

The Journey... Walk as Jesus Walked

Part 7 – Why Should I Get Baptized?

Selected Scriptures – January 24, 2010

Introduction: A drunk stumbled along a baptismal service on Sunday afternoon down by the river. He proceeded to walk down into the water and stood next to the preacher. The minister turned and noticed the old drunk and said, "Mister, are you ready to find Jesus?" The drunk looks back and says, "Yes, preacher. I sure am." The minister then dunked the fellow under the water and pulled him right back up. "Have you found Jesus?" the preacher asks. "No, I didn't!" says the drunk. The preacher then dunks him under for quite a bit longer, brings him up and says, "Now, brother, have you found Jesus?" "No, I did not, preacher." The preacher in disgust holds the man under for at least 30 seconds this time brings him out of the water and says in a harsh tone, "Friend, are you sure you haven't found Jesus yet?" The old drunk wipes his eyes and says to the preacher... "Are you sure this is where he fell in?"

Transition: We get baptized after finding Jesus! As Christ-followers we obey Him. After looking at Jesus' example of baptism last week, we are led to look at the meaning of Christian baptism today? Is it essential or optional? Should we ever get re-baptized? Is there a proper method, mode, or model? What does it all mean?

I. The Mandate of baptism: Why should I be baptized?

A. Its origin... where did it come from?

1. The Jewish rabbis believe that the first instance of the use of ceremonial cleansing is just prior to the giving of the covenant at Mt. Sinai. They cite the verse *"The LORD also said to Moses, 'Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments'"* (Ex. 19:10) as justification.
2. The Jews had a ceremonial dunking in something resembling a deep bathtub called a mikvah. Archaeologists

find Jewish mikvahs from before and after Jesus' time in Israel. Mikvahs were used to immerse things and people to cleanse them of sinful influence. The Essenes washed daily in their pools to cleanse themselves from sin. Worshipers immersed themselves for ceremonial cleansing before entering upon the Temple Mount. There were mikvahs for the priests, including two reserved for the High Priest. Private homes had these "mikvahs" as well and they would use them for cleansing the dirt from items purchased from Gentiles – items such as dishes and tables (Mark 7:4).

So, when John came baptizing for repentance, people had long since grown used to the idea of baptism being associated with cleansing.

B. It is the **pattern** of the NT:

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts 19:5

1. We do so in obedience to God's Word.

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

2. In fact, among Jesus' last recorded words on earth were:

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...." Mark 16:16

3. It is an ordinance/command that Jesus made for His Church

"Make disciples....baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." Matt. 28:19-20

C. It is our **public** declaration:

For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

1. It is an outward ceremony of an inward profession of faith. It is our public identification with Jesus Christ.

“having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” Colossians 2: 12

A wedding ring is an outward sign that a person is married. A military uniform is an outward sign that a person is involved in that particular branch of service. Similarly, water baptism is a symbol designed by God to identify a person as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

II. The Meaning of Baptism

- A. It is a **declaration**: It demonstrates a “break” with the old life. It is a “declaration of dependence” on the Lordship of Christ

Quote: The word *Baptidzo* means to immerse or dip. The clearest example that shows the meaning of *baptizo* is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be ‘dipped’ (*bapto*) into boiling water and then ‘baptized’ (*baptizo*) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptizing the vegetable, produces a permanent change. Christ is saying that mere intellectual assent is not enough. There must be a union with Him, a real change, like the vegetable to the pickle!

- B. It is a **symbol**:

It is intended to portray the truth of the gospel! It illustrates and is symbolic of our identification with CHRIST and His death on the cross.

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. Romans 6:3-4

- Christ died for our sins

- He was buried
- He was raised on the third day
- He appeared (1 Cor. 15:3-5)

C. It **identifies** believers as part of His CHURCH

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:13

1. When you receive Christ as your Lord and Savior, you are placed into the body of Christ. This makes us a part of the universal church or Body of Christ.
2. We also receive the Holy Spirit at salvation, not at our water baptism. The Holy Spirit indwells us right now as believers.
3. **The Church:** We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. (EFCAs Statement of Faith)

D. What baptism does **NOT** do...

1. **Save you!** You are not SAVED by being baptized. What Jesus did on the cross saved you!

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name." John 1:12

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16

"God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it." Eph. 2:8-9

2. It does not grant or **impart saving grace** as the Catholic Church asserts. Impart any spiritual benefit or blessing. It isn't a sacrament.

Sacrament: *a formal religious act in which the actions and materials used are the channels by which God's grace is communicated, either actually or symbolically.*

Cause or perpetuate the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Secure eternal destiny or confirm, seal or complete your salvation. Pagan: For the dead... Mormons

3. **Spiritually cleanse** you, though you will feel great once you do! In and of itself produce any spiritual change, but only is evidence of those changes.
4. Doesn't make you a **better** Christian but it does mean you are an **obedient** Christian!

III. The Model of Baptism

- A. **Quickly**: People didn't wait long to be baptized. They made a profession of faith and then did it!

Ethiopian Eunuch: 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 8:36-38

Saul: And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized; Acts 9:18

- B. **Publicly**: I see no private baptisms in the Bible. It is done in front of believers and non-believers.

Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard, were believing and being baptized. Acts 18:8

- C. **Communally**: Whole families were baptized at the same time. It may have not included underage children, but did include slaves, and extended family members.

A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household had been baptized... Acts 16:14-15

Philippian Jailer: And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and his entire household. Acts 16:33

*Yes, I also baptized the household of **Stephanas**; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else. 1 Corinthians 1:16 (NIV)*

Conclusion: The idea of an **unbaptized** Christian is simply not entertained in the New Testament. FF Bruce

IV. The Mode of Baptism

A. Is there one proper method?

I believe that immersion not only is the most accurate but most biblical mode. It fits the symbolic analogy of His death, burial and resurrection best.

In the early centuries sprinkling was reserved for the sick or those too weak to receive public baptism by immersion or pouring. The Christian church knew no form of baptism but immersion until the Middle Ages, when the practice of sprinkling or pouring was introduced by the Roman Catholic church – which itself had previously always baptized by immersion. The Catholic church did not recognize other modes until the **Council of Ravenna, held in France in 1311**. Thus, sprinkling was not accepted in general usage until the thirteenth century

It was from the Catholic church that Lutheran and Reformed churches inherited the form of sprinkling or pouring. The Church of England did not begin the practice of sprinkling until 1645. The Eastern Orthodox church has never permitted any mode but immersion.

B. What about infant baptism?

Infant baptism is practiced by Catholic, Anglican, Episcopal, Methodist, Lutheran and Presbyterians. Each does it for various reasons, but we have no evidence of the practice in the NT.

It is related to covenant theology. In Israel infants were circumcised and thereby brought into the believing community, so infant baptism is the counterpart of circumcision, which brings the infants into the Christian community.

We believe that modern-day baby dedication is a more appropriate analogy for today. We believe that the person should be able to profess their faith, own it for themselves and make a conscious decision. What if you were baptized as an infant? I would get re-baptized as an adult believer.

C. [Should you ever be rebaptized?](#)

Yes, if you were baptized as unbeliever, an infant, or if you didn't really know why you got baptized the first time.

D. [Why would you choose not to be baptized?](#)

If you had a physical ailment that prohibited it (hydrophobia, on your death bed, incapacitated). In that case, I would pour as an acceptable alternative.

E. [What does our denomination teach?](#)

We believe it is very important! Some denominations require it for local church membership. Our church does not require baptism for membership, nor is it required for salvation.

The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer. (EFCFA Statement of Faith)

V. **Wrap-up and conclusion: Baptism is all about life change. When God gets a hold of your life, He changes you!**

[Pat Summerall](#) spent 50 years with the National Football League. He was drafted by the Detroit Lions in 1952 and played with the Chicago Cardinals and New York Giants until 1961. After his retirement from the game, he joined CBS as a broadcaster and in 1993 switched to Fox. During his CBS years, he and a fellow broadcaster partied hard off the field. "I was the first guy at the bar and the last to leave." Summerall was told that if he kept on

drinking he was going to die. After checking himself into the Betty Ford Clinic, his counselor urged him to seek a better life through faith in God. At age 66, Pat Summerall became a Christian and was baptized. In USA Today he told a reporter that when the minister "leaned me back in the water, I never felt so helpless." Summerall testified, "I knew I had become a Christian. I can't tell you how great life has been since then."

Table Talk:

1. What are the differences between John's baptism, Jesus' baptism, and our baptism today?
2. If you haven't been baptized, what is keeping you from doing it? Talk with your kids about baptism and go for it!

Sneak Peek:

Next Sunday, January 31 is our **State of the Unity Sunday**. This is a must-attend Sunday! We will bring in outside help for KidVenture so that every adult can be in the service. If Moorpark Ev Free is your home, then please do whatever it takes to be early to church next week. We will share some very important announcements, as well as some exciting news about our future.

In preparation for next week please read I Corinthians 12:12-27 and Ephesians 4:1-3...

1. What do these passages teach about unity in the church?
2. List the characteristics or elements of a "body" (church) that is "*walking in a manner that is worthy*".