



SAMPLE BAPTISM MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT

I want to welcome you all to what could be one of the most exciting days in the history of our Church. For the last month we have been talking about today as a special day as we partner with churches all across North Carolina who committed to "Fill the Tank". We are praying that more people will come to Christ and follow Him in baptism than on any single day in the history of North Carolina. With this in mind, today I want to share a few passages where the bible teaches us about baptism.

I will never forget baptism day for me. I gave my heart to Jesus on April 13, 1997. My baptism was scheduled the very next weekend, April 20th.

Before I could be baptized there was a very important conversation that I needed to have - with my mom. You see, like some of you here this today, I was "baptized" as a baby and I felt like I needed to tell her about this decision that I was making:

"Mom, I wanted to let you know that I am going to be baptized tomorrow." to which she replied, "YOU'VE ALREADY BEEN BAPTIZED!"

Over the next few minutes I proceeded to share with my mom the change that had taken place in my heart - that I had been born again and that I had received Jesus into my life as my Lord and Savior. I proceeded to tell her, "tomorrow I will share my decision with the world through baptism."

Baptism is a BIG deal! It's you saying to the world "I BELONG TO JESUS!" Because baptism is such a big deal I want to remind our church how important it is that you have a biblical baptism. If you will turn in your bibles to Acts 8:26 we will read one of the most informative passages on baptism in all of the bible. First, let's pray.

1st things first, if we are going to be biblically baptized, it is important that we get the order right: **1st I believe, THEN I'm baptized.** (Acts 8:26-39 ESV) That might seem like a no-brainer to some of you, but you would be surprised how many people get the order twisted up. It really is a big deal. Let's look at the scripture:

^[26] Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. ^[27] And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ^[28] and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. (EXPLAIN)

^[29] And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." ^[30] So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ^[31] And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ^[32] Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:



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"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he opens not his mouth.

^[33] In his humiliation justice was denied him.
Who can describe his generation?
For his life is taken away from the earth."

^[34] And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" (The whole passage is about Jesus)

^[35] Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. I love this term, "the good news". We church people often take it for granted. But plain and simply, the gospel (which means good news). The verse that we most take for granted would be John 3:16 (we see God's love) **For God loved the world in this way: (We see God's gift) He gave his one and only Son,** (and we see God's offer to us) **so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.** THIS is the good news. So here is what happens as a result: ^[36] **And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?"**

In this moment the man understood - I'm ready to follow Jesus - there's water - **LET'S DO THIS!**
Baptism always takes AFTER a person receives Jesus.

This may impact people in 2 different ways:

1st Impact: those who were baptized as babies or children. Some of you, like me, were baptized or christened as children. What's wrong with that? It's a long standing tradition in some faiths. The problem is what Baptism means:

Let's look at the word Baptize. The word baptism comes from the greek word, Baptizo which means to dip, or to be immersed. For those of you who, like me, were baptized or christened, as babies because your parents were from a different christian tradition, you may push back. You might ask, "*are you saying my baptism doesn't count?*" The best way that I can answer that is that **if you were baptized as an infant it was most likely very special FOR YOUR PARENTS.** But baptism, baptizo, is **YOUR** decision. In the New Testament **Baptism always takes place AFTER a person receives Jesus.**

The 2nd Impact: People who were baptized before they believed. I have often seen people get baptized for whatever reason, mostly because they think it's the right thing to do OR to join a church, only to actually receive Jesus at a later time - and they **KNOW** it - but they will not follow Him in baptism.

"*What's the big deal? Before or after... I got baptized in church and now I understand better.*" **IT IS a big deal...** I think the reason that people justify this is sin - it's pride - we're afraid of what people will



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think about us if we GET THIS ORDER RIGHT. I would encourage you to forget about what people will say. Anybody truly cheering people on to serve JESUS will REJOICE that you were bold enough to declare to the world that you want your order right!

In our story, the man from Ethiopia has received the Spirit of Jesus and understands that his next step, his 1st step, is to be baptized by immersion:

^[38] And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. ^[39] And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

Historians say that this man went back to Ethiopia with JESUS in His heart and the Gospel flourished. Here's a neat note: Matthew, the former tax collector Apostle was said to have been KILLED in Ethiopia. So the church that **the Ethiopian eunuch** began grew so much that Matthew went there to help.

So it's very important that everyone of us understands, 1st we believe, THEN we're baptized. If you have not been baptized SINCE you believed INTO Jesus you have not been biblically baptized. **Baptism is an outward expression of an inward transformation**

Here's the 2nd fact about baptism: **I am not saved by baptism, I am saved BY Jesus.**

A lot of people confuse this as well. Turn to Acts 19:1-5. It would be easy to think that the purpose of baptism is to "wash away our sins". Our sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus THE MOMENT we receive His Spirit. The scriptures do not teach us that His Spirit comes through baptism - His Spirit comes through belief. We see this demonstrated in Acts 19:

^[19:1] And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. In other words, Paul finds some people that he thinks to be believers. They look like believers, act like believers yet something doesn't sit well with him. But the next verse shows us by Paul's reaction that something was off or missing.

^[2] And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

Amazing! Y'all, this shows us that it's not enough to believe **ABOUT** Jesus. You must believe **INTO** Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the indwelling Spirit of God. When we do the Spirit of God comes in - the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit does not live in you you do not have Jesus.

I have met so many people that miss this: they believe being a christian is about YOU changing your life. Being a Christian is not about YOU changing your life, it's about JESUS changing your life. So many are trying to get their life right BEFORE they come to Jesus. That's ridiculous: you don't get your life right to come to JESUS - YOU COME TO JESUS TO GET YOUR LIFE RIGHT.



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See, in this passage these people were still trying to live out their life by their righteousness, by their strength.

^[3] And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." These people apparently shared with Paul that they HAD BEEN BAPTIZED. I don't know how many times I have spoken to someone about Jesus and they don't tell me about following Jesus, they wanna tell me how they've been baptized. I don't care if you've been baptized - HAVE YOU BEEN CHANGED?!?!? You can often tell something is missing. When believers gather together the Spirit of Jesus bears witness with the Spirit of Jesus.

It's obvious to Paul something is wrong. These people HAD BEEN BAPTIZED but they had never been saved.

And Paul's like, "ooooohhhhh..." So Paul breaks it down:

^[4] And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." Let me take it further - salvation is not about being a good person, it's about being a different person. The old you dies - a new you is born. Jesus shared this with a religious leader in His day:

You know, you can BELIEVE ABOUT Jesus and not BELONG TO Jesus. (James 2:19 ESV) ^[19] You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! It's not enough to believe about Jesus, you must belong to Jesus.

(John 3:3-5 ESV)[3] Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." [4] Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" [5] Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

You can be born again, born of the Spirit -- THAT is good news! But for those who have never been born of the Spirit there is bad news:

- **Bad news statement #1: We are all sinners**
 - Verse: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23
 - Illustration: "Sinned" means we have missed the mark. When we lie, lust, or gossip, we have missed the standard God has set.
Suppose we both threw a rock at a target 5 miles away. You might throw it further than me, but both of us would miss. It is the same with our relationship to God. While you may do more "good works" than me, we will both still miss the target of perfection. We are ALL guilty of sin.
- **Bad news statement #2: The penalty for sin is death**
 - Verse: "For the wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23
 - Illustration: A wage is something that we earn in return for our deeds.
Suppose I agreed to pay you \$50 for some work you did for me. That \$50 is a wage – it's what you earned. The Bible tells us that the wage we have earned for sins is death. Not just physical death – spiritual death, which is separation from God.



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Since we are unable to come to God because of our sins, the Bible says that God came to us. This is the good news! It also has two statements, two verses, and two illustrations.

- **Good news statement #1: Christ died for you**
 - Verse: *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* Romans 5:8
 - Illustration: The Bible says that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, took the punishment for our sin and died in our place.
Suppose you are in the hospital and dying of lung cancer after smoking your entire life. Suddenly, the doctor comes in and tells you someone is willing to have their perfectly healthy lungs exchanged for yours, removing all cancer cells. What would happen? They would die and you would live. They would die in your place. That's what Jesus has done for us.
- **Good news statement #2: You can be saved through faith in Christ.**
 - Verse: *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."* Ephesians 2:8-9
 - Illustration: Faith means trust. We must trust in Christ alone for salvation. Just as you would trust a chair to hold you up while providing no effort of your own, so you must trust Christ alone to get to heaven through no effort of your own. Any good thing you might do cannot get you to heaven. It is through Christ alone.

Serious, eternity altering question here: Has this ever TRULY happened to you? Not have you joined a church? Not have you been baptized? But, did you receive Jesus and you were CHANGED?!? If there was no change there was NO JESUS! See, these people were religious disciples but the Spirit of Jesus did not live in them.

If you have not been baptized SINCE you believed you have not been baptized.

^[5] *On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

Almost 24 years ago there was a ceremony at Westside Baptist Church in Red Springs, NC where Keyna and I stood up on a stage at Westside Baptist Church. We exchanged vows to one another - we promised God that we would stay together until one of us died or SHE KILLED ME, whichever came first. I proudly wear this ring to say to the world, "I belong TO Keyna Spivey Pittman."

8 years later there was another ceremony AT Westside Baptist Church. I proudly stood before the world that day to say, "I belong TO Jesus Christ!" The baptism service is the "marriage ceremony". Baptism itself is the RING of our personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Are you ashamed to wear His ring?

In just a few minutes we are going to give you the opportunity to be baptized - TODAY. IMMEDIATELY. Just like the dude from Ethiopia - here's water, why shouldn't I be baptized? **Jesus isn't looking for perfect people - Jesus is looking for people who will pursue Him.** People



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who pursue Him, pursue His life. People who will follow Him, people who will live for HIM in this world. But before you can follow Him in this world you must follow Him in the transformation of salvation and the expressive waters of baptism. He's not looking for perfect people - He's looking for people who aren't ashamed to say publicly, without shame - **I BELONG TO JESUS.**

There are some who have **believed today** - you need to be baptized today - there are some who have **believed recently** but have not followed - you need to be baptized today - there are some of you **who have not been baptized SINCE you believed**, you have your order wrong - Takes a lot of humility to say all these years I had my order wrong... what you don't realize is that pride that keeps you from taking that step is keeping you from other things as well - you need to be baptized today - there are some of you who have **never been baptized by immersion** - you need to be baptized today.

We're going to do this in just a moment - this is your moment where you decide, "Am I willing to step forward and declare this morning, "I BELONG TO JESUS" or am I worried about what others think of me? **Jesus isn't looking for perfect people - Jesus is looking for people who will pursue Him.** I believe there is someone here who needs to be baptized today. If you are ready to declare to the world, "I belong to Jesus" this is your moment - on the count of 3 I want you to stand up and make your way out those back doors - and church, when they do, I want you to shout and clap and encourage them because THIS - IS - THEIR - DAY - I BELONG TO JESUS, 1..2..3...