

Sermon Mark S. Aites
GOD'S DIVIDING LINE

INTRODUCTION:

1. Years ago, I used to spend considerable time on a farm.
 - 1) In fact, I spent time on several different farms.
 - 2) I remember one occasion picking blue berries.
 - 3) I came to the electric fence which separated me from the cows on the other side of the fence.
 - 4) When I set my pan of berries on the electric fence, I got a good jolt to say the least.
 - 5) It was an abrupt reminder that there was a fence there, a dividing line, if you will, between myself and the cows and pasture beyond.
2. In life sometimes we draw foolish lines.
 - 1) Brethren vs. Brethren: sometimes over foolish things (example: songleading; songs to fast or too slow).
 - 2) Sometimes lines are drawn between family members, sometimes over foolish things, other times more serious things.
 - 3) Sometimes we draw lines between God and self when we succumb to temptation (**Isa. 59:1-2**).
3. Of surprise to some God also draws lines.
 - 1) God's lines are dividing lines.
 - 2) God has a line between darkness/light (**Eph. 5:11; 2 Cor. 6:14-15**).
 - 3) God has a line between those who are lost and saved; a unique line because this line is of a physical nature; water.
4. In this lesson: study God's dividing line between the lost and the saved.

DISCUSSION:

I. FLOOD: DIVIDING LINE FOR NOAH.

- A. God attributes high praise to Noah; thru Peter's writings (**2 Pet. 2:5**).
 1. Noah not only preached truth but practiced it, or else he would not have been spared in the flood.
 2. Noah must have been much like the Psalmist (cf. **Psa. 119:172**).
 3. The Bible tells us that Noah obeyed the commandments of God by faith (**Heb. 11:6-7**).
 4. The Bible gives a good commentary on Noah's life (**Gen. 6:22**).
- B. Noah's day the situation was grave: wickedness filled the earth (**Gen. 6:5-8**).
- C. God then devastated the world with a great flood (**Gen. 7:19-22**).
- D. However, Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives survived.
 1. God shut them in the ark (**Gen. 7:16**).
 2. Peter tells us in his writings that eight souls were saved by water (**1 Pet. 3:20**).
 3. Water was the agency by which God saved Noah, his wife, his sons, and their wives.
 4. Whereas the water served to destroy the unrighteous; Noah and his family were spared as the water lifted up the ark to salvation.

5. The water became the line between those who perished and those who were saved.

II. RED SEA: DIVIDING LINE FOR ISRAEL.

- A. Bible tells us of the plight of the Hebrew people (**Exod. 1:7-11**).
- B. Remind you: God heard and saw their afflictions (**Exod. 3:9**).
- C. To free them from Egyptian slavery, God sent Moses/Aaron, and through them God smote Egypt with ten plagues; but Pharaoh's heart was hardened (**Exod. 7:13**).
- D. Pharaoh wanted compromise (**Exod. 8:25; Exod. 10:11**). He even sought to deprive them of their sacrifices through his attempted compromise (**Exod. 10:24**).
- E. Result of 10th plague: Pharaoh let them leave calling for Moses and Aaron to serve the Lord as they had said (**Exod. 12:29-33**).
- F. In their departure, the children of Israel encountered the Red Sea (**Exod. 14:21-22**).
- G. When Pharaoh's army pursued and attempted to overtake the children of Israel, they were perished in the sea (**Exod. 15:1**).
- H. Once again water was involved in the salvation of God's people.
 1. The Red Sea was the line of salvation between Israel and the bondage of Egyptian captivity (**Exod. 14:26-30**).
 2. Paul writes of this event (**1 Cor. 10:1-2**).
 3. As they left on dry land, encompassed by water and the cloud above, the water closed after their passage; Pharaoh's army perished, and once again water became the dividing line between perishing and being saved.

III. JORDAN: DIVIDING LINE FOR NAAMAN.

- A. Naaman was considered a great man (**2 Kings 5:1**).
- B. Despite the greatness of this man, he had a very noticeable flaw, leprosy.
- C. The king of Syria sent a letter to the king of Israel, wanting Naaman to be healed of his leprosy (**2 Kings 5:7**).
- D. Elisha learned of the situation and told the king not to despair.
 1. He had some interesting instructions that he passed on to Naaman (**2 Kings 5:9-10**).
 2. Needless to say, Naaman was extremely angry; the Jordan was certainly not the river that he would want to wash in.
- E. Naaman was reluctant at first; but then obeyed and was cleansed (**2 Kings 5:13-14**).
- F. Once again, water was God's dividing line.
 1. Being cleansed in the Jordan is what separated Naaman from leprosy.
 2. God extended His grace/mercy, but Naaman had to respond in faith and obedience to receive that cleansing.
 3. It was not until he moved in obedience and dipped seven times in the Jordan River that he was cleansed.

4. God chose water as the means to bring about his cleansing, and his salvation from leprosy.
5. There is no doubt that other means of cleansing him of his leprosy were at God's disposal.
 - 1) God could have spoke the words it would have been done.
 - 2) But God chose water as the agent in his cure of leprosy.

IV.SILOAM: DIVIDING LINE FOR THE BLIND MAN.

- A. The blind man was the means whereby Jesus could teach a lesson on God's dividing line (**John 9:1-3**).
- B. This occasion afforded Jesus the opportunity to perform a miracle upon a man blind from birth; demonstrating the power of God. (after the miracle, note the comment made in **John 9:32**).
- C. Notice now the instructions of Jesus to this man (**John 9:6-7**).
- D. Question: when did the blind man receive his sight?
 1. When Jesus first spoke to the disciples?
 2. When He was spitting on the ground?
 3. When He made clay of spittle, and anointed his eyes?
 4. When the blind man was on his way to the pool of Siloam?
 5. Note carefully: "*So he went and washed, and came back seeing*" (**John 9:7**).
- E. The blind man later told how he had received his sight (**John 9:15**).
- F. Here again, God's dividing line for the blind man was water.
 1. It was not until he arose by faith and obedience that he was cleansed of his blindness.
 2. The pool of Siloam was the dividing line for him: it was that fence or dividing line that separated him from a world of blindness.
 3. The Lord helped him to cross the line from one state into another.

V. BAPTISM: GOD'S DIVIDING LINE IN SALVATION.

- A. By no means would I contend that water, in and of itself, has the power to save; however, water enters into the test of obedience.
 1. Noah and his family were saved by faith coupled with obedience; making water the means of their salvation from the old sinful world.
 2. The children of Israel were saved by faith and obedience; making water the means of their salvation from Egypt.
 3. Naaman was saved by faith and obedience; making water the means for salvation from his leprosy.
 4. The blind man was saved by faith and obedience; making water the means of his salvation from blindness.
- B. God has made water, in each of these cases, essential to the completion of one's obedience!
- C. In harmony with this, God has made baptism (immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins) the dividing line between being lost and being saved.
- D. The New Testament strongly emphasizes the importance of baptism (**1 Pet.**

3:20-21).

E. Example of the Ethiopian (**Acts 8:35-39**).

1. Philip preached Jesus (**8:35**).
2. Evident: Ethiopian believed.
3. Repentance apparent: seeking answers from scripture (**8:28**).
4. Confession of Christ (**8:37**).
5. One step remained: baptism, in order to have the remission of sins (**8:38-39**).
6. The process then was complete: Philip was snatched away; note, not prior to the Ethiopian being baptized!

F. Other examples:

1. Peter preached God's dividing line on the day of Pentecost; 3,000 obeyed (**Acts 2:38,41**).
2. Philip preached God's dividing line to the Samaritans (**Acts 8:12-13**).
3. Saul of Tarsus (Paul) understood God's dividing line (**Acts 22:16ff**).
4. Peter declared God's dividing line to the household of Cornelius (**Acts 10:44-48**).
5. Lydia understood God's dividing line (**Acts 16:14-15**).
6. Paul/Silas declared God's dividing line to the Philippian jailer (**Acts 16:30ff**).
7. Crispus and his household heard of God's dividing line (**Acts 18:8**).
8. The disciples at Ephesus were told of God's dividing line, and were rebaptized (**Acts 19:1-5**).

CONCLUSION:

1. The plain and simple conclusion is that unless one is baptized he cannot be saved (**Mark 16:16**).
2. Baptism was part of the Lord's great commission (**Matt. 28:18-20**).
3. It is the only thing that can put us in Christ (**Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-27**).
4. What we learn in this lesson is that water is the agent which God uses to save us from our sins.
5. It is not actually water, H₂O which saves, but that we contact the blood of Christ when we are baptized in water which cleanses us from all of our sins.
6. In His death that we are cleansed by His precious blood by faith:
 - 1) The soldier pierced Jesus side after He had died (**John 19:34**).
 - 2) Paul tells us we are baptized into His death (**Rom. 6:3**).
 - 3) We are cleansed of our sins by faith (**Col. 2:12**).