

1 Baptized in Mud

2 Sport Utility Vehicles

- If you turn on the TV tomorrow and watch a football game, you're likely to see a bunch of commercials touting a variety of next generation SUVs.
- Each ad looks about the same . . .
 - Attractive people loading up their oversized 4x4 to head out over some terrain that only "Big Horn" sheep can negotiate—throwing dirt and gravel all the way.
 - There will also be images of the same folk setting up camp or jumping into a kayak or dangling off a rock.

3 Sport Utility Vehicle

- The truth is that only about 5 percent of SUVs are ever taken off-road, which means that you're more likely to see a Range Rover at Starbucks, for example, than anywhere near a mountain lake.
- For most SUV owners, the look and the possibility of one day actually locking in the four-wheel drive are worth the extra bucks in the purchase price.

4 Sport Utility Vehicle

5 Important Question

- Given the current debate about rising gas prices, oil shortages, environmental impacts and alternative energy, however, one can understand why some SUV owners feel they need to explain themselves to their green-thinking peers.
- Why have four-wheel drive if the only dirt those four wheels will ever touch is the fringe of the kids' soccer field?

6 Baptized in Mud

- But wait! Thanks to a new product, SUV owners don't need to put up with either the guilt or the critics.
- With "Sprayonmud" they can create the illusion that their SUV has, on more than one occasion, been baptized in mountain mud.
- For a mere \$14.50 per quart-sized bottle you can buy actual mud to spray on your vehicle in order to make it look as though you've just bumped back from a wild ride in the wilderness when, in fact, you've been merely hiking through the aisles at Wal-Mart.

7 No More Guilt or Shame

- Says the promotional material, "If you've got a 4X4 or off-roader, Sprayonmud will send a message to anyone who disapproves or is just plain envious — you use your off-roader, off the road as well as on it."

- Inside each quart-sized plastic container is real dirt from the UK (where the product originates), mixed with water and a “secret ingredient” which helps the mud stick to the vehicle’s body.
- A few strategic squirts on the fenders and you’ve got an Escalade that’s dirtier than a mudslide, or dirtier than Tom Brady’s jersey on a rainy Boston Sunday afternoon.

8 John the Baptist

- When Jesus burst on the scene in first-century Israel, one of his first actions was to mark his life and ministry with some real mud.
- He traveled way off-road, all the way out into the Judean wilderness, to see his cousin John, the quintessential rugged individualist.
- In the manner of other ancient Israelite prophets, John lived a solitary life amid sand and snakes but preached a message so compelling that people were willing to get their feet dirty to go find him.

9 John the Baptist

- Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’
- I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.
- The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. (Matt 3:8-10 NIV)

10 John the Baptist

- “I baptize you with water for repentance.
- But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry.
- He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.
- His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” (Matt 3:11-12 NIV)

11 John the Baptist

- First-century Jews were use to ceremonial washings, but the only one that involved immersion was for those converting to Judaism.

- John called everyone, even ethnic Jews, to be baptized or “marked” as being in need of forgiveness and salvation — the mud and muck of human sin being washed away and replaced with a real mark of repentance and confession.

12 Jesus Gets Muddy

- When Jesus came to the edge of the water, John recognized that he was “the one” who “is more powerful than I ... I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals” (Matthew 1:7).
- If anyone needed to skip this particular mud bath it was Jesus. In Matthew’s version, John is incredulous that the Messiah would need any kind of baptism — “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” (Matthew 3:14).
- Yet Jesus willingly steps down into the brown water to take on the same muddy mark as his people.

13 Humbling Experience

- Water Baptism is a humbling experience.
 - We have to go outside of our comfort zone.
 - We have to be willing to testify to our faith in front of many witnesses.
 - We have to let someone dunk us in water.
 - Then we have to walk away soaking wet.
- But so is repentance!
 - Humble ourselves and confess we are wrong.
 - Change the direction we are living.
 - When we do something that pricks our conscience take care of it.
 - Don’t wish it away or deny it . . . turn from it.

14 The Pledge

- . . . long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also — not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. (1 Pet 3:20–21 NIV)
- What is a pledge?
 - It is a solemn promise or undertaking.
- So what is a pledge of a good conscience?
 - It is when we confess our faith in God/Jesus to others and declare our intent to be Jesus’ disciple.
 - Or in others words, it is a promise we make in public that we intended to keep our conscience clean before God by repenting of our sins.

- It is a statement of intentions to live for God.

15 The Good Fight

- Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme. (1 Tim 1:18–20 NIV)
- In this context, what is “to fight the good fight?”
- What happens to those who don’t hold on to faith and a good conscience toward God?
- So when God’s Spirit pricks our conscience, what should we do?

16 Respond

- So I say, live [walk] by the Spirit, . . . (Gal 5:16 NIV)
- Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (Rom 8:12–14 NIV)
- In other words, if we respond to God’s Spirit when He convicts us of areas in our lives that need changing, we are walking in the Spirit.

17 Conclusion

- So then when we humble ourselves and are baptized,
 - we are confessing to God and everyone that we intend to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and be His disciple.
 - we are also confessing that we plan to rely upon God’s Spirit for direction, discernment, and power to live that new life.
- Those who do so and are faithful in carrying out their pledge of repentance, will not be disappointed.
 - They will see God’s power at work, and
 - Blessings that only He can do.

18 Final Thought

- There is another baptism.
- I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” (Mark 1:8 NIV)
- But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8 NIV)

- So if you haven't received the baptism of Holy Spirit yet, prepare yourselves to receive Him.
 - Study all about it and what it means.
 - Start praying to God asking Him to fill you to overflowing.
 - Understand that what gifts He gives you is not for yourself, but for the edification of the church.