

Mt. 28:18-20 “Discipling by Baptism”

For the Children: Every now and again I like to do some “Chinese cooking.” I need to use a recipe book, since I don’t know much about cooking. When I look at my book, it tells me the ingredients I need and the methods for producing the best results. I follow those instructions, because I assume that they know what they’re talking about. But I try to follow the Bible even more carefully, because I believe God knows what He’s talking about far, far more. When He says that the method for making and training disciples involves baptizing and teaching, we must follow His Word and use those methods with confidence. **Questions:** How is baptism like teaching? What does baptism teach? Why should we not baptize or celebrate the Lord’s Supper at home?

Introduction:

First Point: Methods of Discipling

- 1) Two Methods: The structure of the passage involves only one command; “Disciple!” This includes making new disciples and nurturing existing ones. The Lord assumes that His people will have gone out into the world – this is not commanded. The sense is, “Having gone, disciple!” He then tells us 2 main methods of doing so: by baptizing and by teaching
- 2) Two *Related* Methods: Baptism is a sign and seal of the covenant. It therefore involves teaching, by means of the symbol of washing with water. “Teaching’ is the more regular kind of instruction by evangelism, catechism, preaching and other aspects of church-education. We can see how God used circumcision to teach Israel about His grace in cleansing His people (Dt. 30:6) and their response in pursuing holiness (Dt. 10:16). Baptism teaches similar truths
- 3) Those Who Use These Methods: The “great commission” here is especially to the church. In the early OT, the 2 sacraments were largely family-oriented. Later in the OT, they were both family and church. Now the 2 sacraments are church-ordinances only. However, the church is comprised of families and individuals, who take part in these ordinances and back them up at home
- 4) The Importance of Infant Baptism: Baptism teaches about God’s method of saving sinners through Christ’s blood. It teaches about the baptized person’s membership in the covenant. And it is a method He gives the church to use in discipling. This “commission” makes infant-baptism important, for thus covenant children are disciplined. That also puts the onus on the church and families and members to explain repeatedly to the children what their baptism teaches

Second Point: Confidence in Employing These Methods

- 1) Confidence in Baptizing: When questions arise about the future of our children (or new converts), we must place our confidence in God, not in man. The Lord Jesus establishes the basis for this by stressing that all authority has been given to Him after His death and resurrection – “*Therefore, having gone, disciple, by baptizing and teaching!*” He tells them to baptize in the Name that has that power and authority – the divine Name, in the Triune God. Then He promises to be with them unto the end of the age, to ensure that this has the results He wants. The frightened disciples needed to hear that assurance then, and so does the church and believing parents
- 2) Confidence in Teaching: The same confidence applies to the church’s role of teaching, whether in evangelizing new disciples or training up existing ones. For God’s Word always accomplishes His purpose for it. He does not prescribe methods for discipling in vain!

Conclusion:

