

Take the Plunge

A preacher became obsessed with baptism. It was all he ever wanted to talk about. Therefore, one of the elders suggested that he speak on something else. “Okay,” the preacher replied, “Give me a passage and I’ll preach on that.” The elder thought about it and said, “How about Genesis 1:1?” The next Sunday, the preacher got up and announced, “By request, our text today will be Genesis 1:1. It says, ‘In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.’ Now when the Lord created the earth, He made it one-fourth land and three-fourths water, which brings me to an important use of water — baptism.”



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Preachers should strive to stay balanced. They need to declare “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27) and not get too fixated on a particular topic. But all joking aside, the opposite would be closer to the truth when it comes to baptism. It is not talked about nearly enough in many churches today and as a result, people know very little about this important practice. If you doubt that is true of you, consider these “Did You Knows?” about baptism.

Did you know that baptism is for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38)? Did you know that baptism washes away sins (Acts 22:16)? Did you know that baptism puts one into Christ? (Rom. 6:3)? Did you know that baptism puts one into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13)? Did you know that baptism clothes one with Christ (Gal. 3:27)? Did you know that baptism is a spiritual circumcision (Col. 2:11-13)? It is when the removal of not *skin*, but *sin* takes place. Did you know that baptism is an appeal to God for a good conscience (1 Pet. 3:21)? That text compares Noah’s transition from the old world to the new world by means of water to our transition from the old man to the new man by means of water (vv. 20-21). And finally, did you know that baptism was always done with a sense of urgency? For instance, 3,000 Jews were baptized in one day (Acts 2:41), the eunuch was baptized on the side of a road (Acts 8:38), and the jailer was baptized in the middle of the night following an earthquake (Acts 16:33). The fact that baptism took place immediately underscores its importance.

Many preachers neglect these truths because they view baptism as a meritorious work. However, Paul makes a distinction between “works done by us in righteousness” (meritorious works) and the “washing of regeneration” (baptism) in Titus 3:5. Hence, baptism is not an earning but a yearning. We are merely meeting the conditions of God’s grace, just as Noah did by building the ark or the children of Israel did by marching around the walls of Jericho. So, have you taken the plunge?