

WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

What does the term “baptism” mean?

Here is a definition of Baptism from biblical times: to immerse, plunge, to dip in or under, to sink, to drown, to bathe. It was originally used of a cloth that was immersed in order to dye it.

What is baptism?

Here is how Paul pictured what happened when you came to Christ:

“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.”

Romans 6:3-6

When you came to Christ, you became linked with Christ. Your old self died along with its wants, will, and passions. Then God re-created you (2 Corinthians 5:17). Baptism pictures this reality. As you go under the water it symbolizes Christ’s death. As you come up out of the water it pictures Christ’s resurrection. As you participate in baptism you identify with Christ in these actions.

So, baptism is an outward showing of what has already taken place in the heart of someone who has received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Through baptism we identify with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Symbolically, we die to our old ways, and we rise out of the water in newness of life.

Why should we be baptized?

As Jesus was preparing to leave His disciples He gave to them important instructions.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20

Jesus challenged them to go throughout the world and make “disciples” or followers of Christ. With these followers they were to first baptize them. The first step for every follower was to be baptized to demonstrate their initial identification with Christ. When we as believers participate in baptism, we are declaring publicly that we have placed our faith in Jesus Christ. We are now followers of Him for the rest of our lives. So the first reason to be baptized is to be obedient to the Christ’s command and to publicly demonstrate our identification with Him.

Another reason to be baptized is because it is the pattern in the New Testament.

Throughout the book of Acts we see people become a follower of Christ and their immediate response is to identify themselves to Him through baptism. Here are a few of the accounts:

So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. Acts 2:41

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. Acts 8:35-38

They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. Acts 16:31-33

The pattern of the New Testament is that someone hears the gospel, responds in repentance and faith, and is identified with Christ through baptism.

Is there anything "special" about baptism?

The simple answer to the question is no. There is no magic, special water, or secret ceremony. It is an outward demonstration of your inward transformation. However, for many people they cannot point to a day and time when they became a Christian. For them, baptism can become a "sign-post" in their life. It is a time they can look back and see where God has brought them and commit to following Him for the rest of their life. They may not remember when they came to Christ but they can remember the day they were baptized.

Does baptism save me?

Some passages have been wrongly used to teach that you must be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:15-16; 1 Peter 3:21). However, if we look at the context of these scriptures as well as the rest of scripture we find that we can do nothing that will save us.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

Our salvation is God's gift that we receive through our trust in Christ and what He did. In Scripture, baptism is closely linked with salvation but it is never requirement of salvation.

If I was baptized as an infant, should I be re-baptized?

Yes, since biblically, baptism is a symbol of what has taken place in us by placing our faith in Christ. As an infant, you did not make a decision to follow Christ. To demonstrate your desire to follow Christ we encourage you to be "re-baptized".

On the day of your baptism:

- Wear a swimsuit and shirt. We encourage you to think modestly.
- Bring a towel and a change of clothing.
- If at church, it will be during the service. If at the beach, it is usually done around 3:00PM on Sunday afternoon.
- Because this is a profession of faith and a testimony to the decision you have made to be a follower of Christ, we recommend that you invite any and all who you would like to be a witness to your decision (family, friends, neighbors, co-workers) including those that aren't followers of Christ.

What will happen?

You will be asked the following questions and then dunked into the water (either in the spa or in the ocean). Be ready answer these questions. Feel free to write out your answer.

- How and when did you become a follower of Jesus Christ?
- What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus Christ (a Christian)?
- Why do you want to be baptized?
- What is the best thing about being a Christian?

Please let us know if you are afraid of speaking in public or afraid of the water. We will do what we can to help you.

To schedule a date to be baptized, contact Ceci@bridgechurch.us