

## Crossroads Community Church

Sunday July 19th, 2015

On this hot summer morning we entered His gates with praise as celebrated those who chose to commit their lives to Jesus through Baptism. Pastor Don shared announcements and prayed, 'Dear Father God, we praise you for your Son Jesus' sacrifice, we accept Him as Saviour, we are grateful for your forgiveness and our desire is to build a rich relationship with him, help us grow closer each day, in Jesus name Amen,'

When we hear Baptism it can bring two different images; one is of a child baptism that some of us have gone through as a baby and then we think of John the Baptist crying out in the wilderness, 'repent and be baptized!' (Isaiah 40:3, Matthew 3:5,6). Being baptized as a baby was done out of love from our parents, we did not heart-fully do it as we could not understand it; it was more a dedication to the Lord by our parents on our behalf. Some of us may believe that we don't need to be baptized again that this first baptism was all we needed. However this dedication(baptism) is like a first set of tires on a brand new car, it sets us on a right path with God, and like any set of tires they wear out and it is our responsibility to watch for signs as to when we need to change them. As we know if we don't change our tires we inevitably encounter trouble. These 'Faith Tires' keep us going with God for a while, we go to church with our parents, we attend Sunday School and maybe even youth group in our teens. These things are all good at keeping us on the right path but at some point our tires needed change and we may not have paid attention to the signs. We may have walked away from church and then even our faith, life happened, challenges came and we tried to cope and following the right path became blurred so we got into trouble.

For some of us we eventually met Jesus, we accepted Him as Savior, then we were born again, spiritually speaking and He put us back on the right path. Therefore as we were born again we needed a new baptism a new set of 'Faith Tires', only these are eternal, they will never wear out. Jesus was also dedicated at the temple by His parents when he was a baby and He stayed on the right path as he was perfect, so why would John the Baptist need to baptize him? That is exactly what John asked, (Matthew 3:13-15). Jesus responded that it was to fulfill all that His Father required; He saw it as advancing God's Kingdom as an example for us to follow. It was to show us the mission we are to be part of; 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, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (Matthew 28:18,19). In order to do this we need to clothe ourselves with Christ, this is part of what a water baptism signifies, we exchange our old clothes for His spiritual ones, (Galatians 3:27).

When we go through waters of baptism as an adult, it demonstrates our inward change of the heart for we now understand it is a commitment to wholeheartedly follow Jesus trusting Him and letting the world know, (Hebrews 10:21-23). Water Baptism is also an act of obedience, a symbol that we have been cleansed of our past and forgiven of sins. It is a means through which the Holy Spirit is given, 'If you love me, obey me; then I will ask the Father and he will give you another Comforter, and he will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, (Acts 2:38, 41, John 14:15). Water baptism signifies our spiritual rebirth unto God through Jesus, it is the outward expression of the change that took place when we received Him, the marking point of a brand new start, (John 3:5, Mark 16:16). Throughout scripture we have other examples of going through waters of baptism, one was during the flood. God saved Noah and His family and the flood represented their baptism. When God's people came out of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea with Moses and when they crossed the Jordan River with Joshua after their 40 years in the wilderness; these were all grand scale baptisms and highlighted God's forgiveness and their brand new start, (1 Peter 3:20-21, 1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

Beloved, our water Baptism is a vow, an expression of our love, faithfulness and devotion to Him which encompasses our gratitude for what He has done for us, it demonstrates our desire and commitment to have an ever growing relationship with Him. Baptism is our testimony of God's love, mercy and grace towards us, a sign of leaving the past behind to focus on what is ahead, which is a new fulfilling Life with Christ Jesus. Therefore since Jesus is full of grace, already fully committed to us, loves us to the point of death and is patiently waiting for us to respond, why shall we wait? And now, just as we accepted Christ Jesus as our Lord, we must continue to follow him. Let our roots grow down deep into him, and let our lives be built on him. Then our faith will grow strong in the truth we were taught, and we will overflow with thankfulness, Asherey Shalom!