

Exodus – Baptism
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We continue in the stories of Exodus remembering that it's their walk from slavery into freedom. As we look at the different stories we see the same story played out in each of our life. God sent a deliverer to the children of Israel. He sent Moses. We studied about his birth last week and we talked about how that all came to be and how he was drawn out of the water and how he became a great man in Egypt. God had a plan for all of that and he sent Moses back into Egypt as a deliverer. Now, for the people to find freedom they had to be willing to follow Moses. For the people to find freedom, they had to believe that God had sent Moses to them and they had to do some things. When Moses is being called to be the deliverer, he's up there on the mountain and he sees the burning bush, he goes to the burning bush, he begins to talk to a holy God and God begins to tell him you're going to go back into the land. Well he's asking how in the world they are going to believe me. He says I'm going to do some miraculous things through you. Now God wouldn't have chosen this sign for me because he knows my intense fear of snakes but one of the signs he did for him is he threw his staff on the ground and it turned into a snake. If that wasn't enough, he told Moses to grab the snake by the tail, something I would probably never do, could not do that. But those were some of the signs that he had for Moses to go back in so Moses goes to the leaders and he begins to show them these signs and they believed. But there was a line that Moses used that touched their hearts in an incredible way and before we start our journey today I want you to see that one phrase that they saw that really did something. After they believed that Moses was sent by God they heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their misery. You see, you want to follow a deliverer when they bring the message to you that says that God loves you, that God has a plan for you, that God has seen your pain, your struggle, God has seen your sin but he still loves you and has a plan for you so Moses as he stood before the people he said, God has seen your misery and God has had compassion and he has sent me to lead you out of this pain. So the children of Israel begin to follow Moses much like those of us in this room when we see the story of Jesus, when we see that Jesus came from God and looked at us who were sinners and said, God loves you and God has a plan for you and I want you to follow me to find God's plan. We use the word disciple all the time, but the problem with the word disciple is we've turned it into a lot of different things. We've heard that a disciple is someone who knows all about God, a disciple is a discipline person and you wouldn't consider yourself a disciple, most of us but I want you to understand that the word disciple literally means someone who follows, someone who sees the deliverer and takes the steps to follow them. Look at the original disciples; do you think they were great men of God? Do you think they had all the bible knowledge, do you think they understood the things that were happening? Of course not, they were uneducated, simple, common men and Jesus said you're going to be my disciple, why...because you choose to follow me. Ladies and gentlemen as we move from slavery into freedom, it's a simple process into following Jesus. It's a simple process of following him, of putting one foot in front of the other and doing exactly what Jesus said to do. He gave us his guidelines, he told us this is

what I want from you. He starts in Matthew Chapter 28, verses 18-20 and this is what he says as Jesus has them all gathered, *"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, This is how you follow Jesus. You want to be a disciple? You want to be a follower? Make disciples; go out and have other people like we talked about last week follow Jesus, bring them out help them to follow Jesus. I will never ever apologize because the passion in this church, the pastor's passion is to see people saved. That's it. That is my passion and that is why I do everything that I do. That is why I go and serve and minister so I can see people become disciples, followers of Jesus. It's not difficult, it's not hard. We've made it much harder than it is. It's simply trusting that Jesus has a plan and has forgiven the sin in my life and I am going to follow him. He makes it easy. He says then, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".* The next step once you have someone say I'm going to follow Jesus, the next step is to go through the water and be baptized. He made it clear, it's not guess work, it's not theology, it's not doctrine, it's simply God saying you're going to be my disciple, follow me, follow me through the water. We're going to see that in the book of Exodus how Jesus showed us even back then what that was going to look like. It goes on and says. *" , and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* Now, with that scripture I could close; beautiful scripture but I've only preached for a few minutes so you know I am not doing that. I want to take you back to Exodus, I'm going to take you to the story we are in and I want you to see how this plays out in the children of Israel because in the Old Testament you see pictures all of the time, God was preparing his people, he was showing them his way even back then. So here they decided to follow Moses. They believed that God had a plan and they began to walk and follow Moses and as they all came out of Egypt they come to the Red Sea and they stop. Here they are in this journey to freedom and they've met their first huge obstacle and there is no way around it. They don't know what they are going to do. They begin to ask questions, they begin to worry, they begin to get bogged down, and they begin to ask what are we going to do Moses. Moses is standing at the edge of the water and he's not sure either. And then to create more drama the Egyptians decide they want their slaves. The Egyptians wonder who is going to clean the house, who is going to cook dinner, we're going to have to do it ourselves. We're going to get our slaves. So they take off and they see them behind them pursuing them and they begin crying out to God and they are bogged down in their journey before their journey's ever began. They ask God what are we going to do, what are we going to do? That's where we pick up the story with Moses in chapter 14. Chapter 14 verse 15, one of my favorite verses in all of scripture, *"Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me?"* Here they are standing on the edge of the impossible, crying out to God and God says why are you crying out to me? *"Tell the Israelites to move on."* Excuse me God, water? Move on, step forward, because I'm going to take you through the water and you're going to step on dry ground and you're going to see the wall of water on each side and you're going to pass through the water and that's the first step in your journey to trust me. That's the first thing I want you to do in your journey to trust me you're going to pass through the water so I know and everyone knows that you trust me and you're going to follow me no matter what. It may be difficult, follow me, and get into the water. Let me ask you a question. Any of you been bogged down in your relationship with God? Any of you today feel like you're praying the same thing over and over and over and over and God just doesn't seem

to answer you? You feel like you're not hearing from God? Let me tell you why. A lot of you are bogged down in your walk, a lot of you are bogged down in your journey because God has already told you what your next step is, and you're just not willing to take it. God already told you what he wants you to do but you don't want to do it. Because the next step is not always easy but it's always right. Some of you are praying for better marriages. God please, I just want a better marriage. God is saying stop talking bad about your husband, stop getting together with all the ladies and stop putting him down. Stop criticizing him, stop making him feel inferior. Lift him up. Some of you husbands, God I just need a better marriage. God is saying you want a better marriage; the next step is loving your wife as I love the church. Love your wife and you'll have a better marriage. Some of you today are praying God, I'm so broke, and I don't know how I'm going to pay my bills. God says here let me give you a little secret. Give me first; give me the first of it. What! You see some of you think you're bogged down in your relationship but the reason you're bogged down in your relationship is because you're not willing to take the next step. You're financially hurting, you're financially broke, God says that's fine, I'll help you, give me ten percent. Oh wait a minute God, there has got to be another way. Some of you are struggling with your children, your children are out of control, you can't get them disciplined you can't get them to do the things you want them to do and I'm looking at you and you're praying to God, God help me, give me different children, God do something and God is saying, hey, I have an idea, be their parent not their friend. Parent your child. Don't try to be their buddy. The goal of parenting is not to make your child happy. It is to make them obedient. Some of you are bogged down in your relationship and you're crying out to God and God is saying you know what? Stop crying out to me, move on, and take that next step.

So today we are going to ask three questions, the first question is what is your next step? What do you need to do in your marriage, what do you need to do with your finances, what do you need to do with your children, what do you need to do in your spiritual life today to get back on the journey from slavery to freedom. What next step do you need to take? I'm glad that God tells us, I'm glad that God lets us know because I want you to know we all have preferences and we all have ideas and we all have what we think is right. It's kind of like this, if I told you today I was going to take you to Outback and buy you a steak, first of all I'm not, but if I were to take you to Outback and you were sitting across from me and the waiter said how would you like your steak cooked, how many of you would say I like it medium rare to medium? How many of you? Put your hands up high, I want to see you because you're not going to be around in the next four or five years, I just want to see you now because you're going to die and I want to prepare your sermons in advance. How many of you say no I want mine medium to medium well? Raise your hand. I want mine like a hockey puck, just break off a piece and I'll eat it. We all have preferences and some of you would be dumb enough to order chicken. Honestly, you go in and I've got those who don't eat meat, great lets go together and I will give you my vegetables and you give me your steak and we will call it even. That will work. We all have preferences and things that we like and God knew that. So God said here, let me help you. Be baptized; you want to follow me? Be baptized. Not your preference, not what you think, not what you think is right, be baptized plain and simple he lays it out for you. If you've accepted me, if you are walking from slavery to freedom, if you've received salvation, you must be baptized. Why? It's the public commitment of your faith. Its saying I believe, it's saying I trust, it's putting your foot in the water and telling the world, I trust Jesus. I should be a public

event in your life. Too many of you try to be a Christian secretly. You say I'm right with God, but that's just between me and God. Isn't that beautiful? That's just a beautiful sentiment isn't it; straight from hell. It's just me and God, nobody needs to be concerned, it's personal. No it's not. It's public. We just had a very public wedding in our family. My daughter about a year ago the dumb little kid that she was dating came to her, bowed on his knee, pulled out a ring, opened it up, my daughter looked at it and went wow it's beautiful. I don't know if she loved the ring or the boy, it doesn't matter. She put the ring on her finger and before she could get the ring on her finger she had a picture of it, she put it on facebook so everybody could see it, and she walked around for two days like this so you could notice it. She was so proud of it she wanted everybody to see it. We go down to Florida with a bunch of our friends and family, we put on a big public display, we have a big public ceremony, she walks down the aisle, she does her wedding vows, Bonham does his vows, ta-dah, we announce them man and wife. It is hugely public because it's something to celebrate. Now let me ask you, how do you think it would have gone if a year ago Bonham sat down, got on his knee, opened the ring box and said Misty, I want to give you this ring, but don't tell anybody. Have you ever seen a bride to be that could say, okay I will just hide it in my pocket. No, you know that engaged people walk in like this and the first thing you say is let me see. If Bonham had said I want you to keep it secret and listen marriage to me is very, very sacred, it needs to be just between me and you, I don't want to have a big ceremony, I don't want anybody there, I just want me and you to have this, it's between us, it's our relationship, nobody else needs to be involved, just me and you are going to have a private ceremony and then we're not going to tell anybody we're married. Do you think that Misty Brown would have married that boy? Do you think that David Brown would have killed him? You all know what the answers are. Because when you do something that significant it is made to be public. When you say Jesus Christ is my savior, my deliverer and I'm going to follow, that's a public statement and you need to make it public and listen, let me tell you how you make it public. It's not walking down the aisle, it's not shaking the preachers hand, it's not telling all my friends, it is getting in the water and saying I'm going through the water just like the children of Israel went through the water. I'm going through the water to make my commitment public. I want everybody to know.

How are you baptized? Well the bible is real clear about that too. Isn't that great? Everybody wants to discuss should you be sprinkled, should you be dipped, no you have to be put under the water. That's the biblical model. The word baptism means to immerse, to put under the water. It wasn't until 325 years after Jesus that they started sprinkling people. It wasn't for a long time and I'm not trying to talk doctrine with you, I'm talking bible with you. The reason we have the word baptize is because in the 1600's when they were writing the New English Bible, King James is getting it from the Greek into English, they come to that word, which by the way the church of the England sprinkles right? They come to that word and it says to immerse underwater, huh, we write that word, we lose our head. Baptismo, a Greek word, baptized, English word. Then you get to define it any way you want. But you want to be biblically baptized you're immersed. You're put under the water. That's how you're baptized.

Why are you baptized? Don't you love that question? I hear that question all the time. When you're raising kids, how many of you enjoyed the question, why? Doesn't that question just bring joy to your heart? Don't you know that when a kid walks in that room and says why? I said go to bed. Why? Because it's nighttime. Why? It goes on forever. I hated it. I learned

very quickly in the discussion, why, I said very few words, what were they? Why? Because I said so. Why do you need to be baptized? Because God said so. That's it plain and simple, why do you get baptized? Because I said so. Now God goes ahead and gives us the reason behind it and that's exciting. He says in verses 17 to 18 as the Israelites are going to go through the water he says the Egyptians are going to follow you and as you follow you I will gain glory. God gains glory by you publically committing to him through baptism. God gains the glory as people see you go into the water, just like the Egyptians went into the water chasing the Israelites the world saw that God was God. That's why we get baptized, to give God glory. So that usually leads you to another question and kids do this too. Why, why; you give them all the answers and they ask do I have to? So my short answer to that is no, you don't have to. But I want to remind you that Jesus walked 60 miles one way. The passage says he went from Galilee from the Jordan. He walked 60 miles one way to be baptized. Why? Because it was important. 60 miles one way because baptism was that important, to go through the water, to publically commit that you belong to God. I will tell you something else, Jesus actually didn't have to die on the cross for you and so he's asking you to go through the water when he went through the pain on the cross. Do you have to? No, you don't have to.

When should you get baptized? When did the Israelites go through the water? Did they go through the water when they were slaves in Egypt or did they go through the water when they had been set free? There's the pattern. When you're set free, when you're saved, when salvation comes, then you're baptized. After salvation, that's the only time it counts. See, when we have church, a lot of times our kids that grow up in church, they get real confused because they come forward at 7 and 8 years old and they accept Jesus for what they know and they get baptized and then they move away and they get out of the will of God and make some stupid mistakes and then they come back and they say, I want to rededicate my life. There is no such thing as rededication. You can't dedicate that already belongs to God. Once you have accepted Christ, he comes into your life. It's not about you anymore, it's about him. So you can't rededicate, you can repent and he likes that, you can repent and commit to live for him, but you don't rededicate so I have young people come to me and say, well I got saved when I was eight but then I made some mistakes and I want baptized again. No, you don't. You need to repent but you don't have to get rebaptized. Once you're baptized, once you belong to Jesus, once you've gone through the water, you don't circle back around the Red Sea and go again to make you feel better. You just repent and trust God. Salvation first. When you're saved then you follow in baptism. Now listen to that very closely because many people who accept Jesus as their savior tell me this, but I've already been baptized. I was baptized when I was young, wait a minute did you get saved when you were young because if you did this is repentance but if you know that Jesus came into your life right now, I don't care what happened when you were nine years old so let me tell you something is all you did at nine years old is get publically dunked and that happens every day in my swimming pool. Yesterday I had a bunch of boys over from Malachi's football team; they were baptizing each other right and left. I was counting them too. You're going to see them on the church roll. There were 852 baptisms yesterday in my pool. If that's what baptism is, going in the water, we got thousands of baptisms going on because if you've accepted Christ after your baptism that meant absolutely nothing. Salvation first then baptism.

Some of you are bogged down in your Christian life because you know you need to get baptized and you know that God has laid that on your heart but you're trying to go back to the past and hold on to something that has happened. You are saying my parents had me baptized when I was a baby. Well, good for them. That's about them, that's not about you. If you got baptized as an infant, that's your parents commitment, that's not your commitment, that has nothing to do with you and your parents, I'm happy for them, that made them feel better, that made them feel like they were going to raise you right. It gave them what they needed but that was about them. Baptism is about you following Jesus. Salvation then baptism. Not as a baby. Let me tell you we can't force our kids to be Christians. We can raise them in a Christian atmosphere but we can't force them. It's kind of like how I've been cheering for the New York Yankees since I was five years old. I have always liked the Yankees. I pull for Texas, I do. It's like a hobby, you know they're not going to go anywhere but it's still fun to cheer for them. Yankees on the other hand are going to win the World Series every four or five years and so that's a lot more exciting so I have always cheered for the Yankees. Now, I want my kids to cheer for the Yankees. I bought them Yankee hats when they were little, whenever I coached little league I would name the team the Yankees, which went over big in Texas. I wanted them to be Yankee fans. But, at the end of the day they are going to pull for whoever they are going to pull for. If your parents baptized you, good for them, but it wasn't about you. As adult, you are baptized because you placed your faith in Christ.

So I have given you all the details so my third question is what are you waiting for? It's just never been a good time. Really? Do you think there was a good time to get crucified? You think Jesus looked at his schedule and said that day's not going to work for me. Never been a good time. What else are you waiting for? Maybe some of you are afraid. Are you afraid? I don't want to down play that but that's kind of a silly fear, you know. I've baptized hundreds of people and I've only lost one. You'll get that later on when you're eating lunch. They went straight to heaven so it's not a big deal. No, I've never lost anyone. I nearly lost Dan Morton. He got baptized right before my shoulder got fixed, nearly lost him, but he's still alive and well. It's a silly fear. It's kind of like the fear I had one time in Gloretta when a duck starting chasing me. I mean a duck was chasing me and I was running until I realized I'm bigger than that duck. I can punt that duck. I turned around and thank God that duck backed down before I had to punt it and go to jail. It's a silly fear to be afraid of baptism. Go through the water.

The only other thing I think that could keep you from going through that water is pride. You're saying to yourself, people think I'm already saved and if I get baptized, that's embarrassing. I'm sixty years old, I'm forty years old, I'm thirty years old, I'm twenty years old, I can't get baptized, what will people think? I'm so glad Jesus didn't put that in his head when he was on the cross for you and me. When I think of pride I picture Jesus and what he went through and how the son of man was stripped and beaten and hung on the cross and it's hard for me to be too proud to get in the water and get wet. It's hard for me to think about that when I know what he went through to bring me from slavery to freedom. Today, I'm going to give you an opportunity to take that next step, to stop being bogged down. I want you to hear me again. Baptism comes after salvation. If you've accepted Jesus in your heart and you have not taken that first step and gone through the water, you must be baptized. So today I'm going to ask you to make a public step. In a minute we are going to stand, we are going to baptize on August the ninth. Now please don't get out your calendars and tell me that's a bad day,

because we've already discussed this. August the ninth we are going to baptize a bunch of you because there are a bunch of you in church today that have started your walk, you're standing at the edge of the Red Sea and you haven't put your feet in so today I'm going to ask you to come. We have a man standing over here to my left, you're going to come down the aisle, you're going to go to him, put your name and August the ninth we're going to baptize all of you who need to be baptized today. So I want you when we stand, I don't want you to wait for anybody, I don't want you to look around, I want you to come down that aisle and go to him. Are we clear? Old fashion invitation. Would you bow with me?