

Baptism Is Not Important (?)

Someone once said: "A text, taken out of context, is a pretext." Questionable indoctrination, at the expense of truth, always smells funny. I'm not a big "traditionalist" but Solomon stated: *"The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is nothing new under the sun"* (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Hence, exegesis, when replaced with eisegesis, produces something "new" (found nowhere in the Bible) and *becomes* tradition.

So, consider Corinth. The church of Christ located in this massive Greek city had succumbed to division and Paul bluntly condemned it (1 Corinthians 1:10-17). At the conflict's foundation was a misplaced loyalty to the men who had baptized them into Christ (a problem that continues to this day). This flaw is being addressed as the source of ungodly sects following men instead of Christ (another problem that runs rampant in religion today, ref. 1 Corinthians 1:12).

Therefore, in the context, Paul states that, as a priority, he came to preach Christ, not himself. The implication is that no Gospel teacher, when teaching, is teaching himself; therefore, when one is baptized as a natural result of hearing the Gospel preached, that person is not baptized into the baptizer but into Christ (Galatians 3:27). Further, the result of the Gospel planted in an honest heart (Luke 8:11; Romans 10:17) will result in one's desire to be baptized but the person teaching and/or baptizing is irrelevant in regard to the authority and result of obedient actions, including that person's residence in that desired saved state.

Therefore, Paul - and, actually, all Christians, ref. Matthew 29:18-19 - was not commanded to baptize but to preach the Gospel (which is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, cf. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; something that must precede the submission to being baptized in order to become a saved person, ref. Romans 6:3-4). It is noteworthy to point out that Paul never once states, implies or even hints that baptism is not essential, necessary or required; the above references to baptism in Romans and Galatians are from this very same Paul. If he was undermining the essentiality of baptism, he would have contradicted himself. When one points out the abuse of some action, it does not follow that the action itself is necessarily wrong but is being employed wrongly.