

## The Importance of Baptism

### Matthew 3:13-17

The Bible says, that if we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved.

*Baptism is irrelevant outside of salvation.* Once a person receives the grace of God in the forgiveness of their sins, then, and only then, they are candidates for baptism. Therefore, baptism is not a salvific issue but an issue of discipleship.

### 3 characteristics of the baptism of Jesus

#### 1) Jesus chose to be baptized. Matt. 3:13-15

- The baptism of Jesus was not an event that His parents decided upon when he was a baby, but a personal decision by Jesus Himself.
- Whatever spiritual ceremony parents choose for their babies, biblical baptism is a choice that child will one day have to make for themselves once they have received God's grace.

#### 2) Jesus' baptism didn't wash His sin away. Matt. 3:15

- To "fulfill all righteousness" expresses that baptism is "right" for all who belong to Him. Every believer should walk through the baptismal waters.
- John objected to baptizing Jesus because He had no sin to be cleansed from.
- This truth sets Jesus apart as sinless and emphasizes that baptism is not a means of salvation but an outward declaration of an inward transformation. It is the blood of Christ, not water, that cleanses sin. (1 John 1:7-9)
- Jesus fundamentally changes what was understood about baptism, which at the time was a temporary forgiveness much like the Old Testament sacrificial system, to an act of devotion done by one who already loves God and has experienced an eternal forgiveness.
- John's baptism involved individuals identifying with their sin (repentance). Jesus' baptism involved individuals identifying with God.

#### 3) The result of Jesus' baptism was that God was pleased

- The baptism of Jesus revealed a moment of divine approval. Not only was the Father pleased with the Son, but He is also pleased by all who follow Jesus in believer's baptism.

**Invitation:** Have you received the grace of God in the forgiveness of your sin? After having received His grace and forgiveness, have you walked through the baptismal waters?

**Jamie Ward. Co-pastor. Hillvue Heights Church. Bowling Green**