

HAVE YOU BEEN DOUBLE DIPPED?

Bits of Hope

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Pastor Cynthia L. Hale

Mark 1:7-13

It was a short journey that brought Jesus to his new occupation. It was the day of decision for him. He knew that the time was right. When you made your trip down the aisle to accept Christ as your personal savior, under whatever circumstances, chances are you didn't have a clue as to what God had in store for you. With your confession of faith you stepped out of the darkness into the marvelous light. The walk down that aisle was a short walk. After that, somebody told you that you needed to be baptized. What did that mean? Would it make a difference?

John the Baptist came teaching a message of repentance. Why would Jesus submit to a baptism for the remission of sins? Mark's account gives us no clue. John said, "I need to be baptized by you." John knew that Jesus didn't need to be baptized; he had no sin. Nevertheless, Jesus understood that in order to completely fulfill his destiny he had to be baptized in order to share the experience with all humans. The Greek word for baptism literally means to be submerged or dipped. However, figuratively it means: to be identified with.

Jesus advocated that people needed to be baptized so they might repent of their sins. It was symbolic. When John baptized Jesus, something wonderful happened that changed the whole character of baptism. The heavens were opened. It signified a cosmic event. Jesus identified with us and God identified him as His son. It was admitting, accepting, and submitting to God. In that moment Jesus knew that the Father was pleased and loved him. It was a moment of consecration, (being set apart) **Acts 10:37-38**.

Some of you think that the term "calling" is only for preachers, but each of us has a call on our lives **Romans 8:28-30**. We were chosen (picked-out) by God before the foundation of the world. God predestined that you would be conformed to the image of his son. The call of God on our lives is the call to follow Jesus. When you walked down that aisle you probably weren't trying to make that kind of commitment. Some of you still are not sure that you have the power and the will to live the baptized life.

Baptism is a sacrament; a visible sign of a divine act or reality. We are saying, "Jesus, I am with you." It gives evidence that we too have died to sin. Baptism is a transaction between our souls and God. Baptism purges all things that would hinder us from being our best selves. It helps us bury the old and make a clean break. There should be an excitement about baptism. Every time you see someone get baptized it's not just business as usual. Something new is happening in that person's life and in the whole church.

As Jesus was preparing his disciples for his departure he told them about another who would come. He was talking about the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the gift of the Spirit of God to all who accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit makes real in you what the water symbolizes. It is the Spirit working on the inside to purge and remove everything that is not like Christ. The Spirit of God comes to live in us. It is the Spirit's baptism that makes us one, despite our differences, styles, and personalities, **1 Cor 12:12-13**. The Spirit brings us into the fellowship. In this body, if one suffers, we all suffer.

However, though we've been knit together by the Spirit, there is work that we have to do, **Eph 4:1-6**. When you've been baptized with water, that is the first dip. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the second dip. That second dip is the one that ordains us into the priesthood of all believers. It gives us our marching orders and the power to do them.

After his baptism Jesus was driven into the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights. Some of us don't mind discipleship as long as it doesn't hurt. The question is not, "how much will you have to give up?" The question is, "how much are you willing to give?" That's what He tests when he drives us into a lonely wilderness experience. The same Spirit that anointed Jesus filled him with power to overcome the temptations.

The fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace...**Gal 5:22** You have everything inside of you to live faithfully as a disciple of Christ through the presence of His spirit.

Peace.