

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING BAPTIZED

I. Why should I be baptized?

1. To follow the example set by Jesus

Mark 1:9 (NIV) *At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.*

2. Because Christ commanded it.

Matt 28:19-20 (NIV) ¹⁹ *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."*

3. It demonstrates that I really am a believer.

Acts 18:8 (NIV) *and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.*

1 John 2:3 (NIV) *We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.*

II. What is the meaning of baptism?

1. It illustrates Christ's burial and resurrection.

1 Cor 15:3-4 (NIV) ³ *Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day.*

Col 2:12 (NIV) *having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.*

2. It illustrates my new life as a Christian.

2 Cor 5:17-18 (NIV) ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation

Rom 6:4 (NIV) We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Eph 2:8-10 (NIV) ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

III. Why should I be baptized by immersion?

1. Because Jesus was baptized that way.

Matt 3:16 (NIV) As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.

2. Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion.

Acts 8:38-39 (NIV) ³⁸ Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water...

The Word “baptize” means “to dip under water”. The Greek word *baptizo* means, “to immerse or dip under water.”

3. It best symbolizes a burial and resurrection!

The founders of denominations agree:

Lutheran:

Martin Luther... “I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies.”

Presbyterian:

John Calvin... “The word ‘baptize’ signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.”

Methodist:

John Wesley... “Buried with Him, alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church.”

We like to baptize people the way that Jesus was baptized.

This is different from the baptism talked about in the Bible, which was only for those old enough to believe. The purpose is to publicly confess your personal commitment to Christ. At Christian Life Fellowship, we believe that we should be baptized the way Jesus demonstrated, even though many of us were “confirmed” as children.

Every person who has believed in Christ.

Believing should always precede baptism; those who do not believe or are too young to understand should not be baptized.

Acts 2:41 (KJV) Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Acts 8:13 (KJV) Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized,

Acts 8:12 (KJV) *But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*

At Christian Life Fellowship, we wait until our children are old enough to **believe** and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them. Some churches practice a “*baptism of confirmation*” for children. This ceremony is intended to be a covenant between the parents and God on behalf of the child. The parents promise to raise their child in the faith until the child is old enough to make his own personal confession of Christ. This custom began about 300 years after the Bible was completed.

V. When should I be baptized?

AS SOON AS YOU HAVE BELIEVED!

Acts 2:41 (KJV) *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

Acts 8:35-38 (KJV) ³⁵ *Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.* ³⁶ *And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?* ³⁷ *And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* ³⁸ *And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.*

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. If you wait until you are “*perfect*,” you’ll never feel “*good enough!*”

VI. Other Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Can my family be baptized together?

Yes! If each family member understands fully the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation, we encourage families to be baptized at the same time. It is a wonderful expression of commitment. Young children who wish to be baptized are asked to meet with our Children's Pastor for a pre-baptism conversation.

However, it is important to remember that baptism is a personal commitment of faith, not a family tradition. It is usually not wise to delay our baptism while waiting on other family members to accept Christ, particularly children. This puts an undue pressure on them, and delays our obedience.

2. What should I wear when I am baptized?

You should come into church dressed in the clothes you will wear to be baptized in. Shorts and shirt for women/girls are suggested (not swim suit, women should wear a bra under their shirt—not a white shirt). Shorts and shirt for men/boys is suggested. Bring a change of clothes, a large towel, a hair dryer (if you need one), and a plastic bag for your wet clothes. Women can put their change of clothes in the Prayer Room and men can put theirs in the dressing room just up the stairs from the Prayer Room.

3. Where should I be and when?

The baptism will be part of the morning service in the CLF Sanctuary. Please arrive 15 minutes early to the service you will be attending in order to meet with a staff member in the front of the sanctuary the morning of the baptism. A section will be reserved in the front, left section of the Sanctuary for all those being baptized.

4. What will happen the day of the service?

We will ask you to sit in a special reserved section at the left front of the church near where the baptism tank will be located. Toward the beginning of the service, one of our leaders will briefly explain the meaning of baptism from the altar. All those being baptized will have their names called and told to line up at the steps to be baptized. There will be ushers and leaders helping to guide you as well. From there you will be guided up the stairs and you will enter the tank. (Please sit feet forward and cross your arms over your chest with one hand covering your nose and mouth) as a leader lowers you just under the water, and raises you back up and then you can leave the pool. You will exit to the back of the stage. Men will go into the dressing room at the top of the stairs on your left and women will go into the Prayer Room to change into your dry clothes. We encourage you to invite all your relatives and friends to attend your baptism.

5. Special Needs

Private baptisms can be performed in special circumstances.