

TO DIE FOR

The NeverEnding Story

Why Baptize?

To this question only one answer need be given: We baptize because Christ commanded it. Consider these words of Jesus:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20)

Notice the logical progression. We go and spread the gospel (Good News). In our witnessing (Telling our Stories) we will make disciples. We are to baptize those disciples and then teach them to obey the words of Jesus.

Baptism is part and parcel of Jesus' command to the church. It is fundamental to our mission in the world.

Put simply—baptism is a clear command of Jesus Christ. We obey him when we baptize and we disobey him when we don't.

What Does Baptism Mean?

If the meaning of baptism could be boiled down to one word, that word would be **identification**. Baptism speaks primarily of a personal, public identification with Jesus Christ.

In Romans 6:3-4 the Apostle Paul puts the matter this way:

Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Notice the strength of the expressions—"baptized into Christ" and "baptized into his death" and "buried with him in baptism."

How important is your baptism? It is your personal identification with the greatest act of human history—the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism doesn't save you—salvation comes by faith alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). your guilt before God is removed the moment you trust in Christ. But baptism is your personal testimony (Story to, and the inward assurance of, your passage from the old life to the new life).

Likewise, when a person is baptized, he is publicly identifying with Jesus

Christ. It is an outward symbol of an inward commitment.

What, then, does baptism mean?

1. It means we have turned from the old life of sin to a new life in Jesus Christ.

2. It means we are publicly identifying with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

3. It means we are openly joining the ranks of those who believe in Christ.

A. When you are baptized, you are in fact visually preaching the gospel. As you stand in the water waiting to be baptized, you symbolize Jesus dying on the cross.

B. As you are lowered into the water, you symbolize Jesus buried in the tomb.

C. As you are raised from the water, you symbolize Jesus rising from the dead.

And since you personally are being baptized, you are also saying, "I died with Jesus Christ, I was buried with him and now I am raised with Christ to brand-new life."

In short, in your baptism you are preaching a sermon without using any words at all. And your sermon in your baptism will be more effective with your friends than any sermon the pastor preaches on Sunday morning—more effective because it comes directly from you.

**I MAY NOT BE PERFECT,
BUT JESUS THINKS, I AM TO DIE FOR!**