



Sermon Growth Guide

February 20, 2022

Missing Pieces – Washed in the Water

Colossians 2:6-15

Key Verse: Colossians 2:12 “... having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.”

Big Idea: As the people of God moved through the parted waters and into God’s freedom, we pass through the waters of baptism into the freedom of the community of faith, into the church.

Foundations

A Baptist church in an urban area had limited parking space. During the week, people were tempted to park in the pastor’s space, preventing the pastor from working. So, they put a sign up: No Parking. Violators Will Be Baptized. While humorous, it presented baptism as a punishment. That’s one way of looking at it...

Pastor Tim, however, described serious views of baptism in his sermon before telling us the Reformed understanding of baptism. In Colossians, Paul compared baptism to the rite of circumcision, a mark that one has been born into the family of God. So, the church is not a club we join, but a fellowship into which we have been placed. Baptism is not something we do. It is a gracious gift of God.

In the Revised English Bible, verses 6-7 read: “Therefore, since you have accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, live in union with him. Be rooted in him, be built in him, grow strong in your faith, as you were taught; let your hearts overflow with thankfulness.” Our union in Christ means that we are immersed in Him and that is our real baptism.

One of the ways in which we experience that immersion into Jesus is by being immersed into the church, where we and our children “grow strong in the faith, as we were taught.” Pastor Tim asked: “...have you thrown your entire life into the care and keeping of Jesus Christ...?” Are you immersed in Jesus and His people?

Understanding God’s Word

When Paul refers to circumcision as the analog to baptism, he is doing several things. First, babies who were circumcised didn’t decide to participate in this rite. It was decided for them. This tells us that God comes for us before we even think about Him. God chooses us before we can respond to the offer of new life in Jesus.

Second, Paul is showing us the unity of the Old and New Testaments when he aligns baptism with circumcision. This means that we can learn from Israel’s experiences. For example, what did Israel do with and for its children who had been marked as belonging to God? Read Deuteronomy 6. In what specific ways can the church follow this model of forming its members as followers of Jesus?

Applying God’s Word

Martin Luther wrote that “Baptism is not a work that we do but ... a treasure that God gives us and faith grasps. ... In baptism, therefore, every Christian has enough to study and practice all his or her life.” What aspects of your baptism would you like to explore more deeply?

Witnessing God’s Word

There is a baptismal liturgy that concludes: God has made you a member of the household of God, sharing in the priesthood of Christ. What should that look like in our lives, personally and together?