

Acts 8: Why Not Now?

Acts 8 is the location of one of my favorite stories in the bible. It's the story found at the end of the chapter when Philip baptizes the Ethiopian Eunuch. If you haven't yet, take the time to familiarize yourself with the story. **Acts 8:26-40 (NLT)**

I LOVE the eunuch's response to hearing the Good News of the Gospel:

Acts 8:36-38 (NLT) ³⁶ *As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?"* ³⁸ *He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.*

I LOVE IT! Look, there's some water, Why can't I be baptized? We're not told how big the water was, we're not even told the condition of the water, and I think that's important because... IT'S NOT ABOUT THE WATER! The eunuch heard the Good News; and the only thing he could think to do in response was to be baptized. The Good News didn't penetrate his pores, it penetrated his heart! The eunuch was washed in the Gospel...and he was baptized too.

The book of Acts recounts 27 different times people were baptized. In every case, first they believed, then they were baptized. It's important to know something about baptism. Baptism is not a denominational thing or even a local church thing, instead, baptism is an outward expression of an inward decision and change in your life. It's joining with God in His resurrected power for your life.

Think of it this way, Baptism is like the wedding ring of the Christian faith. You are saying publicly that you are taken, that you are married to God, and you're not afraid to walk down the aisle, into the water, and be joined with him.

The bible tells us over and over again that this is the next step after your point of salvation. Although the Bible doesn't put a time frame on when to be baptized after salvation, the examples I read reveal a real sense of immediacy for the people in scripture.

Saul, soon to be Paul, hadn't eaten for three days, yet after his conversion he thought it was more important to be baptized then eat! Look at it for yourself: ...*Then he got up*

and was baptized. ¹⁹ *Afterward he ate some food and regained his strength.* (Acts 9:18b-19) Same this with Philippian Jailer and Lydia in Acts 16! Not because they have to, but because they want to!

Baptism is not about salvation, it's about identification and consecration!

The water won't make you cleaner and it doesn't hold any type of supernatural powers. Instead the water helps us participate in the words of Paul in Galatians, "I am crucified with Christ, therefore I no longer live, but He lives in me (2:20).