

PREPARING FOR WATER BAPTISM

Why should I be Baptized?

It is one of the two ordinances Jesus has told us to do. (The other being Communion.) (Ordinances are activities we do out of obedience because Jesus Christ told us to. He has ordained them.)

Matthew 28:18-20

“The Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Jesus chose to be baptized as an example to us. (Matthew 3:13-16; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21; John 1:31-34)

Baptism is symbolic of the spiritual occurrence that happens at the time of salvation:

- Immersion symbolizes the old life has died. The old world is gone.
- Being raised up symbolizes the resurrection of a new spiritual life.
- It also publicly states “I believe in Jesus Christ!”

Colossians 2:12

“Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.”

What should I wear and bring to the baptism?

Bring dark colored shorts/pants and a dark colored t-shirt that can get wet. Bring a towel and water shoes or shoes that can get wet. There are facilities to change your clothes at the church or when we do an outdoor lake/river baptisms.

What will I be asked to do?

Come prepared to share a short testimony of WHY you wish to be baptized. All baptism participants will be asked why they wish to be baptized before the actual process begins. This is your opportunity to declare your salvation experience in a brief few sentences. You will also answer a set of simple (Yes/No) questions based on the creed, before being baptized that clarify you understand and trust in Jesus. It's not a test, just a confession of belief.

Romans 10:10

“For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.”

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Jesus, Matt. 10:32).

Other questions regarding Water Baptism:

Do you need to be baptized before you can receive the Holy Spirit?

No

Acts 10:47-48

“Then Peter said, “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.”

Ephesians 1:13-14

“Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.”

Is there a time limit (from the time of your salvation) to when you should be baptized?

As soon as you can.

Acts 2:38a

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ”

Do I need to be immersed if I have been sprinkled as an infant?

Evangelicals commonly agree that belief comes before baptism. Discipleship is an act of obedience and choosing to follow Jesus is an act of the head and heart. It’s not something someone else can do for us. Being in the New Covenant is different than being born under and in the Old Covenant. Being in Christ involves placing one’s full trust in the saving life, truth and work of Jesus. Knowledge of salvation should precede trusting in that salvation. We are calling people to know, understand and trust in the teachings and person of Jesus. If one is unable or unwilling to commit to the truth of the gospel, they are probably not ready to publicly identify and confess to be dead to their old life and raised to new life in Jesus, of which being immersed and raised up out of the water reflects.

Mark 16:16

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Does this verse mean that I am not saved unless I am baptized?

No. Read the end of the verse, those who do not believe are the ones who will be condemned.

Can you go to heaven without being baptized?

Yes.

Why do we say, “In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit”?

Because that is the way Jesus asked us to:

Matthew 28:18-20

“Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

This statement reminds both the new convert and other believers that salvation and the Christian life that follows are possible only through the working of the entire Godhead.

How will baptism affect my faith?

As an act of obedience, your faith will grow and be challenged. Publicly identifying as a follower of Jesus has implications spiritually, privately and publicly. Baptism is a public testimony and symbolizes that our faith is not a private affair but a public announcement of the good news for all found in the saving love and work of Jesus.

What happens if you walk away from your faith and then return, do you need to be re-baptized?

No, not necessarily. However, some adults do chose to do this as their own expression of rededication. This is something that should be discussed with a leader or pastor to further explore the reasons behind the possible re-baptism.

Baptism focuses on the death, burial, resurrection of Jesus Christ and what it has permanently accomplished for us through faith but there are other very important ongoing aspects of baptism that should be explored further through discipleship and teaching (inclusion into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), understanding complete forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7), reckoning ourselves dead to sin (Romans 6:5-11), implications and privileges of being seated in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 2:6), the power for ministry in the spirit by the resurrection life of Jesus (Romans 8:11).