

Word One Bible Study

New Life Through Baptism

by Tim Bayer

Text: Romans 6:1-11 for the First Sunday after Epiphany (Baptism of our Lord), Lectionary Series B

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

1. Be reminded that they are changed through Baptism into Christ Jesus, by faith!
2. Look at how faith that is created by the power of the Holy Spirit (often in our Lutheran tradition, through Baptism), changes the way we understand and live our lives.
3. Look at how we can live our freedom in Christ, trusting in His promise of new life and resurrection with Him.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Time piece like a stop watch or cell phone clock
Bibles
Masking tape
Bowls of water (one for each group)

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Get into groups no larger than 10. Stand in a circle and share your first name. Time how long it takes. Set a goal to see how quickly you can get around the circle with each person sharing his or her first name, only. Celebrate well when the goal is met. If the group struggles, brainstorm ways you can work together to achieve the goal.

GROUP GUIDELINES

GETTING TO KNOW YOU – A simple way of dividing your group up is to line up along a continuum line. Place a piece of masking tape on the floor and have students line up randomly. Then, have them line up according to height (shortest to tallest). Next, alphabetical by first name. Continue by lining up by birthday (January – December). Finally, by birthdate (add year to the actual date – from youngest to oldest). Celebrate the uniqueness of each student!

1. After students are lined up by birthday, divide them into groups based on birth year.
SHARING QUESTION: What has been the biggest change that has happened in your life this past year? (moving, new school, etc.) What was it like? How did you feel? How is it going?
2. Now, have them get back into groups based on their birthdate month.
SHARING QUESTION: What are new things that you enjoy doing? What are things that you enjoy doing over and over again? (There is no right or wrong answer to these questions).
3. Divide the group in two based on a common sense distribution (January – May; May – August; etc... whatever makes sense for your group).
SHARING QUESTION: When things change in your life, what continues to be the same? What is different? Share the challenges (and the joys) of changing.

GETTING INTO SCRIPTURE

1. Read Romans 6:1-11. What does Paul's "imaginary questioner" understand about grace and sin? (See Romans 5:20-21, too.)
2. What wrong conclusion do you think the questioner draws?
3. What does it mean to be baptized (verses 3-4)? How does that make you feel?
4. How is our life different before Baptism compared to after Baptism (verse 6)?
5. How does verse 7 change or affirm the way we live with our friends, family and ourselves?
6. How do these verses change the way we think? Act? Live with our friends and family?

7. Summarize these verses in your own words.
8. Read Romans 6:1-11, again.
 - a. What does verse 2 call us to? *A different life*
 - b. What hope does verse 4 give to us? *A new life*
 - c. What promise does verse 5 make certain? *Eternal life in Jesus*
 - d. What does verse 7 introduce? *Possibility of a life of freedom*
 - e. What does verse 10 describe? *The one for all price Jesus paid*
 - f. What state are you in according to verse 11? *Alive! To God! In Christ Jesus!*

REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

Explain to the group that you will read the passage 3 times. The first time ask them to listen and allow the Holy Spirit to point out a word, phrase or picture from the passage to focus on. Pause between readings. The second time, ask the group to listen and allow the Holy Spirit to connect the word, phrase or picture from the passage to another word, phrase or picture. Pause between readings. The third time, ask the group to focus on the text again and ask the question to themselves, "What will I do about this?" Afterwards, students may choose to share what happened and what they plan to do with what they have received from God through His Word.

CLOSING

With everyone seated in a circle on the floor with a bowl of water in the center of the group, take specific prayer requests (one from each student). Then, each student will go to the center of the circle and make the sign of the cross with the water somewhere on their body (usually their forehead, but in some cases, students may choose their hearts, their stomachs, a place on their body that aches or that is diseased, etc).

If students are baptized, this is a reminder of their Baptism. For students who are not baptized, this can be a powerful experience leading them to learn more and desire Baptism. Make sure your students know this experience is not re-baptism or for those who are not baptized, Baptism, itself.

While the student is doing this in the center of the circle, someone else from the circle prays for him/her in the circle (the requested prayer). Close with the Lord's Prayer, together.

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