



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – May 31, 2009

## Heart to Heart...

Let's talk plainly about the things of God. When we speak of someone 'in Christ', who are we speaking about? The term "Christian" is over-used and it has lost its real meaning. To use the phrase 'in Christ' is to refer to those of us in Jesus. What do we mean by 'in Christ'?

Sometimes we speak of someone being 'in Christ' or not 'in Christ'. Who is the person 'in Christ'? It is one who has been baptized for the forgiveness of their sins into the name of Jesus. (Acts 2:38/Acts 22:16) Many people profess baptism but their term is not used as the Lord uses it. Baptism to some is sprinkling. That's not baptism, that's sprinkling and never in the Bible was anyone "sprinkled into Christ." Others are immersed in water as that is what the term baptism means. But they aren't immersed into the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. They have no faith in coming to Jesus through baptism for His cleansing power. Their baptism was nothing more than a symbol of what they claim has already happened to them. There is no cleansing because they expect no cleansing. They believe they are already saved before being baptized and their baptism was joining up with a particular group of people or just an outer sign. Others are simply baptized because Jesus was baptized. They do it out of obligation or religious merit, not for salvation. Still others claim their baptism is by the Holy Spirit. They say it has nothing to do with being physically immersed. When one is sprinkled, or not expecting any cleansing in immersion or believing they are already saved prior to their baptism, or it is Holy Spirit baptism, they are not 'in Christ'! That might make some uncomfortable but we need to be looking at God's word and handling it accurately to see what He says about one being 'in Christ.'

Paul made it clear to the brethren at Rome by asking them, "***Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?***" (Romans 6:3) Notice the apostle speaks of "*all of us*". A person enters Christ upon baptism. There is no other entering at any other time. We must identify with His death in order to be raised into His life. Baptism is that time and point where faith is reaching out to God to raise you from the death of sin into the life of Jesus (Colossians 2:12). That's not preacher talk, that's the Lord God speaking. That's what our Savior spoke and taught through His apostles. (Mark 16:15-16) Baptism, immersion in water while faith is reaching out, is where one appeals to God through the resurrected Christ for a clean slate and conscience (I Peter 3:21).

When we speak of someone being 'in Christ', we are speaking about a believer knowing that they have been immersed in water into the name of Jesus for their forgiveness of sin. That person is 'in Christ' and they are the true "Christian" in the God-given sense, rather than a term that is so loosely used. Study and see if it is not right. It might make you more careful how you use the term "Christian" and realize it means to be 'in Christ'. Think about it!!!

Brent