**April 23, 2017 “Baptism” Matthew 3: 1-17**

**Acts 2: 37-41**

As most of you can see, we are conducting a baptismal service today. By and large Baptism has become in many ways by-passed in the Christian church. That is not to say all churches have placed little or no value on Baptism but many have and it is my opinion that is one of the reasons among others why Church has become so emaciated when it comes to influencing our culture.

Well, how do I know that this is the case? How many times have you seen on Christian television some sort of an evangelistic service? Often times you will hear a very good sermon on the price of our salvation which was paid in full on the Cross of Calvary by Jesus Christ and you will hear that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in the finished work of Christ. People will be invited to come to the front and receive Christ which is a good and proper thing to do. I grew up watching Bill Graham crusades on television and I can still recall in my mind’s eye the thousands that came down from their seats and made their way to the front in obedience to the invitation given.

Yet how many of us ever saw anyone getting baptized after the invitation was acted on? How many of us when we have attended a service conducted by an evangelist ever saw that evangelist follow through with a baptismal service? Acts 2:37-41 gives us a clear example of what happened on the day of Pentecost. Why do I bring this up? It is because many times people get all excited about Acts 2:1-4 but give nearly no credence to the fact that those who were filled with the Holy Spirit instructed those to whom they preached the Good News…to be baptized.

Let’s be honest with ourselves today and ask ourselves if we would rather be in a service where people flock to the altar and flood the place with tears or go to a service where people are following through in their obedience to Christ by being baptized? Why is it that for too many cases, churches in America and perhaps around the world want to see miracles and signs rather than see people follow through on their confession of Christ with the most simplistic form of obedience by getting baptized?

1. Understanding of the Baptism
   1. Two Greek words
      1. Bapto… means to dip into
      2. Baptiso… means to “drown”
   2. So, what is baptism?
      1. In its simplest term
         1. It is a ceremony in which a person is immersed in water
         2. Even John Calvin one of the main theologians of the Reformation wrote, “the word ‘baptize’ means to immerse. No linguist can come up with anything else.”
2. Matthew 3
   1. Do you know how radical John the Baptist was?
      1. Who is he preaching to?
         1. The Jews
      2. What was he preaching?
         1. Repent
      3. Matthew 3:6, “they were being baptized by him
         1. “As they confessed their sins”
   2. John, you got it all wrong
      1. We are the children of Abraham
      2. We are the children of promise
      3. We are the chosen people of God
         1. We are not those Gentile dogs who need to be baptized
            1. Three steps for a Gentile

Milla… he had to be circumcised

Identified with the people of God

Tebula… dunked under water

Dead to his old life

Dead to idolatry

Dead to their old sins

Corbin… sacrifice an animal

There had to be a substitutionary death

* 1. What John was telling them was
     1. They were no different than the Gentiles
     2. They were unclean

1. What did they understand through John’s preaching?
   1. They were worthy of death
   2. They were worthy of burial
   3. They needed to be raised into a new life
   4. All of these things are symbolized in immersion
2. Matthew 3:13-17
   1. Why then did Jesus come to be baptized by John?
      1. He had nothing to repent of
      2. He had no sin to confess
      3. He did not need a new life
      4. He was not worthy of death
   2. Matthew 3:15… “to fulfill all righteousness”
      1. He was doing what God had required of a man
      2. If I am going live like a man I will do all that God commands
3. Romans 6:1-4
   1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we who are dead unto sin live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us were “immersed” into Christ were “immersed” into His death? That like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life.”
   2. What are these being baptized today in effect saying?
      1. I have been immersed into the life of Christ and the life I now life, I live by faith in the Son of God who gave Himself up for me!!!!