

Believe and be Baptized. *Mark 16:16*

# BAPTISM

*Discussion Guide*

Video Teaching

Feb. 4/5, 2012 (Bob Merritt)

## *Introduction*

God has created us as people of experience—we live and re-live our experiences. They shape us. They determine our path. Our lives have been marked by events and experiences, both good and bad. They point us to where we've been, and who we used to be; but they also offer us the hope of who we could become with God's help. This weekend, you witnessed the mysterious power of hundreds of people identifying with the experience of Christ's death and resurrection. In obedience to Christ's command to believe and be baptized, hundreds of Eagle Brookers went public with their faith in Christ. In doing so, they buried their past regrets in a watery grave and rose up to new life—a new life that will be filled with experiences of God and His Spirit that will continue to shape them, and offer them the hope that all things are possible with God.

## *Discussion Questions*

1. What have been some of the experiences of your life that have marked you? How do you carry those experiences with you today? Do some of them still affect you in a positive or negative way?
2. If you are a follower of Christ, when did you accept Christ's gift of new life? Do you remember how your life changed as a result? If you are not a follower of Christ, what do you think is keeping you from accepting this gift of new life?
3. Bob referred to baptism as the process that begins our obedience to God. We often cringe at the word obedience because of its cultural connotation. What areas in your life have you been faithfully obedient to God? Which areas of obedience come easy or naturally to you? Which areas of obedience do you struggle with?
4. In the same way that a newborn baby carries with it a sense of wonder, our relationship with Christ, when new or fresh, also carries a sense of wonder and awe. Over time we tend to return to our "wayward" tendencies. What in your life feels wayward or lost? What role do you think God, your family, your small group, or friends have in helping you overcome your "waywardness?"
5. Bob referenced **Romans 6** and how we identify with Christ's death and resurrection in baptism. Baptism declares our identity with Christ. Do you find yourself declaring your identity in Christ in all areas of your life? Is it easier with certain friends or co-workers? Are there still people in your life who don't know of your identity in Christ? What holds you back from declaring your identity in Christ to all you encounter?

## *Think About It*

The symbol of baptism is God's invitation to all of us to bury our old sin, guilt, and shame and trade it for a new start and a solid identity rooted in Christ. What still needs to be buried and left behind in your life? How will the experience of watching others participate in baptism change and motivate you to continually declare your identity in Christ and participate in his resurrection of all things?