

Guided Bible Study: Week 8

May 9-15, 2020

During the time we cannot have Sunday School and Wednesday Bible Study due to the Corona Virus emergency, Rick is posting a guided Bible study on here to help fill the void left by not having those classes. We encourage you to read the passages in the Bible together with your family. We will post the study for each week.

BAPTISM STUDY

Part 1

Baptism is a matter that has some people confused and can even get some people quite worked up. Since we finished our previous study, but we can't have classes yet, I thought you might find a study about baptism to be helpful. Then the question in my mind became "where to start?". After careful consideration, it seems the best place to start is to see baptism in the context of the overall plan of salvation.

For some this first study might be present new and challenging material while others of you might already be very familiar with it. Any movement in thought and possibly response to teaching about baptism needs to be in relation to Christ and our overall walk with him and not merely be a matter of baptism becoming an issue in and of itself. So to get the ball rolling, let's start at the beginning. I often refer to these as "Four Spiritual Truths". I will not print out the Scripture references. You can look these up in your Bible and read them as you go through this study.

FIRST: GOD LOVES YOU. [John 3.16](#) We learn back in Genesis that we are made in God's image. As a loving Father, God longs for us to live in relationship with Him. Some people have the idea that God is up there looking down anxious to crush us like we would crush a cockroach. Nothing could be farther from the truth. He is our loving Father who cares for us in the most loving and caring of ways.

[DISCUSS: What are some ways you know that God loves you?]

SECOND: WE HAVE ONE BIG PROBLEM. **Romans 3.23** We are guilty of sin and our sin breaks our relationship with God, leaving us condemned. We become guilty of sin when we are capable of knowingly disobeying God. **James 4.17**
I John 3.4 When we are tiny we are safely in Christ and are not yet guilty of sin. **Matthew 18.1-3; 19.13-14** However, we all grow to that point in life that, even if we remain basically good persons, we sometimes are led away by our natural earthly desires and disobey God. **James 1. 13-15**. In Romans 6.23, the Apostle Paul tells us that what we earn for sinning is “death”. That refers to something far worse than mere physical death. The Bible reveals a “second death” involving fire and burning sulfur. **Romans 6.23** **Revelation 21.8**

THIRD: GOD HAS MADE THE RESCUE. **Romans 5.8-10** **I Corinthians 15.1-4** We already mentioned how much God loves us. Here we see that love in action. He sent Jesus to take our sins upon Himself. Though He was sinless (**Hebrews 4.14-15**), Jesus bore our sins and was punished in our place on the cross. We do not deserve salvation. We deserve to be lost. Our loving God, our Heavenly Father, reaches out to us with His grace (undeserved favor or unearned gift). **Ephesians 2.8** We don’t earn salvation. We don’t deserve to go to heaven. However, God offers each of us this great free gift. [DISCUSS: If you could earn your salvation, how much would you be willing to give or do? Do you think you could really pay or do that much? How much good does a gift do you if you don’t open it and use it?]

FOURTH: WE MUST OPEN THE DOOR. The New Testament reveals how we can “open the door” and take this free gift of salvation into our own lives. Look again at **John 3.16** and **Ephesians 2.8**. Becoming saved starts with our FAITH in Jesus Christ, that He is God’s Son and our Lord and Savior. Because the rest of the steps are so tied to faith we often sum this up by speaking of being saved by faith. However, the rest of these steps are essential and indispensable aspects of believing in Jesus and becoming saved. [DISCUSS or CONSIDER: Do you believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God? Do you trust Him to save you?]

One of these steps is REPENTANCE. **Mark 1.15** links repentance to faith. **Acts 2.38** links repentance to the forgiveness of our sins and to receiving the Holy Spirit into our lives. To repent is literally to “change our mind”. It has the effect of changing our lives. It’s turning around and making Jesus our Lord, putting Him in

control of our lives. While this particular study is of the steps involved in BECOMING saved, we also learn in the New Testament what, once we become saved, we must remain faithful and live the Christian life. (**I Corinthians 15.58 Revelation 2.10**) In genuine, saving, repentance we DECIDE we are going to live that faithful life. [DISCUSS or CONSIDER: Do you want Jesus to be in control of your life?]

The next step is CONFESSING our FAITH. **Matthew 10.32 Romans 10.9-10** Again, we see confession of faith as an expression of faith and as leading to salvation. In confessing, we state in the presence of others that we believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. In a sense, it's stating our allegiance to Jesus and our intent to follow Him. [DISCUSS or CONSIDER: Are you willing to tell others that you believe Jesus in the Christ, the Son of God?]

Finally, there is **BAPTISM** into Christ. It is not somehow contradictory to faith, as some have claimed, but very much tied to faith and salvation. **Mark 16.16** Being at the end of the process, as seen in the many conversions in Acts, we can say that baptism is the point in time at which the repentant believer goes from being lost to being saved. It's the point at which we come to be in Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit comes to live in us and transform us, identifying us as a child of God. In addition to Acts 2.38 and Mark 16.16, check out these verses that tie baptism to salvation: **Acts 22.16 Galatians 3.27 Colossians 2.12-13 I Peter 3.21**. We believe there is also a connection to baptism in Jesus' words in **John 3.3-5**, linking it with being born again and coming into the kingdom of God. Therefore, we can sum things up by saying God saves us by GRACE, through FAITH, at BAPTISM. [[DISCUSS or CONSIDER: Have you been baptized? If not, what is holding you back?]

In future studies, we will consider for whom baptism, as taught and practiced in the New Testament, was intended and to whom it was administered. We will also consider the form of baptism as presented in the New Testament and what we should gather from that in light of the various practices we find today. I will look forward to sharing with you. If you have questions, please contact me.