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The ‘Other’ Ordinance: Baptism

Pastor Gene Giguere, June 1, 2025

Introduction

1) We have just heard Deacon Bob read our confession of faith, which we read on the first Sunday of each month. A part of it reads:

We believe the evidence of salvation
 is, in the sight of God, real piety,
 and in the sight of man apparent piety,
 and that all who are in right standing with God
 have a right to the two divine ordinances:
the Lord’s Table and Baptism.

While we celebrate *one* of these ordinances – the Lord’s Table – each month, Baptism, the *other* ordinance, we observe annually.

It’s such an important event for us that we rent out a section of Spring Lake and build our worship service and Church Picnic around it; it is without question the highlight of the day.

Baptism is not a footnote to the Christian life; our Lord commanded His followers to be baptized in water.

Furthermore, it’s a part of the so-called *Great Commission*.

Just before His Ascension into Heaven to take His place at the Father’s right hand, Jesus instructed His disciples to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (**Matthew 28:19-20a**).

What we actually have here is a single verb: “MAKE” + a few participles: “going” and “baptizing” and “teaching.”

So, Jesus commanded them to “make disciples,” and to do so by (1) “going,” (2) “baptizing,” and (3) “teaching.”

To be a follower of Jesus is to do the things that He says – to obey His commandments.

In **Luke 6:46**, Jesus asked a straightforward, yet poignant, question: “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”

- 2) To be a disciple of Jesus is to be enrolled in the *School of Jesus*, growing to spiritual maturity, little-by-little becoming more like Him.

In contrast to every other school in existence with their *many* teachers, for Jesus’ followers there is One Teacher – *He alone is their Teacher and Master and Rabbi*.

A Christian is always, and only, *a student* of Jesus.

Those who like myself are pastor-teachers, are also, first and foremost, students, sharing what the One Teacher has given them to feed the flock.

Jesus holds a unique position that cannot be transferred to any of His disciples or to any teacher.

That’s what He meant when He said: “You are not to be called ‘Rabbi’, for you have only one Master and you are all brothers ... Nor are you to be called ‘teacher’, for you have one Teacher, the Christ” (**Matthew 23:8, 10**).

So, in orthodox Christianity, believers who study God’s Word under a certain Bible teacher or pastor *are never disciples of that teacher*.

No matter how special a certain brother or sister may be to you – no matter what impact he or she may have had on your spiritual life – you are always a disciple of ONE Teacher alone in the School of Jesus.

3) There are many lowly under-shepherds in the Christian faith, but there is only ever One Shepherd:

‡ **Ecclesiastes 12:11**: “The words of the wise are like goads [prods, the stick a rancher uses to make his animals move], and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd.”

‡ **Ezekiel 34:23** prophesied, “I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.”

This is a reference to Jesus, David’s greater son.

When Ezekiel wrote this David had been dead for many, many years.

‡ Jesus Himself said in **John 10:16**, “I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, One Shepherd.”

4) As students in the School of Jesus we learn in two ways: *by* (a) *hearing* the words of our Master, and by (b) *imitating* Him.

The two-sided coin of hearing and doing.

The Sermon on the Mount is a perfect example of the theoretical teaching of Jesus.

Jesus sat down, like a rabbi in the synagogue, and taught His disciples by talking to them (**Mathew 5:1–2**).

Their place was to listen to and even memorize His words.

But those who were taught by Jesus were also instructed to *do like their Master*.

Jesus always presented Himself as an example to be imitated by His disciples.

The Apostle John put it this way: “Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked” (**1 John 2:6**).

So, in the School of Jesus, we learn (1) by listening to Jesus and (2) imitating Him.

Jesus expects us to *take what we learn from Him and to live it!*

He NEVER gives us doctrine as an end in and of itself.

He gives us a new way to live, a fresh new way to be human – a way that we're to live out and invest into others.

And He directs us to be intentional about *making disciples*.

To be *going*, and to be *teaching*, and to be *baptizing*.

So, let's look at that third one this morning and ask what baptism is and why it's so important to our discipleship?'

The Believer's Baptism

- 1) There's a lot of confusion about water baptism within Christian denominations.
 - ✝ If you're a *Baptist*, you believe in baptism by submersion only.
 - ✝ If you're an *Anglican*, you can be baptized by submersion, by immersion, by pouring, or by sprinkling.
 - ✝ If you're *Eastern Orthodox*, baptism is by 3-fold submersion or immersion.
 - ✝ If you're a *Roman Catholic in the West*, baptism is usually by pouring.
 - ✝ If you're a *Roman Catholic in the East*, baptism is by submersion or immersion - and sprinkling is only allowed if the water flows on the head.
 - ✝ If you're a *Quaker* you believe that baptism was a mere external symbol and that it should no longer be practiced.
 - ✝ If you're a *Presbyterian*, baptism is a *sacrament*.
 - ✝ If you're a *Trinitarian Pentecostal* or belong to the *Assemblies of God*, baptism is an *ordinance*.

‡ If you are *United Church of Christ*, you *can* be baptized as an infant to indicate membership in the New Covenant.

Lutherans and *Methodists* also baptize babies.

In *Roman Catholicism*, infant baptism is absolutely necessary, as an unbaptized infant cannot go to Heaven.

So, there is quite a bit of confusion about baptism, but it's not because the Bible presents a confusing message on the subject!

On the contrary, the Bible is exceedingly clear about what baptism is, who it's for, and what it accomplishes. Let's try to sort it out.

2) Baptism is introduced for the first time in the New Testament in **Matthew 3**, where we meet John the Baptist.

‡ John was baptizing and preaching a straightforward message to the Jews of his day: 'Repent of your sins because Messiah is coming VERY soon!'

That Messiah, of course, was Jesus, John's own half-cousin.

‡ Now, understand what the visual picture of water baptism would have meant to those who watched others being baptized.

Water was used extensively in the Old Testament in connection with *ceremonial cleansing*. So, they would have understood this as some sort of cleansing, of making something fit for the Lord's use – much as a dirty dish, once it is washed, is once again fit for use.

This common connection of water with *ceremonial cleansing* would have significantly shaped their understanding of what John was doing.

Those being baptized by John were signifying their Messianic expectation.

They were preparing themselves to encounter the Messiah, who John promised was coming soon.

3) Then, one day as John was baptizing, Jesus Himself came to be baptized.

John was floored by this. It seemed to him SO inappropriate, out of sorts, that he should baptize HIM!

✠ The baptism of Jesus was obviously unique.

- ✓ It wasn't a baptism of *repentance*, because He had no sin to repent of!
- ✓ It wasn't an indication that He was *turning to God*, for He was and is VERY God!

No. Jesus' baptism signified the inauguration of His earthly ministry – a ministry that would end some three years later with His sacrificial death upon the cross for the sins of the world.

But we're already seeing a New Testament pattern emerge: *baptism is important – REALLY important.*

The great preacher J.C. Ryle writes: “We see in this passage the high honor the Lord Jesus placed on baptism ... [even] the Savior of the world came and was *baptized*... An ordinance which the Son of God was pleased to use, and later appointed to be used by his whole church, should always be held in special reverence by His people ...”¹

So, then:

- ✓ John baptized BEFORE Jesus began His ministry.
- ✓ Jesus Himself was baptized by John.
- ✓ Jesus' disciples baptized during His lifetime.

It is uncertain whether or not Jesus personally baptized, but He certainly supervised His disciples doing that important work (**John 4:2**)!

- ✓ Then, before He ascended into Heaven, Jesus instructed His disciples to make more disciples of every nation by *going, teaching and baptizing*.
- ✓ Finally, the apostles baptized AFTER Jesus.

¹ Ryle, J. C., *Luke: The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books) 1998, c1997.

For instance, AFTER the birth of the Church on the day of Pentecost, AFTER Christ had ascended and the Holy Spirit had come – AFTER these things, the Apostle Philip famously baptized the Ethiopian Eunuch.

Acts 8:34-38: “And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?”
³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” ³⁸ And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.”

Is there any question that this was *water* baptism? No.

The Apostle Paul too specifically tells us that he baptized Crispus and Gaius and others (**1 Corinthians 1:14**).

And on and on it goes.

So, believers were baptized BEFORE, DURING and AFTER the earthly ministry of Jesus.

And our Lord Himself commanded His followers to make disciples *by baptizing*, among other things.

So, what does this say about those who would argue that baptism is not important nor necessary today?

Jesus instructed His followers to teach people “to observe all that I have commanded you” after commanding baptism in the very same sentence.

Truth is, water baptism in the New Testament always *signifies that something MOMENTOUS has happened in the spiritual life of the one being baptized!*

It is important. It just matters.

- 4) However, what we call the “Believer’s Baptism” – the baptism we practice in the Church today – is far different from John’s baptism and Jesus’ baptism.

✠ The *primary* meaning of the Greek verb βαπτίζω is to *immerse* or to *dip* – even to *wash*.

In non-Christian literature, it meant to *plunge*, to *sink*, to *drench*, or even to *overwhelm*.²

For instance, in Homer's *Odyssey*, book 9, the writer used βαπτίζω to describe hot metal being plunged into water by a blacksmith to cool it off.

Xenophon said that the Spartans used to “baptize” their spears by putting them into a bowl of blood.

We see this in **Revelation 19:13**, for instance: “He is clothed in a robe dipped [βάπτω] in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.”

This is important because the image here is one of dipping cloth in dye to dye it.

This makes a strong case that baptism should be *by immersion* in water: you don't dye a piece of cloth by sprinkling or pouring dye on it, right?

✠ So, when we baptize at *Harvest* – as we'll do again on August 3rd at Spring Lake – we will baptize by full submersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, as our Lord instructed us.

We also baptize outside in a lake, because the *Didache* – a very important early Christian document – suggests that we should “baptize this way: ... baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in *living* water. But if you have no living water, baptize into other water.”

✠ So, the *primary* meaning of the word βαπτίζω means to *immerse* or *dip*.

But it's not the only meaning of the word – and its *secondary* meaning helps us to understand a number of tricky New Testament passages.

In fact, it's the *secondary* meaning of the word that really gets to the heart of why baptism is so important to Christians.

² Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

The *secondary* meaning of βαπτίζω is to ‘identify’ something with something else.

And this is a very common use of the word.

- ✓ For instance, when Homer described how Ulysses took a piece of hot metal and rammed it into the Cyclops’ one eye, he called it “baptizing.”

What was happening? Ulysses was “identifying” the piece of hot metal with the Cyclops’ only eye!

- ✓ The Greek playwright Euripides used the word to describe a sinking ship.

The idea is that the ship was “identified” with the bottom of the sea when it sank!

[Which reminds me of an old joke. A guy goes into a tailor shop and hands the tailor pair of torn pants. Just then, the tailor thinks he recognizes the customer. “Euripides?” says the tailor. “Yeah, Eumenides?” says the customer.]

- ✠ SO ANYWAY, as it turns out, the Bible too likes to use βαπτίζω in the sense of *identification*.

And this brings clarity to a number of thorny passages.

Let’s look at four of them:

- ✠ **1 Corinthians 10:1-2**: “... our fathers ... all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses ...”

So, what does it mean to be *baptized into Moses*.

It simply means that all who were *identified with Moses* were delivered safely through the Red Sea, while those who were *identified with Pharaoh*, perished! See it?

- ✠ Secondly, in **Luke 12:50**, Jesus said to His disciples, “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!”

Now here Jesus was referring to His imminent death upon the cross.
So, we call this the *Baptism of the Cross*.

What does it mean?

Jesus was going to the cross where He would die for our sins.

He *identified with our personal sins* and was judged for them in our place.

And through this *baptism*, He became the very Savior of the world.

✠ Third, is something that John the Baptist said in **Luke 3:16**.

He said, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

What did John mean by this?

He was saying that, when the Messiah comes people would either believe in Him or reject Him.

Those who believed in Him He would *identify* [βαπτίζω] with the Holy Spirit.

But those who did not, He would *identify* [βαπτίζω] with fire.

Everyone in this age will be identified with one or the other of these!

Believers, He would “baptize” or *identify* with “the Holy Spirit” for all eternity.

Unbelievers, He would “baptize” or *identify* with “fire” for all eternity.

I don’t think I need to explain what being identified with fire means.

‡ Finally, a passage that has caused much confusion and false teaching, but which is easily understood when one sees baptism as identifying something with something else.

1 Corinthians 12:13: “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.”

The ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit’ is *not* the gift of tongues, *nor* the ‘afterglow,’ *nor* the ‘second blessing,’ nor any of the other unbiblical ideas that charismatic heretics dream up.

The ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit’ is the act whereby God the Holy Spirit, at the very moment of salvation, forever identifies the believer with Christ and with His people.

The ‘baptism of the Spirit’ puts the believer (1) in union with Christ and (2) in union with other believers in the Body instantly at the moment of salvation.

That’s what Paul’s referring to when he describes the seven essential, intrinsic unities:

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—

⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (**Ephesians 4:4-6**).

Do you see how understanding that the word βαπτίζω means ‘to identify’ clarifies a number of difficult passages?

5) OK, so what does water baptism, the Believer’s Baptism, identify us with?

Well, Paul takes all the guess work out of it in **Romans 6:3-4**:

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into

death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

So, the “Believer’s Baptism” *identifies* us with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ – and it does so PUBLICLY!

In the ritual of water baptism, we’re acting out the drama of Christ death, burial and resurrection and writing ourselves into that story!

That’s why Paul could say: “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (**Galatians 2:20**).

And so, the believer’s baptism carries with it tremendous symbolism.

It represents the believer’s personal identification with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection in a profound and public way.

Baptism is the PUBLIC proclamation of our faith in Christ,

a statement of our submission to Christ, and

an identification with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection.

It’s declaring to the world that we belong to Jesus and we are not for sale.

The Believer’s Baptism & Discipleship

So, being baptized is *an act of obedience* – and, as we’ve seen, to be a true follower of Jesus, to know Him as our *Lord*, is to be serious about obeying Him.

Again, **Luke 6:46**: “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”

But, let’s be clear about what baptism does and does not do.

1) First, baptism doesn’t save us, nor is it necessary for salvation.

In fact, *being saved is a prerequisite to baptism!*

But that being true, Jesus clearly commanded it, and so it is *not* optional.

Clearly, water baptism is a very important *step of obedience* in a believer's journey of discipleship.

- 2) Second, not only does baptism *not save us*, it *doesn't make us sinless* either. While our baptism can be a wonderful motivation to remain faithful in our walk with Jesus, we will struggle with our old sin nature until the day of redemption.

John could not be more clear about this: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (**1 John 1:8**).

- 3) But, third, there is something baptism WILL do: It will bring us the joy of identifying with the new life that we have in Christ Jesus!

Look at Paul's words again ...

Romans 6:4: "... just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."

Baptism is a declaration that we're new creatures in Christ and that everything has become new in us (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).

God is doing a new thing and He's doing it in you!

And so, we should walk out of the waters of baptism *rejoicing*, even as the Ethiopian eunuch did in **Acts 8:39**!

That God has not only given us life, but life more abundantly!

Yes, baptism is an act of obedience, but it's also a spring of spiritual exuberance – of divine joy – to the one who comes gladly to its waters! Amen?

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

OK, let me close by addressing some frequently asked questions and try to provide reasoned, biblical answers.

1) First, ‘Who should be baptized?’

Answer: Everyone who has been born again and desires to follow and obey the Lord Jesus.

In other words, everyone who wants to be a Jesus-follower, a true disciple.

But, no one should be admitted to the waters of baptism until they fully understand what baptism is and what it is not – and what it represents.

In the 2nd and 3rd centuries of the Christian era, preparation for baptism could take as long as three years!

Craig Blasing writes that the Church needed to see that the faith professed was accompanied by the “fruits of a converted life before it would admit [a] person to baptism.”³

A disciple of Jesus should be baptized only after coming to a full understanding of its purpose with a desire to obey the Lord.

Because it is an act of obedience, no one should ever be coerced into being baptized.

2) One question that comes up over and over again in Old Woonsocket, *the Paris of New England*, is this: ‘I was baptized as a baby. Does that count?’

The answer is an unequivocal, ‘No.’ Infant baptism is NOT biblical. Infant baptism is not the Believer’s” Baptism!

In the Bible, everyone who underwent the Believer’s Baptism had first put his or her faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.

✝ An infant cannot do that.

✝ An infant cannot make a conscious decision to obey Christ.

✝ An infant cannot understand what water baptism symbolizes.

³ Blasing, Craig, in Kenneth Gangel, and James Wilhoit, *The Christian Educators Handbook on Spiritual Formation* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994) p.23.

If you were baptized as a baby, you had no idea what you were doing – and the Believer’s Baptism is ALL ABOUT knowing what you’re doing!

And, most tellingly, *there is not a single record in the entire Bible of an infant being baptized* – not one.

If Christian parents wish to dedicate their child to Christ, then a baby dedication service is entirely appropriate. But remember, an infant who is dedicated to the Lord *still* has to come to faith in Jesus (when they grow up) if they’re to be saved. *No one has ever been saved by baptism. Period.*

Baptism is about discipleship; it’s not about salvation. Baptism is for believers, not for unbelievers. So, having been baptized as a baby does not count as baptism in the Lord’s eyes.

3) Which brings up another oft-asked question: ‘Can a person be *rebaptized*?’

It’s a great question, and the answer is: Yes. In fact, we find an example of rebaptism in the Bible – by the Apostle Paul himself in **Acts 19:1-5**.

“It happened that ... Paul ... came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. ² And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” ³ And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John’s baptism.” ⁴ And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

So,

- ✠ Rebaptism is necessary if you were baptized as an infant.
- ✠ Rebaptism is also necessary if you were not baptized of your own choice or were baptized without a clear understanding of what you were doing.
- ✠ And rebaptism is necessary if you were baptized in an other-than-biblical way: if you were not immersed in water; or if you were not baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (**Matthew 28:19c**).

- 4) Another question that often comes up is: ‘When should children be baptized?’
The answer is: the Bible does not give an age.

So, as soon as a child is able to (1) clearly articulate his or her faith in Jesus Christ, (2) understands what baptism means, and (3) expresses the desire to do so, I think they should be allowed.

I’m not big on forbidding what the Lord has not forbidden.

When some parents brought their kids to Jesus in **Matthew 19** so He might “lay his hands on them and pray,” the disciples rebuked them for doing so (**19:13**).

But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven” (**19:14**).

He laid his hands on them and went away (**19:15**).

- 5) A fifth question people ask is: ‘What should I wear when I am baptized?’

Well, in the early Church, believers were baptized completely naked!

And, because we want to be as authentic as possible ...

I was gonna say, ‘*Because we want to be as authentic as possible, we do it in a lake!*’

Seriously, believers in the early Church were baptized in the nude for reasons the Church Fathers thought biblical.

Cyril of Jerusalem, 4th century, wrote this to baptismal candidates:

“As soon, then, as you enter [the water], put off your tunic; as this is an image of putting off the old man with his deeds.

✠ He’s appealing to **Ephesians 4:22-24**:

“[P]ut off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires ... ²³ and ... be renewed in the

spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and ... put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

✠ So, there you have it, the biblical case for naked baptism!

Cyril continues:

“Having stripped yourselves, you are naked and imitating Christ, who was stripped naked on the Cross,⁴ and who, by His nakedness, put off from Himself the principalities and powers, and openly triumphed over them ...

✠ Ao, in another appeal to biblical reasoning, Cyril thinks that, as Christ was naked on the cross, the one being baptized should thus imitate Him in baptism.

✠ He refers to **Colossians 2:15**, where Jesus, by His cross, “disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them.”

Cyril concludes:

O wondrous thing! You are naked in the sight of all, and are not ashamed; for truly you bear the likeness of the first-formed Adam, who was naked in the garden, and was not ashamed.”

✠ And there it is! Your new again, like Adam in the garden, friends again with God. Just as he was naked and unashamed, so you should be naked and unashamed!

So, early Christians were baptized in their birthday suit. But we’re not going to do that. At the risk of being *unauthentic*, we’d like to ask that you be baptized in anything BUT your *birthday* suit – preferably, your *bathing* suit.

⁴ The text of John 19:23 reads as follows: “[T]hey took His garments [**ἱμάτιον** – *outer garments*] and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also, his tunic [**χιτών**, *undergarment*]. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.” There are no significant textual variants in the Greek manuscripts, though there are a couple of bad spellings in a few manuscripts. From the point of view of Greek grammar, this is perfectly transparent. The verb **ἔλαβον** (they took) is followed by two direct objects in the accusative case: **τὰ ἱμάτια** (the outer garments) and **τὸν χιτώνα** (the undergarment). The NIV translates it, “they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. But there’s no way that **καὶ τὸν χιτώνα** could mean “with the undergarment remaining.” This is not a translation, but an interpretation of what the NIV translator wanted it to say, rather than what it actually says.

- 6) Now, a very delicate question: ‘What about people with serious mental disabilities? Can they, should they, receive the Believer’s Baptism?’⁵

This difficult question is best answered by remembering what the Believer’s Baptism *is*.

As we’ve seen, the Believer’s Baptism is *a conscious act of obedience a person who’s come to faith in Jesus makes*. It’s a declaration of faith they make to publicly proclaim their faith and identify with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

Therefore, if someone is handicapped to the extent that he or she cannot make such a declaration, nor express a desire to do so, they should *not* be baptized. Remember: being baptized *has nothing to do with being saved*; it is a forward step in a believer’s *discipleship*.

In such cases, baptism is neither appropriate, nor needed. God certainly understands the disabled person’s situation and does not require what he or she is not able to consciously do.

But to baptize those with severe cognitive impairment, who cannot declare their faith, *just because they belong to a Christian family* would be clearly unbiblical.

It would be tantamount to infant baptism – baptizing a person without their understanding. This is not the Believer’s Baptism. For these reasons, at *Harvest* we do not baptize those who are unable to declare their faith and desire to be baptized.

- 7) And finally: What should be a believer’s attitude toward baptism?

I think it should be the same as the Ethiopian Eunuch’s:

Acts 8:36: “As they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?”

I think that’s perfect!

⁵ See Piper, John, ‘Believer Baptism and Mental Disabilities,’ Interview with John Piper, *Desiring God*, March 25, 2014; <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/believer-baptism-and-mental-disabilities>.