

BAPTISM



WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Christian water baptism was established by Jesus when He called his followers to make disciples of all nations and to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.
- MATTHEW 28:19-20

Baptism and communion are the two sacraments Jesus calls his disciples to observe as *visible* symbols of *invisible* grace. In the words, these two practices are tangible representations of the Gospel of Jesus Christ at work in our lives.

Baptism is an *outward* proclamation of the *inward* reality that God has created new within a person through salvation in Jesus Christ. It is a new believer's testimony of belonging to Jesus and His Church.

Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. - ROMANS 6:4

The apostle Paul explained that baptism represents the believer's union with Christ: that when we are immersed and raised out of the waters, we are symbolically joining with the life-changing death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul describes this as putting on new clothes!

For those of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. - GALATIANS 3:27

BAPTISM IS...

1. **Baptism is about identification.** In sports, players wear jerseys to identify with a team. When a believer is baptized, they publicly identify with Jesus and with other Christians. To "identify" with someone is to say that you are with that person; you belong together. You identify with your mom and dad; you belong together.
2. **Baptism is a symbol.** You see symbols all the time. The red mark on the faucet in the sink symbolizes hot water. The blue mark represents cold. When you see the dial turned to the red mark, you know that the water coming out of the faucet is hot. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ and his church. When you see someone being baptized, you're watching a moving picture of what has happened to that person spiritually.
3. **Baptism is a picture of our death.** The person being baptized goes under the water, which is a picture of the burial of their old self that was enslaved to sin. We are as dead to our sin as Jesus was dead on the cross. Jesus really died on the cross, and they buried him. When we put our trust in Christ to save us, God's Word assures us that we really died to our sin and our old self was buried along with Jesus.
4. **Baptism is a picture of our resurrection.** The person being baptized is brought up out of the water, which is a picture of their soul being raised from the dead to eternal life. It also reminds us of God's promise to one day resurrect our physical bodies from the grave just like he did for Jesus.

WHY DO WE BAPTIZE?

We baptize because Jesus modeled it himself and made it part of His ministry and part of our mission. Simply put, we baptize because Jesus commanded us to; however, there is also purpose and wisdom in that command. Baptism provides a decisive, public way of taking a stand that Jesus has saved you, that you're crazy about Him, and that you're going to follow Him all the days of your life.

Essentially, you are publicly proclaiming three things in Baptism:

TO GOD

Thank You for saving me. I'm Yours. Help me to live a life that shows Jesus to the world.

TO BELIEVERS

Celebrate with me! Jesus has saved me! Remember when He saved you? Encourage me, help me, and keep me accountable to following Jesus.

TO UNBELIEVERS

I want you to know the Jesus that I know. If you see any change in my life, if you see anything good in my life, it's not me- it's Him! He wants you to know Him.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Our understanding of the Bible is that every baptism in the New Testament was preceded by a confession of sin and repentance, which is something that neither an unbeliever nor an infant can do. Because we believe baptism represents a union with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, we practice only baptism of believers.

DOES BAPTISM SAVE US?

We are saved solely by God's grace applied to us by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Nothing we do can save us... our salvation is not a result of our works.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. - EPHESIANS 2:8-10

We are, however, called to do good works and obey the commands of Jesus, baptism being one of them. So like all the other “good works,” we baptize and are baptized not in order to be saved, but because we are saved. Just because a Christian is not yet baptized doesn’t mean he isn’t a Christian.

Baptism is an outward demonstration of what has already occurred inside of us. Though baptism doesn’t save you, God is pleased when His child proclaims to the world that the salvation of Christ has come into his life.

KNOWING THE GOSPEL

The Gospel is for everyone. Baptism expresses the following truths about our relationship with God.

1. God loves you! He made you and knows everything about you. ([Psalm 139](#))
2. When we mess up and do wrong things, it’s called sin. We deserve to be punished for those things, but when we follow Jesus, He takes the punishment for us. ([Ecclesiastes 7:20](#))
3. To follow Jesus, you have to admit that you’re a sinner and that you’ve messed up. You need to tell God you’re sorry. ([Acts 3:19](#))
4. God loves you so much He sent His son Jesus to earth. Jesus took the punishment for the sin of everyone who would believe in him by dying on a cross. But Jesus didn’t stay dead! God brought Jesus back to life. To follow Jesus, you have to believe Jesus died for you and that God brought Jesus back to life. ([Romans 10:9-10](#))

While we do not believe there is a specific, special prayer we should pray to become a Christian, one of the ways we affirm the truths above is through prayer. If you’ve never made a decision to trust Jesus with your life, you may choose to pray something like this:
God, I know you love me. I admit I have done wrong things. and I am truly sorry. I believe in my heart that Jesus, your son, died for me and you brought Him back to life. I commit to following you. Jesus, you are my leader, the Lord of my life! Amen.

PARTICIPATING IN OUR BAPTISM CELEBRATIONS

- At the beginning of the baptism ceremony, we provide an opportunity for the person(s) being baptized to share a testimony to affirm their faith to the family of God.

- We usually have two people in the waters with you to perform your baptism. Our pastor or one of our elders will perform the baptism service. In the event of a child baptism, we will usually invite a parent or family member to participate.
- When you step into the waters, the person performing the baptism will ask, “Do you confess and believe Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?” You affirm your faith by responding, “Yes” or “I do.”
- You will be immersed and raised up out of the waters. Typically, this is done by leaning back into the water while being supported by those performing your baptism. (If it’s easier for you, we may also have you lean forward into the waters.) While doing this, the person performing your baptism will say, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Buried with Christ in baptism, and raised to walk in newness of life.”
- If circumstances prevent us from performing a full immersion baptism, we will pour water over the head of the person being baptized.

HELPFUL TIPS FOR YOUR BAPTISM

- Wear dark shorts & a dark shirt to maintain modesty.
- We’ll supply a T-shirt. Bring a change of clothes, towel, and a bag to hold your wet clothes after you change.
- If you have friends and family visiting to celebrate your baptism, have them sit in the rows in front of the baptistry. We will also stream the baptism on our screens at the front of the sanctuary. If outdoors, there will typically be plenty of room and visibility.

A WORD FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Being the primary spiritual influence in our children’s lives is a big responsibility. When it comes to baptism, we want to encourage you to be discerning and realistic regarding whether your child is ready for baptism.

- If your child wants to get baptized, ask questions. Baptism is a response that follows salvation, so you’ll want to make sure your child understands what they are affirming by asking some of the basics: Can you tell me who Jesus is? What did Jesus do for you?

- If your child has received Jesus into his/her life, make sure they understand what baptism is and what it means. You can review this guide with them, but we also recommend looking up key verses about baptism. A few to start with are Mark 16:16, Romans 6:4, and 1 Peter 3:18.
- Initiate the conversation, but don't dominate it. Let your child ask questions and answer them - even the silly ones.
- Remember that discipleship is not a sprint! Baptism is a key step for every Christian, kids included. But it's possible your child might not be ready and THAT'S OK. Remember, baptism is about your child's faith in Christ, not yours. Let baptism be as meaningful to them as it is for you.

SHARING YOUR STORY

Baptism itself is a public proclamation of faith. For City Alliance, everyone who participates in baptism is asked to declare their faith and share their story of becoming a follower of Jesus.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. - 1 PETER 3:15

To help you prepare for this, follow the prompts below to write a testimony to share before your baptism.

- **How do you know God loves you?**
- **What did Jesus do for you?**
- **When did you choose to accept Jesus as Lord & Savior?**
- **What does it mean for Jesus to be your Savior and Lord?**
- **How do you see God at work in your life?**
- **Who has helped you learn to follow Jesus?**
- **Why do you want to be baptized?**

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