

Why Can't I Be Baptized?

Acts 8:26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

Message Bible says - "Here's water. Why can't I be baptized?"

The question that this man asked was a question that we should all ask especially if we have never been baptized.

Why can't I be baptized?

What would stop me from being baptized?

- I'm a little different than many pastors.
- I don't just go dunking people just because they decided to join a church.
- I heard one pastor recently explain that baptism is an outward expression of an inward commitment.
- Another called it a public confession of their faith.

Too many people and too many preachers do not understand what Baptism is for and what it represents.

- The simple act of being baptized does not save you; you must have an understanding of what that baptism is doing for you spiritually before it can have the effect of salvation on your life.

This Eunuch was not some slow-witted person,
Look at verse 27

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

What do we know about him?

- He was a man of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians.
- He had charge of all her treasure
- He came to Jerusalem to worship.
- He was returning in his Chariot.

This was an educated man of great wealth and authority, but he was also a man who loved Jehovah God, the God of the Jewish people. He was probably Jewish.

So as the man reads from the book of Isaiah he comes across a passage of scripture that reads...

32 He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

Philip didn't just have a casual conversation about Jesus with the man,

- He preached it to him.
- He told him everything there was to know about Jesus.
- He chain referenced scriptures
- He used illustrations
- He testified about the time he himself had spent with Jesus
- He told him about the miracles he saw Jesus do
- He told him about Jesus' own preaching
- He told him how Jesus' preaching confounded the religious people of his day.
- He told him about dead Lazarus being raised from the dead.
- He told him about the blind man
- He told him about the man with the withered hand

- He told him how they took Jesus in the night to crucify him.
- He told him how Jesus was taken like a lamb to the slaughter.
- He told him how when the railed accusations against Jesus and that Jesus didn't open His mouth except to say, "I thirst".
- Philip told the man how Jesus died and not only died, but resurrected 3 days later and was later seen by all the apostles and masses of people for many days.
- He told the eunuch how he himself saw this lamb that Isaiah wrote about ascend into Heaven before their very eyes...
- Then he must have told the eunuch about how on the Day of Pentecost over 4120 people were baptized and received the Holy Spirit after one man asked Peter "What shall we do?"
- And Peter responded, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the Name of Jesus Christ and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
- And he probably he even told the man about the revival he just left in Samaria where miracles and wonders were being preformed and where multitudes of people were being baptized in the name of the One he was reading about in Isaiah and how they too were receiving the Holy Spirit baptism evidenced by speaking in other tongues.

And when he told him everything there was to tell him about this One who Isaiah called the Lamb of God, and who the people called the Son of God, the eunuch's response was, "Why can't I get baptized?"

- "I want in"
- "I want to be a part of this"
- "I'm ready to be saved"

I doubt that this was a 30-minute sermon. In fact, I believe they were probably there for several hours if not most of the day!

It would have taken that long for Philip to tell the Eunuch all that he had witnessed himself and everything the eunuch needed to know to cause him to come to the conclusion that he was ready to be baptized.

So the question that the Eunuch asks is an amazing question to me because it shines a light on this man and let's us know where his heart was by his response to hearing all that there was to hear about Jesus.

- He immediately was ready to be baptized.
- He was not hard headed.
- He wasn't argumentative.
- He didn't question everything Philip said.

- When he heard the Truth, he responded in kind with, "Why Can't I Get Baptized?"

Philip's response to the question is equally important to understand because in his response Philip gives to the church the requirement that every candidate for baptism should have and that is found in vs 37

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

- With that confession, the Eunuch qualifies himself as a candidate for baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.

This is why infant baptism is not found anywhere in the bible, because an infant neither has sins to repent of, nor do they have the ability to understand and believe, in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

This is why at Acacia we don't just baptize people in order to join them to our church.

I'm not interested in getting people joined to Acacia nearly as much as I am interested in getting people into the Kingdom of God!

- It is more important for me that people understand what is happening when they are getting baptized.

- As a matter of fact, I cannot tell you for certain that a person is truly baptized unless they understand what baptism is all about and what it does for them.

Child and infant baptism cannot produce that understanding.

Nor can a 30-minute sermon that creates more enthusiasm and excitement about baptism than it does understanding as to what being baptized does for the sinful soul.

Jesus Said in John:

John 3:3 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Then in vs 5 it reads,

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

- Now don't get mad at the preacher if that rubs you the wrong way today, I'm just telling you what the Good Book says.
- "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit.
- This kind of goes along with what happened over there in the book of Acts the 2nd Chapter.

People say, "I don't believe you have to be baptized."

- "I can just be a good person and get to Heaven."
- "I don't need all that."

Well listen, I respect your beliefs.

- I'm not sure where you got those doctrines,
- Because I don't read that in here (Bible)
- But I can tell you what the Bible has to say about the subject.

First of all it tells us in **Philippians 2:12**

... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Other words, don't just guess at it.

- Don't treat this subject like it's not really all that important.

- Get into His Word!
- Dig into the scriptures to find out what it's talking about.
- "Study to show your self approved" as the Bible says.

1 Peter 3:21

The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.

This subject of baptism is pretty important.

- If it's a part of the salvation process, we need to understand it.
- We need to talk about it.
- We need to devote some time to understand and grasp what the Bible is saying about it and whether or not we should do it.

"Well now preacher – I believe you don't have to be baptized!"

You're all grown adults here and you're all welcome to believe what you want.

I certainly believed what I wanted to, but then I read it in this book (Bible).

- Just because you believe something does not make it truth!
- Just because you were taught it as a child does not make it truth either.

Someone told me about a guy named Santa Clause once.

- Then they told me about the Easter Bunny.

I've been told all kinds of stuff, but that does not make it truth.

- If it's not in here, if It's not in His Word... it's just someone's opinion.

So I've got to ask you this morning, are you going to trust someone's opinion or God's Word?

This is why for the next 3 Wednesday evenings; we are going to be here studying what the Bible says about Baptism.

- We're going to look in here (Bible) and see what it's all about.
- We're going to see what Jesus said about it.
- We're going to look at what the disciples said about it.
- We're going to see how it was done in the bible.
- We're going to look not only in the Bible, but we are also going to look at some of the earliest and oldest historical records to see just how it was performed in the Early Church.

If you've never been baptized...

- If you don't remember being baptized...
 - If you don't know how you were baptized...
 - If you just want to know more about it
 - Or enough to be able to tell someone else about it...
- I want to invite you to these Bible Studies at 7 pm.

Peter told us in Acts 2 to Repent and Be Baptized.

- In the original manuscripts, the word "And" did not exist.
- So the original reading of this scripture would have read Repent be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ.
- Repentance and baptism work together for the believer.
- You can't have one without the other.

Here's what I am saying, A new believer can cry out to God and ask for forgiveness for their sins and even begin living a repentant lifestyle, but that same believer still needs to be baptized.

In fact, the salvation process has not begun according to the scriptures until a person repents of their sins and is baptized.

- Peter did not say, "Repent only."
- No matter how good you are living, it's not good enough because we need the waters of baptism to wash our sins away.

Here's what's interesting to me...

Of the 3 things Peter talked about in Acts chapter 2...

1. Repentance
2. Baptism
3. Receiving the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit...

Only one of these things I am supposed to do.

1. I repent!
2. Then I simply have to allow the preacher to baptize me.
3. Then the third thing is to seek after and allow God to fill me with his Spirit.

4. I repent.
5. The preacher baptizes me.
6. Then God fills me with the Holy Spirit.

But you have to be ready

- You have to be willing.

But it starts with Repentance.

- It starts with having a heart that says, "God, I need your help!"
- It starts with a great big, "I'm sorry for the way I've been living!"
- It starts with "Jesus, help me."

I wonder if there is anyone here today who is ready to take this step.

- Are you ready to give your heart to Jesus Christ today?

I want to open this altar and invite you to come to repent here today and ask Jesus to give you salvation.

And if you are ready I want you to be here with me this Wednesday evening so I can show you what baptism is all about.