

THE IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM



FIRST MISSIONARY CHURCH

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM

I. Why Should I Be Baptized?

1. To follow the example set by _____.

“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river.” Mark 1:9

2. Because Christ _____ it.

“Jesus 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.’” Matthew 28:19-20

“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 _____.

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

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

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.

“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.” Ephesians 2:8-9

II. What is the meaning of baptism?

1. It illustrates Christ's _____.

“Christ died for our sins... He was buried...and He rose again.” 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

“For when you are baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ.” Colossians 2:12

2. It illustrates that you now _____ yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ.

“For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Galatians 3:27

3. It illustrates my _____ as a Christian.

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

“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!” Romans 6:4

III. Why Be Baptized By Immersion?

1. Because it seems that _____ was baptized that way.

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

2. Other baptisms in the _____ follow this pattern.

(Example) *“...then both Philip and the man went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water...” Acts 8:38-39*

3. The word “baptize” means to “_____ in water”.

The Greek word is βαπτίζω (*baptizō*).

4. It best symbolizes Jesus’ _____!

“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.” Romans 6:3-4

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.”

IV. Who Should Be Baptized?

1. Every person who has believed in Jesus Christ and repented of their sins.

“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.’” Acts 2:37-38

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

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

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.

V. When Should I Be Baptized?

As soon as you have believed!

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

“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.” Acts 8:35-38

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”!

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. Everyone who is baptized is asked to share a brief testimony with those in attendance, telling what Christ has done in his or her life. Suggestions on how to prepare a testimony are found on the last page of this study. Please write out your testimony and return it to me by _____.

Suggestions for How to Share Your Testimony

Romans 10:9-10 (NIV) is a clear statement about the importance of sharing about what Jesus Christ has done in your life: “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.”

Testimonies are an opportunity to strengthen your commitment, encourage other believers, and share your faith with nonbelievers. Your testimony need not be long—just share from your heart. You may find the following questions helpful to answer as you prepare.

When did you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?

Describe your life before you knew Jesus in a personal way.

How did you discover that you needed a Savior?

How has Jesus changed your life?

I know I have eternal life because...