

Preparation for Baptism

Joseph Carty / General

Learn Ministry / Baptism; Conversion; Transformation / Matthew 3:13–17

Baptism is one of the most significant decisions that anyone will ever make in their entire lifetime. It deserves serious thoughtfulness and a clear plan. Many have misunderstood what Baptism is and therefore are not able to help someone take the right steps of preparation. We will redefine Baptism, and outline a healthy process of how to make sure one is ready.

A 7-year-old child was baptized at nearby Lake. With tears streaming down parents face, they watched as he came out of the water, and excitedly asked if he felt any different.

"Yeah, Mom, I do," he replied. "Now I have water up my nose!"

How do you know when someone is ready to be baptized?

- Lots of different answers
 - They love Jesus.
 - They ask for it.
 - They respond to an altar call.
 - Their life has changed
 - They are sharing their faith.

- Here are some key Points
 - Showing readiness:

Not Magic

- I repeatedly say,
 - baptism is not
 - physical action.
- Not Magic
 - not holy water.

True Baptism

John 3:5 **ESV**

Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

- Two things
 - water
 - Spirit

Matthew 3:11 **ESV**

“I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

- True baptism is
 - not just water immersion
- It is
 - **Spirit Immersion!**
- Baptism
 - most significant decisions
 - ever make
 - entire lifetime.
- It deserves
 - serious thoughtfulness
 - and a clear plan.

Definition

Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. — Testimonies For The Church 6:91

- Once defined
 - goal
 - measurable
 - standard
 - expectation
- In other words,
 - we know how
 - to aim for it.
- Here are key identifiers:

Surrender

What is the difference between commitment and surrender? When you make a commitment, you are still in control, no matter how noble the thing you commit to. One can commit to pray, to study the Bible, to give his money, or to commit to automobile payments, or to lose weight. Whatever he chooses to do, he commits to. But surrender is different. If someone holds a gun and asks

you to lift your hands in the air as a token of *surrender*, you don't tell that person what you are committed to. You simply *surrender* and do as you are told.

2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

- Signifies complete change.
 - Change
 - Old
 - New
 - Change
 - secular
 - spiritual

Salvation is not to be baptized, not to have our names upon the church books, not to preach the truth. But it is a living **union with Jesus Christ** to be renewed in heart, **doing the works of Christ in faith** and labor of love, in patience, meekness, and hope. Every soul united to Christ will be a living missionary to all around him.—Letter 55, 1886

- Being like Christ

The story is told of Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia (336-323) and conqueror of Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Babylonia, and Persia, almost all of the known world. One day Alexander and a small company of soldiers approached a strongly fortified walled city and Alexander raised his voice and demanded to see the king. When the king arrived, Alexander ordered him to surrender the city and everyone inside. The king laughed, "Why should I *surrender* to you? You can't do us any harm!" But Alexander offered to give the king a demonstration. He ordered his men to line up single file and start marching. He marched them straight toward a cliff. The townspeople gathered on the wall and watched in shocked silence as, one by one, his soldiers marched without hesitation right off the cliff to their deaths! After 10 soldiers died, Alexander ordered the rest of the men to return to his side. The townspeople and the king immediately *surrendered* to Alexander the Great. They realized that if a few men were actually willing to die at the command of this leader, then nothing could stop his eventual victory. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer: "When Christ calls a man, From a sermon by Christian Cheong, True Seekers – 6/28/2010)

- Surrender is more
 - than words
- more than
 - mere actions.
- It is
 - complete surrender
 - giving up to

- God's transforming grace

True Faith

James 2:19–20 ESV

You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

- Demons have faith
 - not saving faith.
- Saving faith
 - vs. Demonic Faith
- True Faith:
 - **Faith and Works**
 - **Combined**

Tight Rope

Faith and Works Chapter 1—Ellen White Clarifies the Issues

We need to be enlightened on this point, and the ministers need to be educated to dwell more particularly upon the subjects which explain true conversion. All who are baptized are to give evidence that they have been converted. There is not a point that needs to be dwelt upon more earnestly, repeated more frequently, or established more firmly in the minds of all than the impossibility of fallen man meriting anything by his own best good works.

- Baptismal Candidates need:
 - true Conversion
 - true faith

True Conversion

- True Conversion
 - Combined with
 - True Sanctification.
- Sanctification is:
 - related to
 - word - Holy

A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament קדש, קדוש קדש

- to be set apart
- to be consecrated
- hallowed
- sanctified
- dedicated

True conversion

- experiencing sanctification
- becoming like Christ

2 Corinthians 6:17–18 ESV

Therefore go out from their midst,

and be separate from them, says the Lord,

and touch no unclean thing;

then I will welcome you,

and I will be a father to you,

and you shall be sons and daughters to me,

says the Lord Almighty.”

- Conversion is
 - letting go
 - clinging to
- Letting go of world
- Clinging to Christ

Rudy Rasmus learned the family business from his father when he was just five years old. His dad brought home a set of blueprints and unveiled his business plans. He said, "This a motel and other people's husbands are going to come and give us money to spend time in one of our rooms."

Seventeen years later, Motel Houston opened its doors right next door to the family's home. The motel strictly catered to prostitutes and their customers. With Rudy in charge, the business took off. Rudy calls it a borderline bordello, because he says he never took a cut of the prostitutes' profits." But it was about making money. Yet there was definitely something missing in his life.

Then one day when he was at a funeral, a woman caught his eye. She was a Christian and they began dating but Juanita never really understood what Rudy's business was. She was admittedly naïve by the grace of God she says because she was able to see what was in Rudy's heart. They fell in love and married.

Juanita wanted to have a godly family and took Rudy to church. "The preacher

reached out to Rudy and mentored him,. Rudy joined a Bible study. Juanita prayed for her husband. He eventually became a Christian though still ran the family business. Eventually his changed heart helped him to change his career.

Spent rest of life, pastor and feeding poor.

- True Conversion
 - marked by
 - life change.

Ministers who labor in towns and cities to present the truth should not feel content, nor that their work is ended, until those who have accepted the theory of the truth realize indeed the effect of its sanctifying power, and are truly converted to God. God would be better pleased to have six truly converted to the truth as the result of their labors, than to have sixty make a nominal profession, and yet not be thoroughly converted. — Testimonies For The Church 4:317

Transformation

Romans 12:1-2 ESV

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

- God calls us
 - to be transformed
 - by renewing mind.
- To be
 - completely different
 - than the world.

Sir Edwin Landseer was one of the most famous painters of the Victorian era. His talent developed early, and he had the first showing of his work at the Royal Academy when he was just thirteen years old. He was commissioned to do a number of official portraits of the royal family, and even gave private drawing lessons to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. But he was best known for his depictions of the natural settings and life in the Scottish highlands.

One day as he was visiting a family in an old mansion in Scotland, one of the servants spilled a pitcher of soda water, leaving a large stain on the wall. While the family was out for the day, Landseer remained behind. Using charcoal, he incorporated the stain into a beautiful drawing.

It was a huge mural of a waterfall.

- Like God
 - Transforms us
- Something ugly

- something beautiful.
- Transformation is
 - baptism by fire.

Our ministering brethren make a decided failure of doing their work in a manner directed by the Lord. They fail to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. They have not gained an experience through personal communion with God, or a true knowledge of what constitutes Christian character; therefore many are baptized who have no fitness for this sacred ordinance, but who are knit to self and the world. They have not seen Christ or received Him by faith.—The Review and Herald, February 4, 1890

Judging Fruit

- Now we know
 - if someone should
 - be baptized!
- All True Christians:

- Living in Spirit
 - Life of Surrender
 - True Conversion
 - Life of Transformation
-
- If not,
 - need more discipleship
 - not more information
-
- Our job is
 - to judge people.

Matthew 7:16–20 ESV

You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Investigation

The test of discipleship is not brought to bear as closely as it should be upon those who present themselves for baptism. It should be understood whether they are simply taking the name of Seventh-day Adventists, or whether they are taking their stand on the Lord's side, to come out from the world and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. Before baptism, there should be a thorough inquiry as to the experience of the candidates. Let this inquiry be made, not in a cold and distant way, but kindly, tenderly, pointing the new converts to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Bring the requirements of the gospel to bear upon the candidates for baptism. {Ev 311.2}

Tares in the Church

1 Corinthians 5:1-2 ESV

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

- Case Incest

1 Corinthians 5:12-13 ESV

For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."

- God demands action
 - church discipline

- Discipline
 - not practiced today
 - “not loving”

- God commands us
 - have boundaries
 - in our membership

- Levels
 - visitor
 - member
 - leader

- Uphold expectations.

- Problem:
 - baptizing everyone
 - unconverted!

Some ministers and churches are so desirous of securing an increase of numbers that they do not bear faithful testimony against unchristian habits and practices. Those who accept the truth are not taught that they cannot safely be worldlings in conduct while they are Christians in name. Heretofore they were Satan's subjects; henceforth they are to be subjects of Christ. The life must testify to the change of leaders.

- Continuing

Public opinion favors a profession of Christianity. Little self-denial or self-sacrifice is required in order to put on a form of godliness, and to have one's name enrolled upon the church book. Hence many join the church without first becoming united to Christ. In this Satan triumphs. **Such converts are his most efficient agents. They serve as decoys to other souls. They are false lights, luring the unwary to perdition.** It is in vain that men seek to make the Christian's path broad and pleasant for worldlings. God has not smoothed or widened the rugged, narrow way. If we would enter into life, we must follow the same path which Jesus and His disciples trod,—the path of humility, self-denial, and sacrifice. — Testimonies For The Church 5:172

- We must guard against
 - welcoming those
 - Satan's agents
 - decoys to souls
 - false lights

The story is told of a young girl who accepted Christ as her Saviour and applied for membership in a local church. "Were you a sinner before you received the

Lord Jesus into your life?” inquired an old deacon. “Yes, sir,” she replied.

“Well, are you still a sinner?”

“To tell you the truth, I feel I’m a greater sinner than ever.”

“Then what real change have you experienced?”

“I don’t quite know how to explain it,” she said, “except I used to be a sinner running after sin, but now that I am saved. I’m a sinner running from sin!” she was received into the fellowship of the church, and she proved by her consistent life that she was truly converted.

APPEAL

- Keep Standards High
- Example Conversion
- Disciple Transformation