

Water Baptism Part 2

“37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call. 40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. 41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:37-42 KJV)

In the day of Pentecost the Jewish who heard the message of Peter, *“they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” (Acts 2:41 KJV)* Those people they heard the message and they repented of their sins, and willingly they got water baptized. After their baptism they devoted themselves to the following four things:

1. The apostles' doctrine: Baptism is not the end of the Christian journey, but is just the beginning of the way. Those who got baptism, the church should continue to teach them and discipline them to continue to live in the ways of the Lord. Jesus also told us the following in *Matthew 28:19-20 “19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”* What the Lord emphasized here that after baptism we need to continue to teach the new disciples to observe what Jesus commanded us; that we need to continue to instruct them on the ways of the Lord and disciplining them to obey everything. *So we either go on discipling the new believers and then we baptize them and continue to teach them, or we baptize the new converts but after baptism we need to continue to teach them the ways of the Lord.*

What is important here is the following: *The church should not baptize people without teaching or discipleship process whether before or after baptism. Although in certain occasion we may baptize people who show evidence of true repentance and willingness to obey but we will not be able to follow them up. That should not be the rule to follow, but as an exception that is possible when the Holy Spirit would lead us to do that.* The example for that is what Philip did in obeying the leading of God to reach the Eunuch and baptized him in water: *“26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. 27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, 28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31 And he said, How can I, except some man*

should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. 32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: 33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. 34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.” (Acts 8:26-40 KJV)

2. The fellowship: The new convert who were baptized need to be part of the church, the body of Christ, the family of God. They must be fully come out from the worldly ways of life and replace their old life with new relationships with the body of Christ and their brethren in the church. *The fellowship should be concerned about edification and encouraging the members to do what is right and just and directs them in the ways of the Lord and to do His will. Fellowship also involves counseling and giving the right advice. The importance of fellowship is to strengthen the bonding of the brethren to one another and their unity with God and His Word and purpose.* Fellowship should not be based and emphasized on arranging food and eating together, that is not what is meant by fellowship. *The fellowship also involve to reach those parts of the body who are not able to come with us, like those who are sick in hospitals, and those handicapped and cannot move or those in prison, or those who had great troubles and cannot deal any more with life's pressure. We need to reach all these categories in order to fellowship with them and strengthen them so that our worship to God would be complete.*

3. The breaking of bread: This is the Lord supper that Jesus commanded His apostles to do when He took that with them as we can read here, *“17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: 18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.” (Luke 22:17-20 KJV)* *We do the breaking of the bread because the Lord said, “this do in remembrance of me.”* But we must not do that as a ritual practice and without deep understanding. Jesus did it with His apostles who were His disciples. Therefore the true disciples who are willingly following God should observe that as they are observing and obeying all the commands of God. Jesus said in *John 6:53-58 “53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me,*

and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.” The bread represents the body of Christ and the cup is the New Covenant in His blood, therefore as long as we abide with Christ and His Word we are eligible to take part in the breaking of the bread. Those disciples who are devoted to the apostles’ teaching are eligible for the Lord’s Table. We should not be a traditional church who observes the Lord’s Table but we don’t observe the spiritual condition of our members.

4. Prayer: Is the source of strength that we receive from the Lord to sustain us and His provision for us to face and to solve our problems. The new disciples should get involved in prayerful life. Prayer is our backbone to stand firm in life in serving God. Prayer is our full expression to trust in God and walk in His ways that He will be the one to deliver us from all our troubles. The early church had passed through many hardships and was sustained through prayer. The new disciples should take prayer and petition to the Lord as the only thing that they can trust for to be sustained in life. Let us read the following Scripture to see how prayer life was so important in the life of the early church, and is so important for us today, “23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. 24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: 25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? 26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. 27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. 29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, 30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. 31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.” (Acts 4:23-31 KJV) “1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. 3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) 4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. 5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. 6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. 7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. 8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. 9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. 10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and

forthwith the angel departed from him. 11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the LORD hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. 12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying. 13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. 14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. 15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. 16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished. 17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place. 18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. 19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and there abode.” (Acts 12:1-19 KJV)

My dear and beloved: * Water baptism is a real commitment to follow God and to start and to get involved in new life as disciples, follower and worker to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. * Water baptism is commitment to follow the Word of God, doing, His will, living a life of holiness, life of prayer, following the doctrine of the apostles, and living in fellowship with the rest of the members of Christ’s body, His church. * It is my prayer that this message will help you to decide to obey Jesus Christ, our model and example, burying your old life and to be willing to start to follow Him, giving your life fully to Him and without reservation, and setting good example to others to follow Christ and to be His disciples.

Let us pray ...

My prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your Word and thank you for the new life that I have in Christ Jesus. Lord thank you for placing me in your family, your church, having fellowship with my brothers and sisters in your presence. Lord thank you for all the material and the spiritual blessings that I had received from you. Lord thank you for all the teaching, the corrections, the rebukes and the admonishments we received in this message.

Come now to God and repent and renounce all your sins. Repent of your lack of faith and doubts. Repent of your non willingness to bury your old life through water baptism and to rise from water to live a new life of holiness for Christ, and in fellowship with the rest of the church members. Repent of your stubbornness doing your own will and plan and not the will nor the plan of God. Repent of your lack of reading God’s Word and life of prayer. Repent of your non willingness to obey the doctrine of the apostles. Repent of your non willingness to serve God and to suffer for Christ. Lord I repent forgive me the following sins

Lord I surrender my old life and my will to you burying them under the water in water baptism and to raise from the water to live my new life for Christ and to serve God and His

purpose. Lord I commit myself to the doctrine of the apostles, to the breaking of the bread, to the fellowship with your church, and to the life of prayer. Lord I commit myself to go and preach the gospel, to spread your Word, to make disciples and to set good example to others to follow you. Lord uphold me with your grace, protect me and continue to provide for me to continue to serve you.

Lord bless our Brothers and Sisters who committed their lives to live for you, to get water baptized, and who committed themselves to the doctrine of the apostles, to the fellowship with your church, and to the breaking of the bread and prayer. Lord uphold them with your grace, answer their prayer, fill them with the Holy Spirit and use them to serve you to reach others and bring them to you. Lord set their life and testimony as good example to others to follow you.

Lord bless us as your church and help us to continue to persevere in the doctrine of the apostles, in the fellowship, in the breaking of the bread and in the life of prayers. Lord help us to continue to evangelize and spread your Word. Lord enable us to go and make new disciples and to baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Lord lead us and help us to train new workers to serve you to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church. Lord we pray for more people to be water baptized and receive the Holy Spirit baptism. Lord take the message and spread it to reach the people who need your Word. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, 'Multiplication in peace with implementing the whole will of God.' Lord bless us, enlarge our territory let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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