



ARMITAGE BAPTIST CHURCH
Membership Information Session #3
Baptism and Your Story

I. The Biblical Method

- A. The Greek word βαπτίζω (bap-tid-zo) was transliterated into the word “baptize” in the 16th Century in order to avoid controversy about the method of baptism being used at that time.
- B. The Greek word “βαπτίζω” literally translated “to immerse” or “to submerge”.
- C. The Greek words for sprinkle ἀντισμός (hnan-tis-mos) and pour κχέω (ek-khen-o) are never used in conjunction with the Biblical method of baptism in the Scriptures.

II. The Biblical Message

A. Our Public Profession of Jesus Christ

“Matthew 10:32-33, “Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.”

- 1. We are baptized because we are saved, not in order to be saved – Acts 10:47

“Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?” Acts 10:47,

- 2. Jesus commands His disciple to be baptized – Matthew 28:18-19

“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit’,” Matthew 28:18-19,

III. The Biblical Meaning

A. Identification with Jesus Christ through His Death and His Resurrection – Romans 6:3-6

“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;” Romans 6:3-6 says,

B. Identification with Jesus Christ through His Church and His People – Acts 2:41

- 1. The Biblical pattern

“So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls.” Acts 2:41,

- a. Faith always precedes baptism and baptism always follows faith

IV. Five Criteria for Biblical Baptism

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| A. Biblical <u>Pattern</u> | Acts 2:41 | Baptism must follow salvation, not precede it |
| B. Biblical <u>Purpose</u> | Romans 6:3-6 | Identification with Jesus’ death and resurrection |
| C. Biblical <u>Context</u> | Acts 19:1-5 | In and by the Christian church |
| D. Biblical <u>Method</u> | John 3:23 | By submersion only |
| E. Biblical <u>Formula</u> | Matthew 28:19 | In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit |

V. Sharing Your Story

Twice in the book of Acts Paul gives his conversion story (22:1-21 and 26:4-23). If we study these accounts we will discover three essential elements that we should also share in telling our story:

1. What my life was like before I knew Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior
2. What led to my decision to trust Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior
3. What my life is like since I received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior

VI. What was your life like before you received Christ?

- A. What were your attitudes, needs, and problems? (e.g. confident, proud, insecure, etc.)
- B. What was most important to you? (e.g. money, position, possessions, opposite sex, etc.)
- C. What did you look to for security, peace of mind, and happiness? In what ways did you find the activities not satisfying? (e.g. spouse, job, circumstances, etc.)

VII. What led to your decision to trust Christ? Why did you decide to surrender control of your life to Jesus?

- A. How did you receive Christ? What were the circumstances? Be specific.

VIII. What happened after you received Christ?

- A. What changes do you see in your actions, attitudes, and problems? – If these changes correspond to the problems you expressed before you knew Christ, you will have a consistent theme!
- B. What does Jesus Christ mean to you now?

Write out your testimony, answering these three questions in three brief paragraphs. Share this with your Bible Study leader or Grow Group Leader and have them work with you as you prepare to share your testimony at your baptism or church membership interview.

Telling Your Story

Any subject matter can be presented more effectively by careful preparation. A carefully prepared testimony, empowered by the Holy Spirit, can be of immediate and effective use in nearly every witnessing situation. It should be our desire to present Christ in such a clear, attractive and simple way that those who hear will not only want to know Him, but will also know *how* to know Him - personally. People can debate or deny the truth of God revealed in scripture but no one can debate or deny the positive change it has made in your life.

The “Do’s” and “Don’ts” of a 3 Minute Testimony

Do...

1. ...prepare your testimony beforehand; ask the Lord to give you wisdom and guidance as you write it out (Proverbs 25:11)

“Like apples of gold in settings of silver Is a word spoken in right circumstances.”

2. ...periodically review and edit your testimony as needed
3. ...try to follow a 3 point outline:
 - a. My life before knowing Christ
 - b. How I came to know Christ (be specific, especially in sharing the gospel). By time you’re finished your audience should know enough about the gospel to accept Christ themselves!
 - c. My life since I received Christ (i.e. the changes He has made, what He means to you now, etc.) (indicate at this point if you became a Christian as a small child)
4. ...begin with an interesting attention-getting sentence; close with a good conclusion
5. ...give enough details to arouse interest but use discretion when talking about your life before Christ (do not glorify your past sins or previous way of life)
6. ...give your testimony in such a way that others will feel a connection with your past and present experiences (Colossians 4:6)

“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.”

7. ...use one or two scripture verses to give your testimony context (e.g. *“Therefore if any man is in Christ he is a new creature...”* “I’d like to share with you what Jesus Christ has done in my life.”)

Don’t...

1. ...use Christian jargon (i.e. saved, convicted, converted, born again, sin, etc.). These words are precious to us but are often misunderstood and sometimes ridiculed by non-Christians
2. ...be too wordy, beat around the bush or emphasize how bad you used to be
3. ...speak in glittering generalities. Try to avoid words like “wonderful,” “glorious,” etc.
4. ...mention church denominations if possible, especially in a negative way
5. ...speak critically or negatively about any one person or group if possible
6. ...give the impression that the Christian life is a bed of roses

When you are asked to share your testimony be sure to...

1. ...share with loving enthusiasm in the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,”

2. ...speak loudly and clearly in a natural and relaxed tone of voice
3. ...avoid mannerisms (i.e. rubbing nose, jingling change, etc.)
4. ...avoid arguing and high pressure methods of getting a “decision” for Christ. Remember, people are “born of the Spirit” not through the persuasive logic of men, though God may use both
5. ...avoid preaching at people. Give your testimony, not a sermon
6. ...smile often! Ask the Lord to give you a happy, radiant face

7. ...memorize your testimony. Practice it until it becomes natural (1 Peter 3:15)
“but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;”