

baptism

I AM NEW

WELCOME

The New Testament records two ordinances instituted by Jesus: The Lord's Supper and Baptism. An ordinance is a commanded practice by Jesus for his followers to remember and proclaim the truth of who he is, what he has done, and what he will do.

Baptism is going public about your faith and what Jesus has done in your life. Since you're here today, you've likely experienced the grace, power and love of Jesus in your life. Today you'll learn:

- What the Bible says about baptism.
- What will happen on the day of your baptism.
- How to prepare your personal faith story.

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

THE PATTERN OF BECOMING A CHRISTIAN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

By God's grace and power, there is a pattern in the New Testament of people hearing the gospel and then responding to it by repenting, believing in Jesus and then being baptized (Acts 2:37-41; Acts 8:30-39; Romans 10:14-17).

It's the same pattern today. When you hear the gospel, the good news about Jesus, repent, and believe in Jesus, you are born again and are considered a new creation. This means you have been washed and cleansed from your old life and sins; and now, you are a new person, with a new heart, a new life, united to a new Savior, living for a new Lord, adopted into a new family, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 3:8; Romans 6:3-4; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 2:11-14; Titus 3:4-7; Gal. 4:4-7). Based on God's grace and your faith in Jesus, you have a new personal life with him.

BAPTISM IS AN INITIAL, PUBLIC SIGN OF YOUR NEW PERSONAL FAITH AND LIFE

It's a **sign**. By a sign, baptism signifies your new relationship with Jesus. It functions as an illustration or picture of what Jesus has done in your life. By going under the water, it illustrates your death to your old life, and coming out of the water, illustrates your new life with Christ. In effect, you are announcing: "I am not just a better person; in fact, I am a new person because of Jesus Christ." In this way, baptism is an external sign that points to that inward reality.

It's an **initial sign**. Baptism is one of the first steps of obedience for a Christian. There is a close relationship and timeline between repenting, believing and baptism throughout the New Testament. In this way, it's an initial expression of a person's active and genuine faith in Jesus.

It's a **public sign**. Baptism serves as an announcement to everyone else of God's work in that person's life. While faith in Jesus is a personal matter; it is certainly not a private one. In this public way, baptism communicates two things: first, our devotion to Christ above all else, and second, our forsaking of everything and everyone else.

WHAT BAPTISM IS NOT

Baptism does not save us. People receive salvation by God's grace through faith in the death, blood and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). The water does not wash away our sins. Jesus does that (1 John 1:7). It is his power, not baptism, that gifts you salvation.



Not Guilty!

WHO IS BAPTIZED?

Baptism is for all believers in Jesus Christ who have not been baptized yet as a believer. We wait until children are old enough (age 12) to be baptized.

HOW ARE WE BAPTIZED?

We are baptized in water by immersion. The Greek word “baptizo” means to dip or submerge, so, we immerse in water rather than sprinkle with water. It also captures the meaning of baptism well, symbolizing our death to life experience.

We baptize in the name of our Triune God – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – as Jesus instructed (Matthew 28:19-20).

WHY DO WE BAPTIZE?

It is an act of **obedience** and love toward Jesus. Baptism is an express command of Jesus (Matthew 28:19), and baptism shows our desire and love for Jesus and willingness to obey and follow him above everything and everyone else. This is the first of many ways to listen and obey what Jesus asks of you.

It is an act of **identification** with Jesus and his Church. It's been happening since the New Testament church. All believers, past and present, are part of one body, one Spirit, with one faith; and one God and Father of you (Ephesians 4:4-5). Your baptism lets everyone know who we are for and who you are with. In this way, baptism not only points to people's new life with Christ, but also new life with Christ's body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:4-6).

It is an act of **worship**, as we point people to the glory and greatness of God in Jesus. In this way, our baptisms function as an apologetic for God and his grace, as we declare how he has made us new people through his Son.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

VIDEO TESTIMONY

- Try to memorize your one-minute testimony. At a minimum, practice it several times before you come!
- Bring your written testimony to the taping. We'll display it on the teleprompter, too.
- Start your video script with your name as an introduction.
- Dress casually. No shirt and tie here!
If t-shirts are worn, they should be plain with no logos.
- Don't be nervous! We'll help you through the process.

DAY OF BAPTISM

WHERE TO MEET

Meet 15 minutes before the start of service and sit on the right side of the Sanctuary/East Hall in the first three rows.

WHAT TO WEAR

- the black t-shirt provided by CCC.
- dark pants or shorts. (*Light colors can be see-through!*)
- sandals or flip flops.

WHAT TO BRING

- a towel.
- a plastic bag for wet clothes.
- sandals.
- a complete change of clothes. (*Don't forget underwear!*)
- a hair dryer.

Leave your valuables like your phone, cash and watch at home or with a family member.

WHAT YOU WILL DO

- Follow the pastor up on stage.
- Walk slowly into the pool when directed.
- Let the pastor hold your hand as you walk down the steps into the pool. *(Be careful, it's slippery!)*
- The pastor will pray for you just before you're baptized.
- Exit the pool carefully! A deacon will give you a towel, then you can head to the restroom behind the Sanctuary or Gym Locker Room.

PERSONAL FAITH STORY

As you prepare to write out your story, use this guideline for help. Keep your story to about 200 words. When you read it out loud, it should be about a minute long.

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

WHAT WAS YOUR LIFE LIKE BEFORE CHRIST?

Help people understand your life as a child, teenager, young adult, etc. How did you realize your need for a savior? How did you realize you were a sinner? Include some problem areas in your life, people, scripture or events that helped you realize your need for Christ.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW CHRIST?

Explain how and when you knew Jesus as your savior. Focus on how you surrendered your life to him. Be very clear and specific. Avoid using confusing statements like "I went forward..." or "I was redeemed by the substitutionary blood of the lamb," etc. Briefly share your personal experience of coming to Christ. Was there a specific person or event that helped you grow closer to your decision?

HOW HAS YOUR LIFE CHANGED SINCE COMING TO CHRIST?

Share how your life has changed. We know that our lives are not perfect, but as Christians we are given a new life in Christ that changes our actions and words and deepens our love for Christ. Be honest and share how your life is different today than it was apart from Jesus. Do you have more joy or peace? Have relationships been restored?
