

FAITH AND BAPTISM

Greetings to you in the name of Jesus Christ the Saviour and Lord. I am so happy to know that you kept your trust in Jesus and are growing spiritually.

Let us know something about faith Biblically. "Faith means to have strong hope in Jesus. "Faith is the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for", Hebrew (11:1). We might have good education job, money, house and other properties, yet our faith should not be kept upon those things. We should have faith only in Lord Jesus christ.

If our trust is kept upon men or princes one day they will change. Even money is not permanent. But Lord Jesus Christ is unchanging for ever. He will help us always. Therefore build your faith upon him.

In the Old Testament period, there was a person called Abraham who did not know the Lord. But he kept his faith upon the Lord. The Lord counted that to be righteousness for him. Gen 15:6. In Psalms, king David says that "if I did not keep my trust upon the Lord I would have been lost". Ps 27:13. In Romans 1:17, we read that the "Just shall live by faith".

In Mathew 8:26 we see an incident in which the Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples were travelling in a boat in the sea. Suddenly they were caught in a tempest and all the disciples univocally cried unto the Lord to save them. Lord Jesus rebuked both the sea and the disciples and said "why are ye fearful, o ye of little faith?" A certain mother of a child who has possessed and tormented by an evil spirit came to Jesus for deliverance. Looking unto that woman Jesus said, "Oh woman, great is your faith" and instantly her daughter received healing. Our faith alone conquers the world.

There was a man called Bartimaeus, blind from birth, begging for his bread. One day he heard that Lord Jesus would pass by that side. When Jesus came that side he shouted and said "Oh! Jesus son of David have Mercy on me. While the others rebuked him, yet he did not lose heart but cried more loudly because he probably thought that far too long "I suffered this much, if I let him go now I may not have another chance". So he yelled loudly, "Oh! Jesus, thou son of David, have Mercy upon me". Lord Jesus paused and called for him. Immediately, he cast aside the upper garment (which he used as begging bowl) and came to Jesus. What he thought was, "Lord Jesus called me, I will be healed. After receiving healing, I don't have to beg". Believing in this, he cast that instrument (garment) which he used for begging and came to Jesus. He never thought that he would not be

healed. He did not also think to throw the garment away after receiving healing. But he completely believed (had faith), that he will receive eye sight. Lord Jesus considered the faith in his heart. So He said "Your Faith has saved thee". Having received complete healing, He followed Jesus (MK 10:46-52).

The good Lord expects similar type of faith from us too. Just as that blind man was hindered by others, even as we attempt to follow Him, many may attempt to hinder us, mock at us, speak reviling words at us, many even scare us about the life in future etc. But worry for nothing, keep your trust upon the Lord, then the Lord will surely honour your faith. "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed". (Rom 10:11.)

They that believed were baptized:

May be, this is the first time you are hearing a word called baptism or you may have heard earlier. What is Baptism? Baptism is an immersion in water of those who have accepted Jesus as their saviour and Lord of life, which means Baptism is received by those who have received the forgiveness of their sins. About this, Bible speaks on numerous occasions. Although Lord Jesus was God when he appeared in the form of man, he too received for Baptism, yet he observed that to present a model for us to follow. John the Baptist who Baptised him, tried to prevent Him from that. Lord Jesus told him "**It was appointed for Him (Jesus) to fulfil all Law**" Mat 3:14. Not only that before he ascended into heaven, unto his disciples he commanded by saying "**go ye into all nations and Baptise them in the name of the father, son and the Holy Spirit**". (Mat 28:19.)

From that time onwards wherever gospel was preached, people repented including the rich and wealthy with power and authority. There was a man by name Saul determined to kill and persecute all those who called upon the name of the Lord Jesus. One day Lord Jesus met him, He understood who is Lord Jesus and immediately accepted Him (Jesus) as the Lord and Saviour and took Baptism (Acts 9:18) This Saul turned into Paul and preached Jesus and resurrection. The Jews rose against him and Silas and put them in prison. It was of course very painful. Yet because they knew that Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord, so they sang songs of praise and glorified Him. What happened you know? The foundations of the prison were shaken and the doors opened. The prison guard seeing this thought, that Paul and Silas have escaped and he attempted to kill himself. At that very moment Paul and Silas loudly said, "we are here, do not do any harm to your self. He went nigh unto them and looked at them in wonder, because there was no fetters, gates open yet they did not go out. When the prison guard looked at that he marvelled at their righteousness and knew that they were filled with joy only because of

Jesus. The guard immediately asked, "what must I do to be saved?." They said "Believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household". As the guard and all his family received Jesus they were saved and also baptised.

We also read an incident in Acts of the apostles chapter 8. An Ethiopian Eunuch a minister of great authority under Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians, was on his way back to his land. The Holy Spirit of God ushered Philip at that point of time to go and join with that chariot and began to speak to that minister, (eunuch) and declared the Lord to him. The Eunuch not only understood that Lord Jesus is God but also about the importance of the baptism. After knowing that, when he saw a pool of water he enquired Philip as to what is the hindrance for his baptism. Philip responded back stating, if you believe with all your heart there is no hindrance at all. Then that Eunuch said, "I believe in the fact that Lord Jesus Christ is the only true son of God!". Then both of them entered into the water and Philip baptized him.

In this way when we survey New Testament we find many people believed in the name of the Lord Jesus and receiving immersion baptism. It will not be spiritually profitable for one to be baptised for the sake of marriage or church membership. Only those who have confessed their sins to the Lord in pure conscience should be baptised.

It is indeed a delight that you have kept your trust and belief upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore it is all the more necessary for you to be baptised in water.

Why Immersion Baptism?

Immersion Baptism - a Commandment:

God indeed has provided varieties of commandments. When we live according to them, they would lead us towards the Lord, and they alone will deliver blessings in our lives. The Lord also has given immersion baptism as a law. Thus says the Lord "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world. Amen". Mat 28: 19-20. As we obey this and many other commandments, we must also obey the commandment of immersion baptism.

Immersion Baptism a Covenant:

There are many kinds of covenants in the world. For example, while buying or selling a real estate, properties or rentals, people make agreements. Even a man and woman who lived independently for years through the covenant of marriage come together. In the same

way baptism serves as a covenant (I Pet 3:21). It is a commitment that I had lived a sinful life but now I am redeemed by Lord Jesus Christ, I will no more lead a sinful life but I will live a life pleasing to God. To get united with God with such a decision is baptism.

Immersion Baptism - a confession:

It is an open confession when we accept the Lord Jesus as the Lord and Saviour and eventually become the children of God. But when we are immersed in the water, we openly and boldly declare that we are the children of God. Therefore it is a must. Baptism is an outward expression of our inward change.

Immersion Baptism - A death to sin and life in Righteousness:

Lord Jesus died for our sins and on the third day rose alive. In the same way, what every child of God manifests through baptism is that he also is dead to sin but alive for righteousness (Rom 6:2-5).

How Immersion Baptism is administered?

A Christian Pastor will administer Baptism. He that administers and that to whom it is administered, get into the water. The Pastor immerses the person in water in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy spirit and lifts the person up. That is all. In order for a person to be baptised, only one thing is required, that is to accept Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour.

I will pray for you and your family, I urge you to send me the reply letter as quickly as possible. I am interested in your spiritual growth.

My Address:

Tamil Christian Prayer Church

தமிழ் கிறிஸ்தவ ஜெப தேவாலயம்

190 Silver Star Blvd. - Unit 5

Worship Service: Every Sunday @ 9am

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