahead?