



BAPTISM CLASS

WHAT DOES BAPTISM MEAN?

We believe the Bible presents baptism as an outward witness of an inward faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

Christian baptism is an act of obedience to the command of Jesus, declaring the believer's faith in and identification with their crucified, buried, and risen Savior. It is a visible declaration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The believer being baptized is immersed beneath the waters in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which expresses the believers' death to sin and the burial of their old life and then brought out of the water, which expresses the believers' resurrection to a new kingdom life in Christ Jesus. Furthermore, baptism identifies a Christian with Jesus, the universal church, and the local church. Jesus commanded that all Christians be baptized. The apostles commanded that all Christians be baptized, which explains why the book of Acts and records of the early church show that baptism was practiced consistently.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

The consistent witness of the New Testament is that someone first believes in Jesus and then is baptized. This is called believers' baptism. Never do we witness the reverse order where someone, such as an infant, is baptized and then later believes in Jesus.

We see six lines of support for this position in the New Testament.

1. In the precursor to Christian baptism, John the Baptizer required that people repent of sin before being baptized. (Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3)
2. Every baptism in the New Testament is preceded by repentance of sin and faith in Jesus. (Acts 2:38–41; 8:12; 9:18–19; 10:44–48; 16:14–15, 29–36; 18:8; 19:1–7; 22:16)
3. Baptism is reserved solely for those people who have put on Christ. (Gal. 3:27)
4. Baptism shows personal identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. This can only happen when someone has trusted in Christ for salvation. (Rom. 6:1–10; Col. 2:12)
5. The Bible does record occurrences where entire households were baptized. (Acts 10:33, 44–48; 11:14; 16:15; 1 Cor. 1:16) In these cases, the Bible also records that each member of these households believed in Jesus and was saved. (John 4:53; Acts 18:8; 1 Cor. 16:15)
6. Both Jesus and his apostles gave the command for disciples to be baptized as an expression of that discipleship. (Matt. 28:19, Acts 2:38)

DO YOU HAVE TO BE BAPTIZED TO BE SAVED?

Salvation is solely a gift given to people whose faith rests in the grace of God to forgive their sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus. For example, when the Philippian jailer asked what was required of him to be saved, Paul did not mention baptism but simply said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus." Likewise, the thief who died on the cross next to Jesus was promised by our Lord that "today you will

be with me in Paradise,” though he had not been baptized. Someone can be unbaptized and yet be a Christian who is destined for heaven.

Nonetheless, even though one can be a Christian without being baptized, a Christian should be baptized. If nothing else, Jesus commanded baptism to show in outward sign the inward covenant relationship we have with him. Similarly, married people are married regardless of whether they wear their wedding ring, which is the outward symbol of their inward covenant relationship. But I, for one, am glad that my wife wears her wedding ring.

Baptism is the biblical way in which we show that by the power of the Spirit, we died to our old way of life through the death of Jesus, and live a new life through the resurrection of Jesus, cleansed from our sin in the same way that water cleanses us from filth. Therefore, being baptized does not make someone a Christian. Not being baptized does not cause someone to stop being a Christian, but a Christian should be baptized.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR BAPTISM CANDIDATES

1. Fill out your baptism application and testimony at www.corechurch.com/nextsteps/baptism. How to write out your testimony:
 - What my life was like before Christ?
 - How I came to Christ?
 - What Christ has done in my life?
2. Sunday morning instructions:
 - Arrive at the church by 10:00am for instructions. We will meet in the front of the auditorium.
 - Sit on the front row on the eastside of the auditorium during the service (this is the side with the ramp leading backstage).
 - Change into your bathing suit/shorts and a dark t-shirt before service.
 - Bring a change of clothes & under garments & a towel.
 - Place your change of clothes & towel backstage.
 - Bring shoes to wear after your baptism (the floor is slick).
 - Leave all your valuables with a family member.
3. When instructed during the service, you will head up the side ramp and behind the stage for baptism. Someone will walk you backstage.
4. After your baptism, please exit down the ramp and out the back of auditorium. Please walk behind the black curtains as to not disturb the other baptisms taking place.