



## Lesson 5 - Baptism: God Washes

LESSON FIVE:

### Baptism: God Washes

You probably wear a few labels. Some levels you give yourself, other labels are given to you. You're proud of other labels, other labels trigger feelings of shame. What would your life look like if you began to wear the label God gives you?

*Ephesians 5:25-26* Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word

Through baptism we receive the \_\_\_\_\_ of sins.

#### Section 1 - Baptism is a blessing from God

##### A. God gives us his blessings through baptism.

*Romans 6:3,4* Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus 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.

**1 Peter 3:20,21** This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also, not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Through baptism, we are connected with the benefits of the death and \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus.

*Titus 3:5* He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 2:38** Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**1 Corinthians 12:13** For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body.

Through baptism the \_\_\_\_\_ gives us a new birth.

**Acts 2:38** Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

**Acts 22:16** And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.

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In baptism, God, not man, is at work. He connects individuals into the death and resurrection of Jesus. Baptism is not primarily what we do to show our commitment to God. Baptism is something God does in us and for us. He connects us with Jesus.

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#### Section 2 - Jesus commanded baptism

**Matthew 28:19, 20** "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."

The job description of the church is to make disciples by \_\_\_\_\_ people and teaching them to obey what Jesus taught us.

Baptism combines ordinary water with the extraordinary Word of God. The Holy Spirit uses this to connect us with the death and resurrection of Jesus.

### Section 3 - Differing practices of baptism

Some Christian churches only baptize adults. Others will baptize adults and children of a certain age. Others baptize people of any age, including infants. There are three primary baptism practices in the Christian church.

Believer's baptism – baptism is an initiation rite into the church for people to show that they have faith in Christ and desire to be publically identified as a Christian.

Paedobaptism – baptism is an introduction of an infant or adult into covenant community.

Regeneration baptism - baptism is an instrument God uses to create or grow faith in Christ.

The primary reasons for the different positions are:

1. There are no Biblical examples of infant baptism, we only see examples of “men,” “women” and “entire households” being baptized.
2. Differing assumptions about the nature of faith.
3. Differing positions on original sin.

#### A. Because of original sin, all people are born with a sinful nature.

*Psalm 51:5* Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

*Psalm 58:3* Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies.

*Romans 5:12* ...sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

*Acts 2:38-39* Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.


#### B. Babies and infants, like adults, can believe in Jesus

1. The Bible specifically talks about the faith of babies, infants and little children.

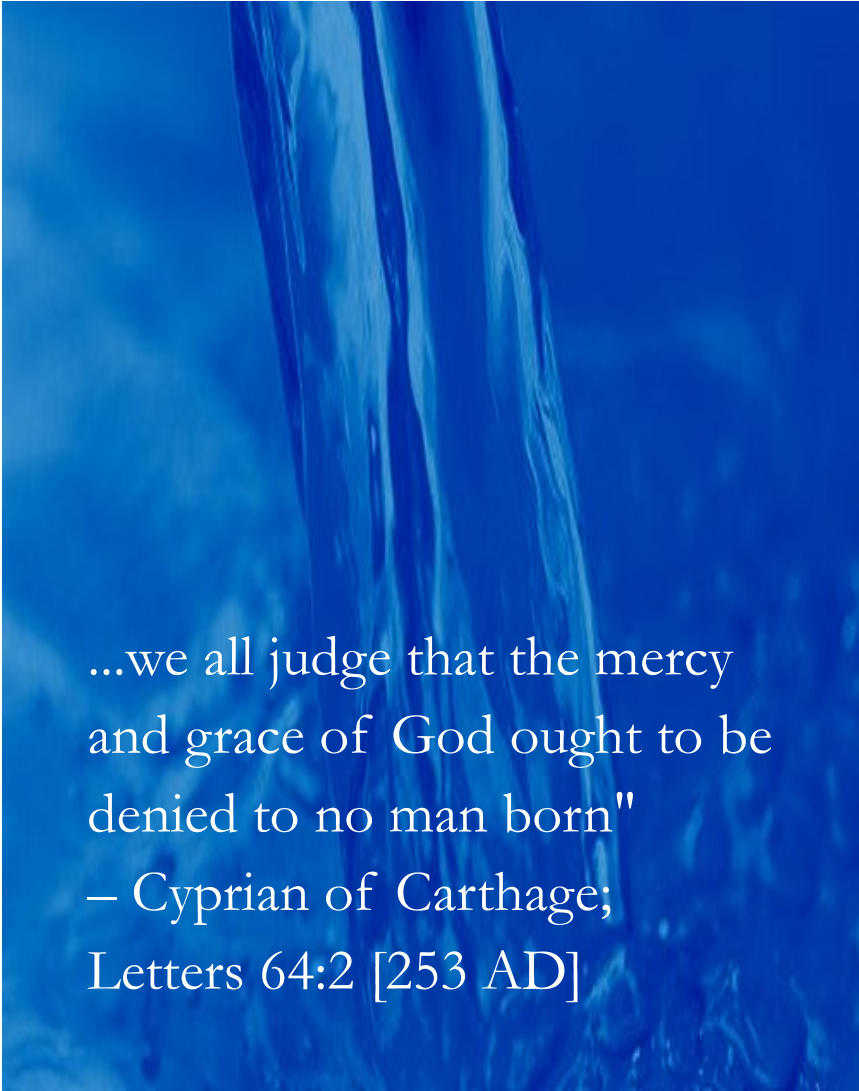
*Matthew 18:5-6* And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

*Luke 18:15-17* People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them.<sup>16</sup> But Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.<sup>17</sup> I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

*Hebrews 11:23* By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.



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Acts 2:38



...we all judge that the mercy  
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denied to no man born"  
– Cyprian of Carthage;  
Letters 64:2 [253 AD]

**Luke 1:39-44** At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, <sup>40</sup> where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup> In a loud voice she exclaimed: "...As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

2. Faith is the work of the Holy Spirit, it is his gift to us.

**1 Corinthians 12:3** "Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."

C. There is clear historical support for infant baptism. From the time of the early Christian Church, infant baptism was considered a normal practice.

"The Church received from the apostles the tradition of giving baptism even to infants. The apostles, to whom were committed the secrets of the divine sacraments, knew there are in everyone innate strains of [original] sin, which must be washed away through water and the Spirit"— Origen; Commentaries on Romans [248 AD]

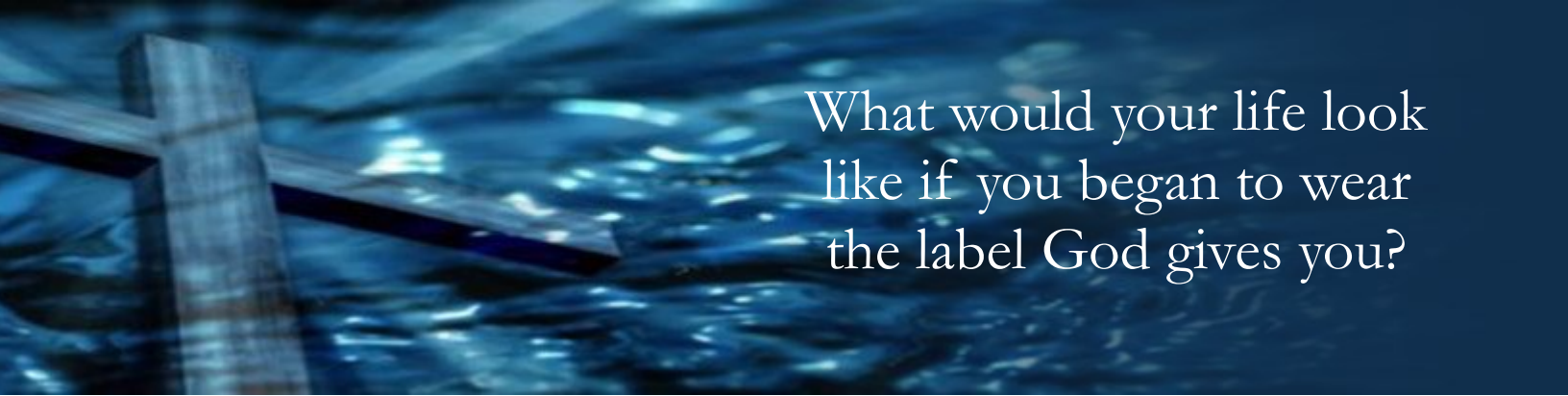
"Baptize first the children, and if they can speak for themselves let them do so. Otherwise, let their parents or other relatives speak for them" – Hippolytus; The Apostolic Tradition 21:16 [215 AD]

"As to what pertains to the case of infants: You [Fidus] said that they ought not to be baptized within the second or third day after their birth, that the old law of circumcision must be taken into consideration, and that you did not think that one should be baptized and sanctified within the eighth day after his birth. In our council it seemed to us far otherwise. No one agreed to the course which you thought should be taken. Rather, we all judge that the mercy and grace of God ought to be denied to no man born" – Cyprian of Carthage; Letters 64:2 [253 AD]

"Do you have an infant child? Allow sin no opportunity; rather, let the infant be sanctified from childhood. From his most tender age let him be consecrated by the Spirit." – Gregory of Nazianzus; Oration on Holy Baptism 40:7 [388 AD]

"You see how many are the benefits of baptism, and some think its heavenly grace consists only in the remission of sins, but we have enumerated ten honors [it bestows]! For this reason we baptize even infants... so that there may be given to them holiness, righteousness, adoption, inheritance, brotherhood with Christ, and that they may be his [Christ's] members" – John Chrysostom; Baptismal Catechesis [388 AD]

"The custom of Mother Church in baptizing infants is certainly not to be scorned, nor is it to be regarded in any way as superfluous, nor is it to be believed that its tradition is anything except apostolic" –St. Augustine; The Literal Interpretation of Genesis [408 AD]



# What would your life look like if you began to wear the label God gives you?

Since the Biblical authors speak about baptism saving, forgiving sins and connecting us to the death and resurrection of Christ, Hope practices regeneration baptism. Namely, that God can and will use baptism to connect the individual to Jesus and, therefore, create or strengthen faith in Jesus. This is not promoting “salvation by works” any more than reading your Bible is salvation by works. Like hearing the gospel, baptism connects us with Jesus.

***Ephesians 4:4-6** There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

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## Questions

1. Who labeled you during your formative years? How did these labels impact you?

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2. Why are labels, even inaccurate labels, so powerful?

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3. Baptism is important because it connects us with Jesus. This gives you a new label as a child of God. How will that help you remove old labels and wear God's label?

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4. When talking with Christians who have differing understandings of baptism, what things are important to keep in mind?

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