

## Introduction:

Baptism! I have to admit I have absolutely no idea why baptism is such a dividing line in modern mainstream Christianity. And yet, here we are. Most folks who claim to be Christian today look down upon us because we proclaim baptism is essential to salvation. Most folks who claim to be Christian accuse us of claiming we can save ourselves by our own works because we declare baptism is essential to salvation. With this onslaught, we are in danger of becoming ashamed of baptism. We are in danger of becoming ashamed to stand out from the mainstream Christian religions who claim we can be saved before and even without baptism by a moment of faith or through a prayer that is recorded nowhere in the Bible. My goals are simple in today's lesson. First, I want us to be unashamed of baptism. Second, if you have not been baptized so your sins can be washed away, I want you to do that today. My goal is to help you wait no longer but to surrender to Jesus right now in baptism, immersion in water. To accomplish this goal, I'd like to look at **John 9**, where Jesus healed a man born blind.

## Discussion:

### I. Jesus gave the command.

- A. This is one of the most interesting miracles Jesus performed. He doesn't just speak the man to sight. He doesn't simply touch the man and give him sight. Instead, He forms mud by spitting on the ground and then puts it on the man's eyes. Then He gives the command: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (**John 9:7**). It is not recorded that Jesus claimed the man would be healed. However, it appears the man heard the whole conversation about the works of God. There is no doubt, the command carries the promise of healing.
- B. Similarly, we are told to be baptized. In **Matthew 28:19**, we are told that disciples are made through baptism. In **Mark 16:16**, we are told that those who believe and are baptized will be saved. In **Acts 2:38**, we are told that we must repent and be baptized if we want to have the gift of the Holy Spirit. In **Acts 22:16**, Saul is asked why he is waiting and told to get baptized in order to wash his sins away.

### II. The man believed the promise within the command.

- A. I grant that we have to read between the lines on this point. However, if someone had rubbed mud on your eyes, what would you have done? I would have rubbed it off. But this man did exactly what he was told even though it was likely one of the oddest things he had ever been told. Why would he do that? Because he believed. He believed something would happen when he did what Jesus told him. I don't know how strong his faith was. I just know it was strong enough to do what Jesus said. Recognize the connection between faith and active obedience in an earlier passage in **John**. In **John 3:36**, belief and obedience are linked. People obey Jesus, because they believe Jesus. That is exactly what this blind man does. He believes and obeys.
- B. We must believe. That is specifically what Jesus said in **Mark 16:16**. He said, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." Plenty of people make a big deal saying it is only those who do not believe that will be condemned, not those who are not baptized. But think about this alongside the story of our blind man. Why did the man go to the pool of Siloam and wash? The only reason we can assert is some extent of belief and hope. What would he have done if he hadn't believed at all? He would have wiped the mud off immediately or at the nearest source of water. With the blind man, we do not imagine the possibility of a man without any belief going all the way to a particular pool to wipe off the mud. That is similar to **Mark 16:16**. The reason Jesus doesn't also say, "Whoever is not baptized will not be saved," is because that is redundant. If the person does not believe, the person will not be baptized. We must believe the promise in the command.

### III. The man was healed when he obeyed the command.

- A. But when was the man actually healed? Was he healed as he started heading toward the pool of Siloam? That was when his faith was demonstrated. The moment he agreed to head that way, he had faith. What if he had gotten sidetracked? What if he changed his mind on the way? What if he truly believed Jesus could heal him if he washed in the pool of Siloam, but never actually washed? He wouldn't have been healed. It was not until he actually did what Jesus said and washed in the pool that he was actually healed.

- B. We are not healed of our sins until we are actually washed in the waters of baptism. In **John 3:5**, Jesus makes it abundantly clear. Unless we are born of water and the Spirit, unless we are baptized, we are not born again and we cannot enter the kingdom. We are not saved when we merely believe Jesus can save and does save. We are saved when we believe Jesus enough to actually do what He says. In **Romans 6:2-4**, we are told that when we are baptized into Christ, we are buried with Him in His death and raised to walk in new life. We do not have new life before we are baptized. In **Galatians 3:27**, we are told when we are baptized into Christ, we have put on Christ. We have not put on Christ until we are baptized. In **1 Peter 3:21**, we are told in about as clear a fashion as we can be that baptism saves us. We are not saved before we are baptized.

IV. The blind man didn't work, God did.

- A. But despite seeing everything I have already shown you and knowing how the logic works, there is one thing that stops everyone in their tracks. They hear what I've said. They see how it matches up. But they are convinced it simply can't be true because "we know" that no one is saved by works. Many believe washing in baptism is a work we do, so it simply can't save us even if the Bible says it does. Look again at our blind man.
- B. The issue of "work" is very much part of this blind man's story. According to **John 9:14**, this miracle was performed on the Sabbath. What do we know about the Sabbath? Jews weren't allowed to work (**Exodus 20:8-11**). In fact, that is exactly what the Pharisees are upset about. However, do you notice that the Pharisees did not accuse the blind man of violating the Sabbath? They accused Jesus of violating the Sabbath. They were certain Jesus was a sinner because He did not keep the Sabbath. This is almost so simple as to be overlooked. No one in this story thought the blind man had done any work. They all believed Jesus had done the work. In fact, Jesus Himself had said the man was born blind that the "works of God might be displayed in him" (**John 9:3**). Jesus did not think the man going to wash was work. Rather, He believed the healing was the work of God, not the man.
- C. Please recognize the parallel. Jesus tells us to go to the water and wash our sins away (see **Acts 22:16**). But this is not done to display our work. Washing is not the work. Rather, just as Jesus was the one who had done the work in the healing of the blind man, Jesus is the one who does the work in the healing of our sins. This is exactly what the apostle Paul taught in **Colossians 2:11-12**. When we are baptized, we are not raised up in new life by our powerful working in baptism. Not at all. We are raised up by the faith in the powerful working of God. Getting baptized is not a work. Interestingly, the very form of baptism demonstrates this. Baptism is not something we go do. It is something someone does to us. Being baptized for the remission of our sins is no more working than this blind man was working when he washed in the pool of Siloam. We aren't the ones working, God is.

Conclusion:

Let us not be ashamed of baptism, immersion in water, for the remission of sins. Let us not be daunted by the many people who try to get us to be quiet about it, who shame us. Let us be unashamed of Jesus's very teaching. The Pharisees tried to get this healed man to be ashamed of Jesus and the healing because it didn't measure up to their understanding of the Law. But the blind man was unashamed. The many self-professed Christians who disregard the necessity of baptism may kick us out of their churches as this man was kicked out of the synagogue. They may belittle us and accuse us, as the Jews belittled and accused this man. Our family may even disavow us, as the blind man's parents did. He was unashamed of washing in the pool of Siloam at the orders of Jesus. Let us be unashamed to walk in his footsteps. Let us be unashamed to believe and obey Jesus's teaching. He that believes and is baptized will be saved. Those who don't believe, will not be saved. Those who are not baptized for the remission of their sins will not be saved. Thus, our question. Have you believed and been baptized for the remission of your sins? Jesus is telling you to go and wash. He wants the works of God displayed in you. Will you let them? Will you go and wash?