

## **Sermon Series: TRANSFORMATION**

### **Sermon: A New Life**

#### **Text: Romans 6:1-14**

#### **Discussion Questions:**

This morning we're going to be discussing baptism.

Break into groups of six or so (table groups work great) to discuss these questions:

- What has been your personal experience with baptism?
- Have you been baptized? If so, tell your story.
- Were you baptized as an infant? If so, what does knowing that mean to you?
- What impact does seeing others get baptized have on you?
- Why do you think Jesus instituted baptism - what's the ultimate reason behind it?

#### **Examination:**

Read **Acts 2:36-41**. Peter is wrapping up his great sermon to the crowds of people who gathered on the day of Pentecost to witness the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus. The people ask an amazing question in response to the sermon - "What must we do?" Peter's answer is immediate: "*Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.*"

- Does it surprise you that baptism is placed right up there on par with repentance as the necessary response?
- Do you believe, based on Peter's response, that baptism is REQUIRED in order to be saved? What about the thief on the cross - he wasn't baptized. What about Romans 10:9-10 - these verses tell us that we must only believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord to be saved? Is baptism required?
- If we conclude, based on the whole witness of Scripture, that baptism isn't required for salvation - why is it given such a place of prominence as the first thing Peter tells them to do in conjunction with repentance?
- We read in **Acts 2:41** that 3,000 people believed Peter's message and were baptized THAT DAY! Have you ever thought about the logistics of that? Where did they find the water? Who do you suppose did the baptizing - just the apostles? Why was baptism so important given the logistical challenges?

Read **Acts 8:34-40**. Philip has the opportunity to lead an Ethiopian official to faith in Christ. The immediate response of this official is inspiring as well as instructive.

- The man sees some water, and gives the order to stop the chariot so that he can be baptized. He asks, "What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" Is it your sense that this man is getting baptized because he wants to, or feels a sense of obligation that he must do it as an act of obedience?
- It's a sincere question when he asks what it might be that would stand in the way of his getting baptized. Make a list of some of the things that he might have had in mind - things that might have resulted in delaying his getting baptized right there on the spot.

- Are there things that we, today, place between salvation and baptism? Are these things legitimate? Reasonable? Or are they unnecessary obstacles?
- I understand that we have to be careful reading too much into the text - but the language of “went down into the water,” and “came up out of the water” sure seem to indicate HOW this baptism took place. It’s unlikely that Philip just got a little water on his hands - and sprinkled it on the eunuch. I also doubt that he grabbed a pitcher or some sort to pour water over the eunuch’s head. What seems probable is that Philip immersed the man completely in the water. Do you agree? Disagree? Does the mode of baptism make any difference?

Read **Romans 6:1-14**.

- Is Paul talking in metaphorical terms about baptism in verse 3 - or is he referring to the actual act of having been baptized?
- What do you think it means to be baptized into the death of Christ Jesus?
- The act of baptism seems to have greater significance in Paul’s theology than a simple act of obedience. Paul describes in verse 4 how we are “buried with Jesus through baptism into death.” Baptism is closely tied here with not only a death - but a burial. Have you ever viewed baptism in this way? And further - does this language get at the mode of baptism? Does laying someone back into water, completely immersing them, seem to capture the significance of Paul’s words far more than sprinkling or pouring?
- Paul goes on in verse 4 to describe how we are, in essence, raised from the dead in baptism. We are raised to live a new life. Talk about this in light of your own experience. Does this put too much emphasis on the actual act of believer’s baptism? Again - are we reading water baptism into what Paul is saying here? How does this passage influence or change our view of infant baptism?
- Paul says again in verse 5 that we are “united with [Jesus] in a death like His.” Does what we believe about baptism come into play here? Are we to view baptism as a death and resurrection? Do you think most folks view baptism as an act in which “the body ruled by sin might be done away with”? Should we?
- Connect Paul’s theology here with what we hear Peter preaching in Acts 2, and what the eunuch does in Acts 8. Add to this the fact that Jesus Himself was baptized. Does this change your view on baptism?

**Application:**

The application this week is pretty straight-forward. If you haven’t been baptized as a believer, why not? As the eunuch asked, is there anything standing in the way of you being baptized? Baptism is certainly a humbling experience. Is that a factor in your decision? Should it be? We’re having baptisms here at King Street every other month this year (*the next one is June 25*). Would you prayerfully consider attending a baptism class - and heeding the words of Peter: **“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.”**