

Study Guide

This week we look at stories of baptism. We start by reading the account of Jesus' baptism. We then look to the early church and how they used baptism. May you be enlightened as you reflect on your own Baptism.

Monday, August 30- Read Matthew 3:13-16, Mark 1:9-11, & Luke 3:21-22. All three accounts agree on the following: Jesus was baptized, the Spirit of God descended on Him, a voice said, "You are my Son, I am well pleased," and He traveled to the wilderness where he was tempted. There is not much variation of this event in the life of Jesus. This is one of the turning points in His life. We can speculate that based on the order of events, the baptism experience enabled him to make it through the temptations in the desert. Also the presence of the Spirit of God is significant. This part of the story seems to overshadow the actual baptism event. As you think of your own baptism and possibly have reflected on your own decision to follow Christ, can you sense the Spirit within you? Do you feel a guiding force or influence that seems to come from something within?

Tuesday, August 31 – Read Acts 2:38-42. In this account of a baptism, we find 3000 people who were baptized. They each had responded to Peter's 1st sermon. After taking them through a brief history of what God had been trying to do in the life of His people, he challenged them to turn. Turn from sin and turn TO God. After their baptism, they responded by joining each other to be taught about by the apostles and to be around other believers. As you have reflected on your baptism, have you made an effort to be around other believers and put yourself in a position to learn, to grow and to be encouraged by other Christians?

Wednesday, September 1 – Read Acts 8:9-13. In the days of the early church, sorcerers and magicians were numerous and influential. They worked wonders, performed healings and exorcisms, and practiced astrology. Their wonders may have simply been magic tricks/illusions or they may have had an evil power. Simon was well known and so powerful that some thought he was the Messiah. This transformation was dramatic and would have caused many people to listen with a new ear to the Gospel message. As you think of your life, reflect on who you were before you were baptized? Is there a noticeable difference? Do people that have known you for most of your life, know there is a difference?

Thursday, September 2 – Read Acts 8:26-38. Philip again, plays a part in a baptism. In this account, Philip found the Ethiopian man reading scripture. He then takes advantage of this opportunity to explain the Good News. Philip asked the man if he understood what he was reading. Philip (1) followed the Spirit's leading, (2) began the discussion from where the man was (reading Isaiah) and (3) explained how Jesus Christ fulfilled Isaiah's prophecies. When we share the Good News, we should start where the other person's concerns are focused. Then we can bring the Good News to bear on those concerns. Baptism was a sign of identification with Christ and with the Christian community. Although there were no witnesses besides Philip, it was still important for the eunuch to take this step. An entire country may have been impacted because of this one baptism. What impact has your baptism had on your family? Your workplace? Your community?

Friday, September 3 – Read Acts 16:25-34. In this remarkable story, Paul and Silas are the ones that introduce the jailer to Christ. But not just the jailer, his entire family! Paul and Silas took the family unit seriously. So the offer of salvation was made to the jailer's whole household – family and servants. Yet it was not the jailer's faith that saved them; they all needed to come to Jesus in faith and believe in him in the same way the jailer had. His entire family did believe and all were saved. Pray that God

will use you to introduce Jesus to your family and that they will come to believe in Him.

Saturday, September 4 - Read Acts 22:1-22. Notice verses 14-15. As Paul recounts his conversion, he was specifically instructed by Ananias to be baptized. All of the accounts of the early church have believers in Jesus Christ being baptized. The worldwide church continues to baptize those who profess Jesus Christ as Lord and also baptizing members of the family of those who believe. Review your sermon notes about those who are baptized who can't speak for themselves.