

*we inherit God's promise rather than earn it?*

*13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body--whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ... 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. - 1 Corinthians 12:13, 25 NIV*

In Galatians we are called one family and in Corinthians we are identified as one body. In the letter to the Corinthians Paul describes at length the need for unity in a diverse body.

*When we make our public declaration of faith in Christ through baptism, we are also declaring our adoption into God's very diverse family. What are some of the ways you are unique and in what ways are you the same as the members of your Bible study group, or if you aren't in a study, the people you know best at church.*

## **WRAP-UP**

It is not baptism that saves us; salvation comes through faith in Christ. We become children of God by faith—a truth that challenged Jewish believers and encouraged Gentiles. But baptism publicly symbolizes dying to our old sinful nature and rising to new life in Christ, showing we are new creations “clothed with Christ,” not merely improved versions of ourselves. This new identity calls us to place our allegiance to Jesus above all other roles and loyalties, seeking Him first in every area of life. Though believers still sin, our lives are no longer defined by sin. We are cleansed by Jesus through confession and repentance. Baptism also marks our unity as one diverse family in Christ, equal heirs of God's promise by faith rather than by works.

## **MEMORY VERSE**

*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*  
- Galatians 3:28 NIV

*Challenge –*

*This week be aware of the similarities and differences of the believers you encounter and give God thanks for them both.*

## **Baptism Celebration Sunday**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This week at New Life we celebrated with several who were being baptized. They were telling the world that they had chosen to follow Jesus and make Him Lord of their lives. As a family of believers, we welcomed them and support them in that decision. Let's take a close look at what baptism symbolizes and its importance in the life of a believer.

### **Ice Breaker**

Share a little about your baptism experience.

### **Key Passages**

*26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. - Galatians 3:26-29 NIV*

### **STUDY QUESTIONS**

#### **1. God's Children, Through Faith In Christ**

Let's begin with one important point- baptism doesn't save you.

*21 But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.'*  
- Acts 2:21 NLT

*9 If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*  
- Romans 10:9 NLT

*8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--* - Ephesians 2:8 NIV

Salvation refers to our forgiveness and deliverance from bondage to sin and its consequence of our eternal separation from God. But among other things, salvation includes the blessings of Christ's

righteousness bestowed on us, eternal life in God's presence, and our adoption into God's family.

*Based on the first verse of our key passage (Gal 3:26) how do we all become children of God? Why would this statement be challenging to the Jewish believers and encouraging to the Gentiles?*

## 2. Baptized into Christ

*1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*  
- Romans 6:1-4 NIV

*27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ..* - Galatians 3:27 NIV

*17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!* - 2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV

In Romans 6 verses 3 and 4 we see that baptism is itself a symbol of putting that sinful nature to death under the water and rising out of the water to that new life in Christ. We aren't just cleaned up versions of our old self, we are a totally new creations. Gal 3:27 says we are clothed with Christ, and the new life in which we live should be as evident as the clothes we wear.

*Many of us have thought of baptism as "washing away our sins". While it is true, we are cleansed of our sin, how does the image of washing differ from the idea of dying? Why do you feel it was necessary to die to the old nature rather than clean it up?*

Once we become new creations "in Christ" our allegiance to everything else becomes secondary and our lives should reflect Jesus to the world. We declare this through our baptism.

Keeping yourself accountable first to God can be difficult as you strive to be a good parent, employee, patriot or friend.

*What would it mean to hold your allegiance and actions accountable to Jesus in each of these areas; your family? (e.g. What if attending your son's sports means missing church) Your employer? (e.g. If your employer tells you "we have to fly below the radar" in questionable business practices) Your government? (e.g. A candidate you support does something unethical) Your friends? (e.g. Your friends invite you to a movie you know displays immoral behavior?)*

Answers to such situations are not always clear cut. But don't allow your desire to satisfy the demands of other roles draw you away from your primary responsibility as a follower of Jesus. Seek Jesus first, then let everything else follow and align with the direction He leads you.

*8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*  
- 1 John 1:8-9 ESV

In Rom 6:2 Paul says we have died to sin. Our old sinful nature died when we accepted Jesus as our Lord. (2 Cor 5:17) This doesn't mean we will never sin, but that sin does not characterize our way of life, and sinning is against the nature of our "new life". If we sin, we can be forgiven and cleansed. But we don't need to be baptized again.

*What is the way to be cleansed when we sin according to 1 John 1:9?*

## 3. We Are All Members of The Same Family

*28 There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.* - Galatians 3:28-29 NLT

Paul's declaration in Gal 3:28 was scandalous in his day. He denied widely held cultural standards by ignoring ethnic, socioeconomic and gender boundaries. He was telling the rich Jewish man that a female Gentile slave was his equal!

*What in verse 29 is the equalizing factor? Why is it significant that*