



DAY ROMANS 6:1-7

1

My friend was recently baptized in the Atlantic Ocean. The sun was shining on the capped waves as he showed the world his commitment to Christ. I was baptized in an indoor pool at Penn State University. The air was sticky-thick and smelled of chlorine. While my baptism experience was not as picturesque as my friend's, the beauty was the same. Baptism is a declaration of our acceptance of Jesus as Savior. It exemplifies the dying to our old selves and allowing Christ to raise us up in new life. Each baptism is an acknowledgement of our unification with Christ, a union described in Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." No matter what the setting, there is always glory in baptism. Take this next step to show your unity in Christ!

DAY MATTHEW 3:13-17

2

"Do as I say, not as I do." This saying is familiar to most of us; there are so many times we do not practice what we preach. In this passage, we see Jesus leading by example. His baptism is not a symbol of His own forgiveness and cleansing, but rather a foreshadowing of the cleansing He would provide for each of us. There are three important concepts presented in this scripture: The Spirit of God comes to Jesus and remains with Him, Jesus is proclaimed to be the Son of God, and God declares that He is well pleased with Jesus. (Notice all three persons of the trinity are clearly represented here). We experience similar blessings through our own baptism. Accepting Christ's forgiveness, allowing the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, and knowing God is pleased with us, changes our lives for good. Declare your faith by baptism - do as Jesus does.

DAY ACTS 2:37-47

3

We've all heard the expression, "it takes a village." This passage of scripture exemplifies that idea by showing the true fellowship of early believers. New Christians are described as a close-knit community that take steps in faith together. These new believers show their identification with the church through the symbol of baptism. Baptism is the outward, public declaration of love for and faith in Jesus as Savior and is the very first step of obedience for any follower of Christ. However, baptism is not the finish line; it is the starting point of growth in our relationship with God and with each other. The village of believers portrayed in Acts 2:37-47 stand together in all things. Together they are baptized, contribute to charity, meet in worship, gather for meals, and praise God. This is the example God shows us and wants us to follow. Although our faith is personal, it should not be concealed. Biblical Christianity is not meant to be private. When faith is authentic, it always goes public!

DAY LUKE 22:54-61

4

It is challenging to be a bible-believing Christian in today's society. Oftentimes we are overcome with fear of ridicule, exclusion, and persecution. We can relate to Peter in this passage because each of us has been false in our relationship with Christ. How many times have we followed Jesus 'at a distance' by professing Him with our mouths, but living lives contrary to His teachings - or by denying Him in the presence of vocal critics either by open rejection or silence? We all face this temptation especially when we are isolated from other believers. We cannot change our sinful nature, but specific character flaws can be transformed by the Spirit through courage, discipline, and Christian fellowship. Let us not allow Satan to instill fear to weaken our faith so we are ineffective or neutralized Christians. Instead, let us strengthen our faith with the support and encouragement of fellow believers. In turn, we can offer hope, love, and inspiration to all are willing to stand up for faith.

DAY 1 PETER 4:12-19

5

When I hear the term "suffer," the last word I think of is "overjoyed." We are conditioned so differently in today's culture. We are encouraged to do whatever makes us feel happy and embrace popular ideals and values. God has a much different plan for Christians. In this passage, Peter warns us that persecution will be part of our lives as we follow Christ. At the same time, he calls us to rejoice in this suffering, since it is evidence that our faith is being noticed. We are fortunate to live in a country that allows us to freely practice our beliefs. Even though we may face ridicule and mockery, we are rarely in physical danger. Around the world, Christians are being imprisoned and executed for their faith. Let's pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are tormented daily because they bravely stand up for the Gospel. We need to remember that even if the whole world is against us, God is for us!

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