



DOUBLE IMPACT BAPTISMS

HOW TO EVANGELIZE AT BAPTISMS

Baptisms are a powerful evangelism opportunity - so many unchurched people are often present! Here's some tips from Terran Williams on what to say to capitalize on this opportunity.

Welcome everyone. Just before we baptize, let me take a gap to explain the meaning of x's baptism to everyone. It depicts three things...

FIRST, BAPTISM DEPICTS AN INVISIBLE BOND.

- So many people think that Christianity is a religion. It isn't. It's a relationship. In fact, the Bible often compares our relationship to God to a kind of marriage. When we put our faith in Jesus, some kind of deep bond occurs. Our hearts and lives are joined to Jesus.
- But this bond is invisible. The marriage bond is invisible too. If Julie is standing there and I am standing here, you can't see that we're one. But we are.
- What the bond needs is an outward sign. In marriage, it's wedding rings. She wears the ring I have given her. We are one – and it's visible. Well, when Jesus sent out his disciples with the gospel message, he said, 'Go make disciples, baptizing them.' Jesus invented baptism as the outward sign that says to everyone: 'Me and Jesus – we're connected. My life is joined to his.'
- If Julie didn't wear a ring, I'd wonder why. See, both marriage and being connected to Jesus is very personal, but it's never meant to be private. I shouldn't be ashamed of my relationship to Julie. Well baptism is x's way of saying, 'I am not ashamed of my relationship with Jesus'.

SECOND, BAPTISM DEPICTS BEING WASHED CLEAN.

- Nowadays we get into water for many reasons – we like to swim. But in the ancient world, you got into water for only one reason. To be washed clean.
- Well, one of the greatest gifts Jesus gives us is being washed clean of all the shame, all the guilt, all the sin. When Jesus died on that cross, God took your sins and my sins and x's sins and put it on him, and punished them there. Now we can be free and forgiven and washed clean.
- If I can just speak for myself, this is one of the most awesome parts of being connected to Jesus. I've done a lot of things that I am ashamed of. And it feels so good to know that my sin and guilt and shame has been washed away. One Scripture says as far as the East is from the West, that's how far he has removed our sins from us. Jesus has so perfectly and completely dealt with my sin – there is infinite distance between me and my guilt. I am so so grateful.

THIRD, BAPTISM DEPICTS SURRENDER.

Notice that x is not going to baptize themselves. No, they are going to be baptized by me. It's a picture of surrender.

- If I can summarize what Christians believe it's this – Jesus is Saviour and Lord. I have already spoken about him as the Saviour who saves us from the guilt and shame of our sin. But let me speak about him as Lord.
- Baptism is surrender to Jesus as Lord. In the first century, there was only one Lord. Caesar. He was the world's most powerful man. Everyone in his empire declared, *'Caesar is Lord.'* Because he had all the power. He was the greatest. But he was a tyrant! You were expected to die for him if need be. Well, you can imagine the shockwaves sent across the Roman world when a group of people started saying, *'Jesus is Lord.'* They were saying, *'There's someone much much greater, and more worthy.'* Many of them died for this. Nowadays our mantra has changed. We now say, *'I am Lord.'* We reserve the right to do what we want, when we want, with whom we want. But it's just another form of tyranny! The Gospel says, *'Don't be deceived. You can't save you. You can't guide you. You don't know what's best. But there is one who can save you, who will guide you, who does know what's best.'*
- So this baptism is a picture of surrender to Jesus as Lord. But it's also a surrender to Jesus as Love. A Christian is first and foremost someone who has been conquered by love. Jesus is the one who says, *'Nothing can separate you from my love – neither height nor depth, neither the present nor the future, nothing in all creation.'* Julie and I might fail each other – we'll do our best not to. But Jesus will never ever fail us – not now, not ever. But his love is not just words. His love is action. Caesar commanded people to give their lives to him, to die for him if need be. Jesus instead came to give his life for us, to die for us. He loves us so much he'd rather die than live without us. That kind of love is worth surrendering to. That's what this baptism means – being conquered by the love of God.