



Baptism Weekend | Doug Wekenman| 5.23.21
Weekly Study

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

What was your favorite birthday you can remember and why?

SHARE

Welcome to our final week of Wonder! Sunday was such a special day. We got to watch so many people go public with their faith in Jesus. But before we dive into the sermon, take some time to check in with your Group by answering these questions.

What is one word you would use to describe your week? Why did you pick that word?

What was the highlight of your week?

What is one thing you feel like God is showing you in your walk with him lately?

What is one way in which you experienced wonder this week?

GROW

Read Mathew 28:18-20

What do you think Jesus was saying when he told his disciples to go make disciples of all nations? What does it being a disciple mean to you?

In the verse you just read, Jesus is giving the disciples what is called the Great Commission. In this verse, it is important to note that Jesus is speaking to the disciples after dying on the cross, laid to rest for three days in a tomb, defeating death, and raised to life! By this point, Jesus had been given all authority both in heaven and on earth. He gives the disciples one last command, to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Why do you think Jesus commands us to be baptized?

Baptism is an act that symbolizes the decision that was already made to live a life of faith that is with God. It is an open declaration to God and to others of your faith in Jesus and that your life is made new in him. The old ways of living apart from God are no more, and a new life of faith in Jesus has begun. This week, Doug gave a great example that if he were to take off his wedding ring, which symbolizes his marriage, it does not mean that he is no longer married. He had already made his decision internally to be committed to his wife. His wedding ring only symbolizes that he is married externally, but his commitment was first made in his heart. The decision to live a life of faith in Jesus is the first step. Being baptized by water is the second step in living a life fully devoted to faith in Christ Jesus.

Jesus assures us that he is with us always, to the very end of age. This is important because after we get baptized, it may be natural for us to think that now we may not struggle with things like we did before we were baptized. We may think that now our life will be free from trouble. This isn't necessarily the case, But Jesus assures us that he is with us always.

John 16:33 Jesus says, "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

With Jesus as the king of our hearts and the God of our life, we can rest assured that we are in good hands no matter what we are faced with. Jesus loves you, and your life in him is more important than you could ever imagine. Your faith in Jesus is enough to get through any struggle, any amount of pain, any doubts you may have moving forward in this life with him. Hold on to him tightly and live your life being assured that he is always right there with you. A life in Jesus is the best decision you will ever make and one you will never forget.

What was this baptism weekend experience like for you? What is one thing you took away from it?

Have you been baptized? Share with your Group your baptism experience. How was your life different for you after you made that decision to publicly declare your faith in Jesus?

M O V E

Read Romans 6:1-7

What do you think it means to be dead to sin and alive in Christ?

Freedom comes with the death of our old selves and the resurrection in our new life in Christ. How does Baptism symbolize this picture?

In the passage you just read, the apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of actively living in our new identities, which is solely found in Jesus. “What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means!” (Romans 6:1). If we aren’t bound to the law anymore, then what does Paul mean by this passage? Freedom is the result of laying down the old cycle of sin and shame, in order to step into the resurrection of a new way of living. In Romans 6, Paul challenges the reader to put off the old self that bound us to chains and to put on the new self that has set us free.

Jesus broke both the religious and sin protocol that deceives us into believing either way could save, transform and ultimately free us. Religion tells us to try harder and then reminds us we’re not good enough when we fail. Sin heaps shame on us, but the cross represents freedom and offers us a new way of living.

Baptism represents the entrance of a person’s new life in Christ. While salvation occurs the moment we say “yes” to Jesus in faith, it’s beautifully symbolized by the out-loud declaration of that decision in the water. We come up out of the water as a new person, offering a visual of the cleansing of our sins. Even though our bodies will never be sinless in this life, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to say no. When legalism tries to shame you in your imperfection, the Holy Spirit moves you to live in the freedom of your new identity. It’s the rhythm of God’s truth keeping you grounded while His grace keeps you free and going.

What areas of your life has Jesus already set you free in or from?

What areas of your life is Jesus calling you into freedom in or from?

PRAY

We need prayer now more than ever. Spend some time-sharing prayer requests. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking off into two separate groups (or calls if you are an online group) to share more freely.

TO GO

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

- John 3:16