

Should I be Baptized? (1 Thessalonians 1:4-10)

1-3-10

Scripture Reading – 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

We're having a baptism service January 31st right here at TWE!!!

Why is that so exciting?

1) It means God has performed a miracle(s) among us!

a. **Ephesians 2:1-5 (NIV)**

¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. ⁴ *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.*

2) We've been praying that God would do 30 such miracles by March 15th, 2010.

- a. Baptized 3 this summer but all of them came to Christ prior to joining TWE.
- b. First fruits of our prayers
- c. God is at work!

3) There's nothing more exciting than hearing about and celebrating the miracle of salvation together as a church.

- a. If I had to choose Viking's Super Bowl tickets and the upcoming baptism service I would choose the baptism service hands down.
 - i. There's nothing I love more than salvation testimonies.
 - 1. Tell us what God has done in your life.
 - ii. It's a once in a life time event.

- iii. I want to encourage others like I was encouraged.

What I want to do today is to help you to answer the question, "Should I be baptized?" because I believe there *may be* more than two people in our midst who should be.

- This is not at all an attempt to manipulate you to fill up the 30.
 - God doesn't need my help.
 - The last thing I want to do is give anyone a false sense of security.
- At the same time, the last thing I want to do is deny God the glory and you and the church the blessing of being baptized if you should be.

For some of you the answer is very simple. If you KNOW that God has done a miraculous, life changing work in your life (like the one described in Eph. 2), and you have yet to be baptized since He's done it, then YES you should be baptized.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV) – Jesus' commands it

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, *baptizing them* in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...

Acts 2:41 (NIV) – The early church followed Jesus' command

⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 8:12 (NIV)

¹² But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 9:18 (NIV)

¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,

Acts 10:46-48 (NIV)

⁴⁶For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷"Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." ⁴⁸So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Acts 18:8 (NIV)

⁸Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

For others, the answer to the question, "Should I be baptized?" is not as simple since you may still be trying to figure out whether or not God has done a miraculous, saving work in your life.

- Though regeneration (new birth) always happens in an instant, that instant is not always immediately recognized.

If you're wondering whether or not you have indeed been born again, the question you need to ask yourself is, "Is there evidence of new birth and true saving faith in my life?"

There are many biblical texts which can help you to answer this question, one of which is 1 John. But the one I want to look at today is 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10.

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5 (NIV)

⁴For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you (and brought you from spiritual death to spiritual life), ⁵because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction...

In this text, Paul teaches us that *one of the evidences of new birth is that the Gospel comes to us not simply with words, but with life changing POWER.*

For 23 years of my life the Gospel was simply words. But then one day, about 11 years ago, it began to come to me with life changing POWER, the Holy Spirit, and deep conviction, and it's been coming that way ever since. It was then that I believe I was born again.

Romans 1:16 (NIV) – talks about the life changing power of the G

¹⁶I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

1 Corinthians 1:18-24 (NIV) – shows us it's not life changing for all

¹⁸For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God... ²²Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Hebrews 4:12 (NIV) – describes how it works

¹²For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Acts 2:36-41 (NIV) – is an example of what it looks like

³⁶"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." ³⁷When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸Peter replied, "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..." ⁴¹Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

When God does a miraculous work in our lives and the Gospel begins to come to us not simply with words but with life changing POWER, the following four things will be true of us.

- 1) When the Gospel comes to us in POWER we will joyfully embrace it despite the cost.

1 Thessalonians 1:5-6 (NIV)

⁵because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. ⁶You became imitators of us and of the Lord; *in spite of severe*

suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

There was a cost for embracing the Gospel then...

1 Thessalonians 2:13-15 (NIV)

¹³ And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe. ¹⁴ For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, ¹⁵ who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out.

There is a cost for embracing the Gospel today...

John 15:18-21 (NIV)

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. ²¹ They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.

I think this is the reason why many people choose not to embrace, or only partially embrace the Gospel.

But when the Gospel comes to us in POWER we will joyfully and fully embrace it, despite the cost, because *God* has convinced us that it is truly His Word.

1 Thessalonians 1:6 (NIV)

⁶ You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy *given by the Holy Spirit.*

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NIV)

¹³ ...when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

2) When the Gospel comes to us in POWER it will ring forth from us in both word and deed.

1 Thessalonians 1:7-9 (NIV)

⁷ And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸ *The Lord's message rang out from you* not only in Macedonia and Achaia--your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, ⁹ for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

Acts 4:18-20 (ESV) – they could not but speak

¹⁸ So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, ²⁰ *for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.*"

2 Corinthians 8:1-4 (NIV) – God's grace evidenced by deeds

¹ And now, brothers, we want you to know about *the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.* ² Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³ For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.

3) When the Gospel comes to us in POWER we will turn from our idols to God.

1 Thessalonians 1:9 (NIV)

⁹ for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

Romans 1:22-25 (NIV) – we're all idolaters

²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles... ²⁵ They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen.

Matthew 22:37-38 (NIV) – idolatry is the worst sin but we're blind to it

³⁷ Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.

John 17:3 (NIV) – God offers us something far better

³ Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Philippians 3:8 (ESV) – we come to our senses

⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

- 4) When the Gospel comes to us in POWER we will not only believe in but look forward to Jesus' second coming.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 (NIV)

⁹ ...They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ *and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead--Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.*

The Thessalonians not only believed in Jesus' second coming but looked forward to it for at least two reasons:

- 1) They knew He would rescue them from the coming wrath.

2 Thessalonians 1:5-10 (NIV) – the wrath and the rescue

⁵ All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result

you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. ⁶ God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power ¹⁰ on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

2) They knew that they would be with Him forever.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NIV)

¹³ Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁴ We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵ According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. *And so we will be with the Lord forever.* ¹⁸ Therefore encourage each other with these words.

In Summary

- Any time someone comes to true saving faith in Jesus Christ it is because God has done a miracle in their life.
- One of the evidences that God has done a saving miracle in a person's life is that the Gospel begins to come to them not simply with words but with life changing POWER.
- When the Gospel begins to come to them with life changing POWER, then following four things will also *begin* to happen:

they will joyfully embrace the Gospel despite the cost, it will ring forth from them in both word and deed, they will turn from idols to God, and they will not only believe in but look forward to Jesus second coming.

- If you believe that God has done this miraculous work in your life, then you should talk to me about being baptized on January 31st.