

Word Notes Sunday 17/09/17
Helen Parker: Church unpacked - Baptism

Summary *(read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday, listen to the podcast if you missed the talk <http://www.newmarketcommunitychurch.co.uk/podcasts.htm>)*

Key Text: Romans 6:1-14

Paul tells Christians they are “dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus”, linking the inner change in their status and identity to the outward declaration that is baptism. In baptism we identify with Christ through an act symbolic of his death and resurrection. We make a public demonstration of our faith and declare a change in our spiritual status. This act is commanded by God through scripture and brings us into a closer relationship as a result.

Baptism is not a prerequisite for salvation but an act of obedience and things happen in the spiritual when we are obedient to God and when we make a physical declaration before the physical and spiritual realms. Examples might include things which hold you back are broken such as anxiety or fear. As with Jesus’ own baptism the heavens open and the Holy Spirit brings power on us when we surrender to him. New directions might open up as we surrender to God. We might experience a fresh energy and dedication to the Lord - Jesus was baptised at the start of his ministry and Father God declared Himself “well pleased” with His Son.

There’s no point being baptised if don’t believe, yet if you do, well as Helen said: “If it’s good enough for Jesus, it’s good enough for me”.

Application *(this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)*

1, Testimony

Ask a few people to share their experience of baptism, especially what was changed in their lives because of their obedience and public declaration. What significance does their baptism continue to have today?

2, Process

In Acts 2:38 Peter exhorts the witnesses to Pentecost to “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” adding that this promise was for all.

- a) What part did repentance play in your baptism?
- b) What was your experience of the Holy Spirit at baptism, what further immersing, soaking or infilling have you experienced?

3, Spurring each other on

Should baptism be the end result of faith or the start of a new journey? As you remember your own baptism do a brief evaluation of where your spiritual and service life is right now. Do you need to re-engage with the path God has called you on or re-discover the energy you once had? Share and encourage one another though exhortation and prayer.

Consider if something like Freedom In Christ would re-ignite the fire (A course using new reworked materials is planned for January, and it’s shorter too)

If anyone in the group has not received a believer’s baptism and wishes to take that step do encourage them to speak to a leader, support them if needed.

Witness *(this is the bit where the cell talks, plans and prays about how to share the Good News)*

Who would you invite to your baptism if it were to happen this weekend? How else might you engage with them in demonstrating your faith and commitment?