



"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 – August 7, 2011**

## ***Heart to Heart...***

I am one that very rarely quotes from man's books as our source of insight to anything in life but this is one of those rare cases. A man by the name of John Stott from Lanham Place, London wrote a book titled *"What Christ Thinks Of The Church."* The following is a quote from his book: *"Our ranks are filled with baptized unbelievers! It has become respectable to have a Christian name. All manner of wild and idle superstitions surround the ordinance of baptism."* He went on to be questioned, if it was ever justifiable to baptize infants or small children, which he answered with a resounding "NO!" Upon that, he asks the next question: *"Can we really dare to put into adult lips, on behalf of a child, solemn declarations of Christian repentance, faith and surrender which we know they neither mean for themselves nor have any intention of fulfilling for the child?"*

John Stott makes a very valid point. It seems many are moving further and further away from God's intended purpose on baptism. *"Baptized unbelievers!"* Scriptures are ignored because of the way many use the term *"Christian"* and baptism. Many claim the Christ as their Savior living under His name but we need to think with some sincerity of heart and soberness of mind carefully of what Jesus commissioned those apostles in Mark 16:15-16 before His ascension back to the Father. It was a message preached, a faith response of baptism that created believers!

Every account of baptism in the New Testament Scriptures shows it to be a response of faith. Baptism was not just a passing thought or religious ceremony but faith responding to a message preached!! People seem to reach back under the Law, before the death of Jesus was complete and fulfilled pulling from the thief on the cross being with Jesus in Paradise and he wasn't baptized. That's the proving ground from many. Again, Scriptures are ignored and few seem to be interested in their meaning and understanding. Mark 2:10 states plainly that Jesus had the authority to forgive sins while He was on this earth! It was impossible to be immersed into Christ before He dies and is raised! That's why He had the authority to forgive while on earth. He was looking at His own sacrifice! After His resurrection from the dead, He commissioned His apostles to teach the gospel. The gospel was to be heard and believed. No one could stand in and substitute for another in repentance and immersion! Those who believed it were to respond to it by baptism and they would be saved (Mark 16:15-16). Did Jesus lie? Listening to all the different ideas of baptism it would seem Jesus deceived us all! Faith and baptism go hand in hand and it is always tied to the gospel! One was never saved upon confession and there is not one Scripture teaching to receive Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior and you would be saved! (Here is where many throw in Romans 10:9-10 but Paul is addressing those already baptized into Christ from Romans 6.) Just because one is "dunked in water" does not mean they were baptized into Christ Jesus. People ignore Romans 6 teachings of the apostle Paul on baptism where baptism is tied directly to the death and resurrection of Jesus. When one comes to be baptized into Christ as a response to the gospel teaching, the Lord is looking for a heart of faith in Jesus and His word. That's why infants and children are exempt!! They cannot be convicted of their sins, repent and turn with their heart to the death of Jesus. If one comes to baptism believing they are already saved or it is nothing more than an outer expression of an inner faith, they too missed the purpose. They missed Jesus. They did not enter Jesus because they have turned something commissioned by the Lord Himself into something that

wasn't intended. Baptism is a burial (immersion) and in that burial it takes faith in the death of Jesus to determine if one is raised by God from the death of their sins (Colossians 2:12). If anyone believes they were saved before baptism, and baptism is a burial with Jesus into His death, why would you bury a live person? Think about it!!!

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