

QUESTIONS YOU HOPE THEY DON'T ASK

"What if One Dies on the Way to be Baptized"

And "Are You Saying My Parents are in Hell?"

(1 Peter 4:11)

- Introduction:**
1. I can't begin to tell you how many times I've been asked these questions.
 2. The first question is often asked as a desperate attempt to skirt the necessity of baptism, while the second question is often born out of conviction and concern.
 3. Whatever the motive for asking these questions, they are fair questions.
 4. As with all questions, what I think is of little value.
 5. What is of value is "what do the Scriptures say" (Romans 4:3).
 6. As we proceed, I want you to consider the dilemma these questions create, then seek biblical solutions as well as practical ways to answer these questions.

I. What if One Dies on the Way to be Baptized?

- A. Answering this question.
1. There are many variations to this question.
 - a. Soldier in a foxhole.
 - b. Sick in a hospital bed.
 - c. Killed on the way to the creek to be baptized.
 2. But the common thread in all of them is what happens if someone dies before they have a chance to be baptized.
 3. The question boils down to this...does this scenario negate what the Bible teaches in Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21, etc.?
 4. Some will contend that this man would be saved, otherwise it would be a blotch on the character of God.
 5. However, what proves too much, proves nothing at all.
 6. This dilemma is not just a dilemma for those who believe in the necessity of baptism, but it is also a dilemma for those who believe in the necessity of faith and repentance (John 8:24).
- B. Working toward a Biblical and Helpful Response.
1. Don't deny the dilemma.
 - a. I've heard people say, "God would never let this situation happen."
 - b. But that is not true. It can and does happen.
 - c. Ills. of man in Kentucky hospital.
 - d. Ills. of man not returning a phone call.
 - e. Ills. of woman waiting on her favorite preacher.

2. Feelings don't determine truth.
 - a. Feelings can be deceptive.
 - 1) (Proverbs 14:12) There is a way that seems right...
 - 2) (Proverbs 28:26) He who trusts in his own heart is a fool.
 - 3) (Jeremiah 17:9) The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?
 - b. However, the word of God is always right. "For the word of the Lord is right (Psalm 33:4).
 - c. Never settle for an "I think," "I feel," or "I believe."
 3. We must not go beyond what is written.
 - a. (1 Corinthians 4:6).
 - b. (1 Peter 4:11).
 - c. We may wonder about motives, God's prerogative, exceptions, etc. but such speculative thinking is of no value to one who is committed to truth and desires a "thus says the Lord."
 4. God will do right.
 - a. (Habakkuk 1:12-13) Notice the caution in Habakkuk's complaint.
 - b. (Genesis 18:25) Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?
 - c. (Deuteronomy 32:3-4) His work is perfect; For all his ways are justice. A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is he.
 - d. We set ourselves in a precarious position when we set ourselves up as judges of God's activity.
 - e. God's word is right even when it hurts my feelings and disagree with the way I think.
 5. Not all questions need an immediate answer.
 - a. I have learned that saying, "That's a great question, would you be willing to sit down and study it with me?" is a great initial response.
 - b. (John 16:12) I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.
 - c. (Matthew 21:23-27) You tell me, then I'll tell you.
 - d. (1 Corinthians 3:1-3) Carnal, fed with milk and unable to eat solid food.
- C. The Takeaways from this question.
1. Do not delay your obedience to the Lord.
 2. (Acts 16:33) The same hour of the night.
 3. Stop accommodating and encouraging delay!

II. Are You Saying My Parents are in Hell?

- A. Sometimes this question is asked for different reasons.
 1. Genuine conviction and awareness of the consequences.

2. Deflection that serves as justification for rejecting the message.
- B. In answering this question, the same principles apply.
 1. God's word is truth.
 2. Feelings don't determine truth, God's word does.
- C. This question is loaded with emotion, Therefore, it has to be handled delicately.
- D. Some suggested responses.
 1. God is a just God and will do right (Genesis 18:25; compare Acts 1:6-7).
 2. Appeal to the integrity of this person's parents.
 - a. Would they have obeyed if they learned what you just learned?
 - b. What would they want you to do?