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Encouragement for Today

"Pickled People"

Micca Monda Campbell, Director of Outreach, Proverbs 31 Speaker Team Member

Key Verse:

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27, NKJ)

Devotion:

When you hear the word "baptize," what comes to mind...sprinkled or dunked? I guess that depends on your denomination. I've never understood why these two words are used to debate the meaning of baptism. To me, they best describe how to eat a donut.

While others are busy discussing which method is best, to sprinkle or dunk, I wonder if we are not missing the significance of what it really means to be baptized in Christ. Are you ready? It means to put on, or clothe yourself with Christ. The Greek express it this way. *Christ is to you the "toga virilis,"* which is a Roman garment that was worn by a man once he became full grown. So a baptized believer is one who is clothed with or puts on Christ.

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27)
Putting on Christ is to identify with Him ... to become one. Baptize means to immerse or to dip. So when we are baptized into Christ we have "immersed" ourselves in Him, becoming one with Him. We take on all that He is. This is wonderful news!

It means that baptism is more than an outward sign associated with water. "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4, NKJ)

Baptism is the visible fruit of spiritual change that testifies to the fact we have become children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. What is the change? We are no longer the same. Our old way of living is gone. It is buried with Christ. We no longer desire to lie, cheat, envy or hate. We have a new identity and a newness of life.

What is that "newness?" Surely if our old life, now dead and buried with Christ, was wholly sinful, the new, must be altogether a holy life. And it is. As we are baptized in Christ, we become clothed in a robe of righteousness and reflect His characteristics.

Allow me to explain it this way. Have you ever pickled cucumbers? I never have, but I've seen it done. Both my mother and grandmother pickled and canned vegetables when I was a little girl. The process of pickling is a great way to illustrate the meaning of baptism. First, the vegetable is dipped into boiling water, and then baptized into the vinegar solution. This produces permanent change. By baptizing the vegetable, it identifies with the brine. Likewise, when we are baptized with Christ we take on His likeness. Clothed in Christ, permanent change occurs because we have exchanged our original state for His. This is a great way to remember the true meaning of baptism; to simply think of ourselves as "pickled people."

So the next time someone asks if you were sprinkled or dunked just say, "Neither, I've been pickled!"

My Prayer for Today:

Dear Lord, help me to remember as I go out into the world today that I have put on Christ. My old self and all its sinful ways have been buried with Him and my original state has been changed. I am now Christ-like. May those I come in contact with today see the Christ I wear and be drawn to Him in me. In Jesus' Name I pray, Amen.

Application Steps:

Being baptized in Christ is the ultimate makeover! There is no greater transformation. God has given us several illustrations of this in our world. We've talked about pickling, but what about the transformation of a caterpillar to a butterfly? To know that you've truly been baptized in Christ, sit down and make a list of the changes that have taken place in you. This will confirm in your heart that you are, indeed, a pickled person!

Reflections Points:

In what ways do you "wear" Christ?

At Home?

At Work?

In your church?

In your community?

Where has true change occurred in your life?

Power Verses:

Romans 6:4, "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (NKJ)

Mark 16:16, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (NKJ)

Ephesians 4:4-6, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (NKJ)

Acts 2:38, "Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (NKJ)

Additional Resources:

The Ultimate Makeover, by Sharon Jaynes

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_ultimateMakeover.htm

What Happens When Women Walk in Faith, by Lysa TerKeurst

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_whatHappens.htm

Secrets of the Vine, by Bruce Wilkinson

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_secretsVine.htm