

A Story of Two Young Women

Over a span of four days, I heard the confession that Jesus was the Son of God by two young women and witnessed their baptisms for remission of their sins.

The location of the baptism of the first young woman, Sara, age 12, was in the 1500 seat auditorium of the Mayfair Church of Christ in Huntsville, Alabama. Sara was baptized by her father in the presence of her grandparents, family, and friends. She is from a Christian home, attends a Christian school, and has the material blessings available to middle class America.

The location of the second young woman, age 13, name unknown, was in the Villa De San Francisco in Honduras. She was baptized in a concrete box located adjacent to a row of outdoor toilets (“banos” in Spanish). The water in the small reservoir was used to flush toilets (not suitable for consumption) and the stench from the toilets was ever-present. This young woman was baptized in the presence of a few neighbors and strangers from the United States and Latin America. She exited the water of baptism likely to return to a non-Christian family in a neighborhood where most of the people live in abject poverty. Her future life situation is clearly uncertain.

In these two very different situations, the sins of both young women were forgiven by a wholly impartial and loving God. Yes, one’s sins are washed away when baptized in dirty water as well as clean water. Naaman learned many years ago that God’s power is not determined by the quality of the water when his leprosy was cleansed in the muddy Jordan River (II Kings 5). Granted, after being raised out of the water of baptism to walk in newness of life, it is easier to live Christ-like lives when we live in a Christian home and regularly receive encouragement, but no one has an advantage of entering God’s family because of family influence, wealth, or ethnicity.

The two truths from the baptism of these two young women that we must not forget are (1) God does not show favoritism to any person (Gal. 1:6b) and (2) we should strive to be impartial in every aspect of our lives. The mindset that causes us to be bias-free is found in the example of Jesus and Paul. Jesus was a servant for all mankind. “He came to earth to serve, not to be served” (Matt. 20:28). The apostle Paul considered himself a debtor to the Greeks and barbarians, the wise and unwise (Rom. 1:14). Likewise, we should be willing to reach out and share God’s word to anyone who is willing to listen regardless of their social or economic status. God help us to develop this mindset.

For the elders (Don Denton)