

This is our last Sunday in the Overflow series. Romans 15:13 - *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.* It's fitting that we celebrate filling & overflow through the baptism of Erin Das today!

Some things we've discussed in this series...

- Overflow; a natural process of being filled; not forced or awkward.
- The Holy Spirit filling me - family & friends - local community - the world.
- What you're filled with overflows to others.
- Filled with Jesus. Filled with the Word of God. Filled with the Spirit of God.
- In this process we are purified; made holy.
- Blessed to be a blessing.
- We give back to God in proportion to what He's given us - Jesus gave his life, I lay mine down in like response.
- Ownership - God owns all that we are, and our finances overflow in tithes and alms.
- And today we'll see, public baptism is a symbol of filling & overflow to others.

All around the world in places like Morocco, Jordan, Nigeria, or Indonesia the ancient practices of dyeing of cloth are kept alive. Practices which first century Christians probably would've been familiar with, walking through the open markets seeing dyed cloth hanging for sale. Maybe they even lived near such a home industry, walking past the open color-filled dye vats in the ground like these in Morocco.

The smell, one of the strongest memory inducing senses, would've been distinctive. The color would've been unforgettable, forming indelible images in their psyche. Imagine kids sitting on the ledge watching their dad dye cloth all day long in the hot sun. Bringing him a drink. Sticking their fingers in the vats & playing with the color. White cloth becoming rich indigo, or deep red, hanging in the sun to dry & being stamped with patterns later. Purple cloth was made from crushed seashells which took a lot of time and was very expensive. It's why that color was reserved for royalty.

Dyeing of cloth was a strong experiential impression on growing minds. Expensive & richly dyed cloth, not a memory too easily shaken off.

The word baptism is linked to the dyeing of cloth. Dipping the cloth in a bath of dye, it takes on the color & properties of the dye. The cloth is forever changed. Never again will cloth & dye be separated. No reversing the process. Dye fills the minute pores & fibers, bonded with cloth forever. No longer white, but red, blue or green, soaked & filled with color. It's one of the best symbols of baptism we have. One of which early Christians, and others, would've had a very clear experiential impression from local market places. We're dipped or immersed in Jesus death, his sacrificial blood covering us, seeping into every pore of our being. We're changed, dyed the color of Christ, alive & vibrant. Now when God the father looks upon us he sees the the royal color of Jesus.

Baptism is an outward symbol of an inward reality which has already occurred. We're not baptized by water to BE saved. The baptism which saves us is a baptism of death;

dying to self & sin. The Scriptures refer to it as the Old Self being crucified along with Jesus at which time we are baptized & filled with the Holy Spirit.

Paul says in Galatians, *27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.* Immersed in his death. Raised to new life in him. Possible only because Jesus was the perfect human being, without sin, yet slain for ours. He died. He rose from the dead, and by so doing, conquered sin & death for us. Upon acceptance of his substitutionary death, we're clothed in Him - dyed in him, taking on new life in him. Spiritually renewed, our sinful self is crucified along with him, we're new creations in Jesus.

It's why Paul says in Romans 6:3-8:

3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.¹

Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross, and his overcoming of the grave has freed us as slaves to sin. It no longer has mastery over us. We've passed from death to life. *But we must believe that and identify ourselves with Christ in this life...Romans 10 says, 9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.²*

Water Baptism, being clothed with Christ, dyed to the color of Jesus, also speaks of community. 1 Corinthians 12 says, 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.³

Ephesians 4:4-6, 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 4

Galatians 3, 'for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

These passages refer to the Baptism of the Spirit. They refer to the change that occurs in us when we are convicted of our sin and find the need for a savior. They refer to the

¹ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Ro 6:3–8). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

² *The New International Version*. 2011 (Ro 10:9). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

³ *The New International Version*. 2011 (1 Co 12:12–14). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁴ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Eph 4:4–6). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

change that happens in us spiritually when we move from being slaves to sin to slaves of righteousness. They refer to the Gospel power of Jesus death and resurrection for us - that we've died to the sinful self, and have been raised up to eternal life in him as a result of his cross and resurrection. They refer to the inward spiritual reality of being in Jesus now which isn't just an individual thing; it's communal.

In other words, those of us who have come to identify ourselves with Jesus as Lord & Savior, have been dyed the same color. We have one Spirit. We're unified under Him. One Body, the community of God. So, it is fitting to celebrate that reality through water baptism which is an outward sign of an inward reality. The outward symbol of an inward filling. It is an expression of overflow in worship and gratitude to Jesus which overflows in encouragement to the church. It overflows in challenge to those who do not yet know Jesus. The baptism ceremony, a public celebration of a person being filled with the life of Jesus which occurred in the past tense. Yet, it is also a celebration of the whole family of God united under one Spirit, one baptism and one faith - all dyed the same color in Jesus - all filled with the Spirit and overflowing to others.

This celebration today is coupled with their preparation as a couple in going to Bangladesh in January. It's fitting to end this Overflow series with Erin being baptized as she and Nishant step out to overflow this Gospel message to Bangladesh.

(AT THE CLOSING OF THE SERVICE)

I want to challenge you today. If you have not been dyed to the color of Christ yet, would you make that decision today?

And for those of you who have clothed yourselves in Christ, have you been baptized? If not, let's talk about when that can happen - it's a command, and a celebration.