

4 • Baptism is a Wedding

What is baptism? One very real way of thinking about it: **Baptism is a wedding.** Listen closely to the way John the Baptist talked about Jesus:

The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete." (3:29-30)

Of all the ways John could describe Jesus—the work he would do, and what he would ultimately accomplish—why as a bridegroom? And who is the *bride*?

We've returned off and on throughout this series to **Romans 6**, an invaluable section of Scripture that helps us answer, **"What is baptism?"** Notice one more time **Romans 6:3-5**:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

"United with him." Maybe that makes you think of the way **covenants**—relationships based on promises—were described throughout the Bible. In fact, notice what Paul wrote...

For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. (2 Cor 11:2)

Christians have been "betrothed." We ultimately belong to "one husband." Who is that husband? The last book of the Bible makes it clear:

"...for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his Bride has made herself ready;
it was granted her to clothe herself
with fine linen, bright and pure"—

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." (Rev 19:6-9)

And it all starts with baptism. Baptism is:

- ~ A funeral: "My greatest problem is sin, but I'm done with it."
- ~ A birth: "God is willing and able to turn my life around."
- ~ An adoption: "By God's grace, I can be his child."
- ~ A wedding: "For the rest of my life, I belong to God."



For Class & Family Discussion:

- Looking back at John's humility in **John 3:25-30**, what was he communicating? How would you rephrase his message in your own words?
- Of all the ways John could describe Jesus, why as a "bridegroom"? And who is the bride? How does **Ephesians 5:22-32** help us answer those questions?
- Why, as he described Christians in Corinth as being "betrothed to one husband," would Paul write, "I feel a divine jealousy for you" (**2 Cor 11:2**)? According to **verse 3**, what was he afraid of? Is there anything we should learn from that warning?
- According to **Revelation 7:14**, what's the only way our spiritual "robes" can be "washed" clean? And how do we come in contact with that "blood of the Lamb"? Passages like **Hebrews 9:13-14** and **1 Peter 3:21-22** might be really helpful here...
- Marriage is often described as a covenant—a relationship based on promises between a husband, a wife, and the God who is "joining them" together (**Matt 19:4-6**). If baptism is *also* a covenant between me and God, what do I need to understand about that covenant?
- Let's pull all four threads of this study together to make sure we understand just how important baptism really is and the tremendous blessings it makes available to us. What do we mean when we say...

☞ **Baptism** is a **funeral**: "My greatest problem is sin, but I'm done with it."

☞ **Baptism** is a **birth**: "God is willing and able to turn my life around."

☞ **Baptism** is an **adoption**: "By God's grace, I can be his child."

☞ **Baptism** is a **wedding**: "For the rest of my life, I belong to God."