

The Importance of Baptism Transcript

Welcome to this study on the importance and meaning of baptism! We rejoice that you have made a commitment to Jesus Christ, and we want to do all that we can to help you grow as a Christian. Ever since the time of Christ, one of the important ways that believers have demonstrated their commitment to Jesus has been through the act of baptism. You may be wondering exactly what baptism is, why it is important, and whether it is something that you should do. I hope to answer some of your questions over the course of these next few pages.

First of all, **Why Should I Be Baptized?**

1. To follow the example set by Christ. Write in the word Christ.

Mark 1:9 says: “At that time Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river. Why was Jesus baptized? In order to save Him? No, He didn't need to be saved. He was perfect. Baptism doesn't save you. It is a symbol of obedience and it's an example that we are to do what He has done.

2. Because Christ commands it. Write in commands.

Matthew 28:19-20 is often called the “Great Commission. Before Jesus returned to heaven after His resurrection, he said: “Go then, to all people everywhere and make them my disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and then teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

There are three things that Christ commanded us to do in the Great Commission: make disciples, baptize them, and teach believers to obey everything that Christ commanded us. We don't believe that baptism is essential for salvation. For example, when Jesus told the thief on the cross that he would be with Him in paradise, there was no time for him to be baptized with water! It is, however, an important step of faith and obedience that once we have accepted Christ as our Savior, we should obey His command: “If you love me, obey my commandments.” **John 14:15 (NLT)**

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock... But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.” **Matthew 7: 24, 26 (NIV)**

3. It demonstrates that I really am a believer. Write in the word believer.

Look at **Acts 18:8**: “...many of the people who heard Him believed and were baptized.”

And **1 John 2:3** says, “We know that we have come to know Him, if we obey His commands.”

Baptism doesn't make you a believer — it shows that you already believe. Baptism does not “save” you, only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring — it's the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart.

A wedding ring doesn't make me married, it is a symbol of a commitment that I made that made me married. One day I made a commitment to my wife before God and a bunch of people and I said "I do" and I gave my life to her in front of God for the rest of my life. That commitment is what makes me married, not the ring. If I were to lose this ring, I'd still be married. What this is, is an outward symbol of an inward commitment.

That's what baptism is. Baptism doesn't make you a Christian. It's just an outward symbol of an inward commitment. It is your commitment to Christ that saves you. Baptism just says to the world, "I'm not ashamed to tell the whole world what's happened to me. I've given my life to Christ." A little boy asked one time, "Pastor, when can I get advertised?" I like that. That's what baptism is. Baptism is an advertisement for Jesus. It's saying, "I'm not ashamed of Jesus Christ." Jesus once said, "If you're ashamed of Me in front of the world then I'll be ashamed of you in front of My Father in heaven." I have heard of people who won't get baptized because they don't want to get their hair wet. Are they that ashamed of Jesus Christ? The Bible says, "We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands." How do you prove you're a Christian? You obey His commands. One of His first commands is, Be baptized.

Now, let's look at **the meaning of baptism?**

1. It illustrates Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Write in the words death, burial, and resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 says: **"Christ died for our sins... He was buried...and He rose again."**

And **Colossians 2:12** says: **"For when you are baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ."**

We suggest that you be baptized the way they did it in the Bible -- putting people all the way under the water. It is a symbol of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Just like Jesus Christ died and was buried in the ground for three days and then rose again.

2. It illustrates that you now identify yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ. Write down identify.

Galatians 3:27 says: **"For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."**

3. It illustrates my new life as a Christian. Write in new life.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says: **"When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. The old life has passed away and a new life has begun!"**

Baptism illustrates the Gospel without words. When you are brought up out of the water, you are illustrating that you have died to your old life and are now a new creature in Jesus Christ!

Romans 6:4 says: **"By our baptism then, we were buried with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead...so also we may live a new life!"**

Ephesians 2:8-9 says: **"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith...it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast."**

In the New Testament, just about every record of a conversion is followed by a baptism. It was automatic. You were baptized as soon as you gave your life to Christ. It doesn't make you a Christian, it shows you already believe. Baptism is not essential for salvation. The Bible does not teach that. Jesus told the thief on the cross that he would be with Jesus in paradise. That thief didn't have any opportunity to get dunked!

Next, we want to talk about **why we Baptize People By Immersion.**

There are lots of modes or ways to be baptized. There are some churches that sprinkle a little water on your forehead. Some pour a little water. Some dip a little bit. Other churches put you all the way under the water. Why do we believe and practice that you should be baptized by immersion? Four reasons.

1. Because it seems that Jesus was baptized that way. Write down Jesus.

Look at **Matthew 3:16**: “As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water.”

We want to do it the way they did it in the Bible. John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the river. He set the example.

2. Other baptisms in the Bible follow this pattern. Write down Bible.

One example is found in **Acts 8:38-39**: “...then both Philip and the man went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water...”

3. The word “baptize” means to “dip in water”. Write in the word dip.

The Greek word is βαπτίζω (baptízō).

4. It best symbolizes Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection! Write down death, burial, and resurrection.

Romans 6:3-4 says: “Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 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.”

The founders of many denominations agree:

Martin Luther...“I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies.”

John Calvin...“The word ‘baptize’ signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.”

John Wesley...“Buried with Him, alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church.”

All these leaders agreed, whether they did it or not, that this is the way they did it in the Bible. In fact, there is even a trend in the Catholic Church now to go back to baptism by immersion. Some people in our church are former Catholics. They and others have been re-baptized. I myself chose to be re-baptized as an adult. If you were baptized as a child or as a baby, I'm sure that was very significant for your parents, but you may not even remember it. So it didn't mean anything to you. Many people in that situation who become have decided to get re-baptized as adults after they accepted Christ. This is not a baptism of confirmation but a baptism of confession. "I want the world to know I'm a follower of Christ." And you can't do that until after you are a follower of Christ.

IV. Who Should Be Baptized?

1. Every person who has believed in Jesus Christ and repented of their sins. Write down “believed” and “repented”.

Baptism is an important step in your Christian life and it should follow your having repented of your sins and placing your hope of eternal life in our Savior, Jesus Christ. Notice the inspired record of the early church as it is recorded in Acts:

Acts 2:37-38 says: “Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’ And Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

And **Acts 2:41** says: “Those who believed and accepted His message were baptized...”

And in **Acts 8:12** it says: “But when they believed Philip as he preached the Good News...and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

The Bible teaches “believer’s baptism”. Obviously, many denominations do baptize children, but nowhere in Scripture do we find an example of children being baptized. Many evangelical churches believe it is better to wait until children are old enough to believe and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them. We do, however, encourage the *dedication* of young children in a public service of the church. This ceremony is intended to be a covenant between the parents and God on behalf of the child. The parents promise to raise their child in the faith until the child is old enough to make his own personal confession of Christ. This is different from the baptism talked about in the Bible, which was only for those old enough to believe. The purpose of baptism is to publicly confess your personal commitment to Christ.

We encourage all believers to be baptized, so if you have not been baptized since your conversion, we strongly urge you to pray about it and ask the Lord if this is a step of faith that He would have you do.

Now, let’s look at **When You Should Be Baptized**.

As soon as you have believed! Or as soon as you realize its importance. Maybe you've been a believer for a while but you didn't realize how important it was. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." In Acts it says:

Acts 2:41 says: “Those who believed...were baptized...that day!”

And look at **Acts 8:35-38**: “Then Philip began with the scripture and told him the Good News about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the man said, ‘Look, here is water! Why shouldn’t I be baptized right now?’ Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ The man answered, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So they went down into the water and Philip baptized him.”

There's nothing special about the water. The water in the lake is not holy. What is holy is the faith of the people. It's not where you're baptized. It's why you're baptized -- to publicly say, "I am an adult consenting follower of Christ."

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. If you wait until you are “perfect”, you’ll never feel “good enough”!

Finally, let’s consider some **Common Questions about Baptism**

1. Can my family be baptized together?

Yes! If each family member understands fully the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his or her trust in Christ for salvation, we encourage families to be baptized at the same time. It is a wonderful expression of commitment. All we ask is that you sit down and have a meeting with the pastors. We’ll explain to you what it’s all about.

However, it is important to remember that baptism is a personal statement of faith, not a family tradition. It is usually not wise to delay your baptism while waiting on other family members to accept Christ, particularly children. This puts an undue pressure on them, and delays your obedience.

2. What should I wear when I am baptized?

Come dressed for your baptism or allow adequate time to change clothes after you arrive. Wear something modest and comfortable. Women: You’ll want to avoid wearing light-colored or transparent tops. Since restrooms may be unattended, please leave items of value, such as watches and rings, with family or friends. Bring a towel, a change of clothes, and a plastic bag for your wet clothes. Plan to arrive early and check with the pastors about any last-minute details.

3. Will I have to say anything?

Yes. We encourage everyone who is baptized to share a brief testimony to those in attendance, sharing what Christ has done in your life.

We also encourage you to invite friends and relatives to your baptism.

4. Special Needs?

The pastors can perform a private baptism in special circumstances.

We would be happy to do that for you. For instance, if you're petrified of water or if you have a disability or needs that would require special circumstances, we can adjust the normal procedures. And if necessary, we can also do private baptisms. We are understanding and sympathetic.

Another that we've been asked is: Is it ok to be baptized more than once? Sure. For instance, a wife was baptized when she gave her life to Christ but now her husband has become a Christian and she wants to be baptized again with him. That's great! There is nothing in Scripture that says you can only be baptized once. If you have other questions, please let us know—we'd be happy to meet with you.

We hope that this study has helped you in your understanding and decision about being baptized as a symbol of your obedience to Jesus Christ! It would be our privilege to baptize you—please let us know of your decision and we'll talk about when your baptism will be scheduled. We encourage you to write out your testimony on the final page of this study guide and pray about sharing it with others. Romans 10:9-10 tells us “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

We pray that this will be the beginning of a wonderful new life of growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord!