

Raised to Life Small Group Notes

Introduction:

What is the biggest change you've experienced in life?

Was it a good change or a bad change? What made it so difficult or wonderful?

When you became a Christ follower, what changed?

Discuss:

1. Read Matthew 3:13-15

John's hesitance in baptizing Jesus makes sense. John's baptism presupposed sinfulness, and John knew Jesus was sinless. For this reason he made a strong objection. That John recognized Jesus' superiority is reflected in his words, "I need to be baptized by you." Thus Jesus was not baptized for any sin in His life. There was none.

Jesus' baptism has always proved to be a bit of a puzzle for the church just as it did for John. The sinless Jesus had no sin from which to turn. Why, therefore, did He desire baptism? Jesus didn't need to repent; He is repenting for others. This is His mission. He came to do what we cannot do for ourselves. Since we cannot atone for our sins, Jesus does it for us. We have the whole gospel in the opening moments of Jesus public life.

Eighteen years had passed since Jesus, at the age of 12, went to the temple and listened to the religious teachers. Why do you think He chose to go to a river to announce the start of His ministry, rather than back to the temple? What did He accomplish through this action?

Verse 14 records John's reaction to being asked to baptize Jesus. Are you surprised by this reaction? Why or why not?

What is something that has surprised you recently as you've followed Jesus? Why was Jesus baptized, even though He didn't need to repent of His sins?

2. Read Matthew 3:16-17

"This is my beloved Son" underscores the source of unity among the three Persons of the Trinity. Love binds and perfects. That Jesus is, in fact, the Son underscores His identity as the Messiah. "I take delight in Him" is a tender expression of the Father who is deeply pleased in the obedience of the Son who has taken fully the form of a man. Jesus commanded baptism as a sign of their new life in Christ—it is symbolic of the fact that when we trust Jesus, all our sin is washed away and we live life as a brand new

creation. In Romans 6, Paul further explains the relationship between baptism and our faith in Christ.

Read Matthew 28:19-20. Why do you think Jesus commanded baptism when He sent out His disciples?

What do we learn about Jesus in verse 17? What do we learn about God the Father?

In your own words, how would you describe the importance of Jesus being both fully God and fully man? In what ways is Jesus a bridge between God and us?

3. Read Romans 6:1-11

Being a believer in Christ means being united with Christ. A believer is identified with the object of his or her belief. For the Christian a mysterious but undeniable new relationship begins at the moment of confession. A union of believer and Lord occurs, thus we participate in His death and are freed from sin. Baptism serves as an illustration of death to an old way of life and resurrection to a new life. While baptism is not necessary for salvation, it is an important symbol for what has happened in the life of the believer. Not only that, baptism is a tangible way to show all those around us that we identify with Jesus.

Why do you think baptism is a good picture of being dead to sin and being made alive in Christ?

Why should baptism come after we have received salvation (see vv. 6-7)? How would you help someone understand that baptism comes after salvation?

What are some of the excuses you have used, or have heard others use, for not getting baptized? How can you answer those excuses? What are you saying to others when you take the step of baptism? Why is it so important?

What encouragement or support can you expect from the church when you declare your faith through baptism? How can we give that support to each other this week?