

Water Baptism

Because we have a lot of people from various denominational backgrounds; there is a lot of different ideas/opinions on the subject of Water Baptism.

Today, after the 2nd service, we will be baptizing several candidates who have made a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I wanted to take this opportunity to share what the Bible says about the meaning and importance of Water Baptism in the life of the church and of the individual Christian in following the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Why is Water Baptism Important?:

- Some of the ideas we have on this subject are tradition.
- Some of them are wrong religious ideas.
- Some have no Biblical founding.

Water baptism was not taken lightly by the First Century Church:

- Both Communion and Water Baptism were public acts.
- Those who participated in these two ordinances of the Church realized there would be a stigma placed on them.
 - They could lose their employment as people boycotted them for their Christian faith. They could lose their fellowship in the synagogue.
 - They could lose their life due to their profession of faith in Christ.
 - There are more Christian martyrs giving their lives for the gospel sake today than ever before.

We, in the 21st century, if not careful, could take for granted that our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world are paying the ultimate sacrifice of their lives by participating in Water Baptism.

Both Communion and Water Baptism remind us of an age old problem we all have with SIN.

- God shows us He is willing to step in and help us with the sin issue of our lives.
 - Rom. 3:23 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- Sin is a common problem for every person living on the planet.

Matt 28:19 Gods remedy for the sin problem:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

- We are charged by the Lord to make disciples/followers of Christ & baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

This scripture and many others shows us the problem of mankind’s sin and that it needs to be dealt with.

Significance of Water Baptism:

1. Water Baptism is a statement of faith:

“That my old life is behind me, and I’m a new person living a new life.”

2Cor. 5:17 “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

Water Baptism is a sign of that very picture!

2. Water Baptism is a sign of repentance:

Repentance is a word meaning “You change your mind.”

- “*Metanoia*” = “A reversal of decision – repentance.”
- A change of 180 degrees, your life was going in one direction, but you have changed your mind and now you are headed in the opposite direction.
- Too many make a change, but in the 180-degree mode; fail to continue in the 180 and go back and make a 360-degree circle and return to the old way of life.
- When and if true repentance has occurred, the new person is supposed to be drastically different than who you used to be.
2Tim. 2:19 “The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal. The Lord knows them that are His. And, let everyone that names the name of Christ **depart** from iniquity.”

Depart = “*aphistemi*” “to remove, desist-stop, desert, draw away from, refrain, withdraw yourself.”

3. **Water Baptism is a public testimony:**

- A way of making a public statement about something that has happened inwardly.
- Make a profession of what has happened internally and personally.

4. **Water Baptism is for your benefit more than for God’s:**

- It’s for the purpose of helping you grasp the reality of the spiritual truth that the old you has died.
- Water baptism is a confession of what Jesus means to you in a public setting.
- Unless a person truly believes they have died to their old self, there is no need for a burial.
- Water baptism states that at a specific date and time you have made a decision and taken an action that you can point to for the rest of your life and say: I have surrendered to Jesus as Lord of my life.

We make special days in our life as milestones – markers to remember and celebrate those events: Birthdays, Weddings, Graduations, Baby dedications, Retirements, Promotions.

- We stop and celebrate and remember those events because our lives were affected and changed at those events.

All of us have a past: things we are not proud of.

Water Baptism is a day when we can point ourselves, the devil and others back to and say: “No, I’m not guilty, that is the day the old me was buried, all things are new and that is not who I am now.”

- What a powerful tool water baptism is in the hand of the believer to point back to in order to deal with the accusations of the enemy.

5. **Water Baptism is a point of separation:**

- Dividing what is old and what is new.

2Cor. 5:17 The old is past and gone.

This implants on the mind of the believer a date for all time to remember and celebrate change in your life.

Examples of Water Baptism in Scripture:

This is a topic that neither Jesus nor the early church was quiet about:

1. Significant enough that even the Lord Jesus choose to be baptized-

- Interesting why Jesus being the perfect Son of God chose to be baptized
 - **He was and is our pattern.**
 - Matt 3:13-17 “Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptize by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?
But Jesus answered and said to him, permit it to be so now, for this it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. The he allowed Him.
When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

- Jesus realized baptism was a part of God’s plan for man’s redemption, so He participated in fulfilling it perfectly.
 - **Jesus sets the example for obedience for all His followers.**
 - Through this act of baptism, Jesus aligns Himself with the life of mankind as sinners.
 - Jesus had meals, conversations, life with sinners to show God loves us.

- **This was not just a teaching point of Jesus, but was a command from Him for His followers:**
 - Being baptized is a command from our Lord Jesus Christ and is not an option-
 - It’s an act God requires of every believer – among Jesus last recorded words on earth are these: Mark 16:16 “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”
 - Jesus puts a lot of significance on baptism.

Baptism follows quickly after a person is born again:

Scriptural model:

1. Acts 2:38 Day of Pentecost – “Then Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
v. 421- “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.”
2. Acts 8:26-40 Philip was led by the Spirit to the desert and encounters the Ethiopian eunuch from the Queen Candace of Ethiopia.
 - Philip ministers Christ to him from Isaiah and he receives Christ; they come upon some water and the Ethiopian asks: “What hinders me from being baptized?”
 - Philip answers: “If you believe with all your heart, you may.
 - Ethiopian answers: “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”
 - V. 38 The chariot stops and they both go down into the water, and he baptized him.
3. Acts 22:16 Paul’s conversion experience led into faith by Ananias:
“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

Acts 10, 16, 18, 19 record other instances of people converted and water baptism.

- There was a sense of quick obedience attached to each of these experiences.
- They all responded to Jesus in simple faith, yet did not see their faith as complete until they obeyed God in water baptism.

**It is a very dangerous practice in life to make something optional
that God has made as a directive!**

- When God gives a directive in His Word, He expects our obedience in that issue. It’s very dangerous when He gives a directive in any area of our lives for us to sit back and say – “it’s optional, because of what we feel or think or our comfort level.
- We start gaging what we are going to do with God’s directionals and make them optional.

Reasons people have said they would not follow God' directional to be baptized:

1. I'm not going to be baptized in water because I don't want people to see me with my hair wet.
2. I don't want to stand up there and say anything because I'm afraid of standing in front of people.

Your personal comforts and vanity are not good reasons to disobey a command and example set by Jesus.

6. Water Baptism is not a religious thing:

This is a command of Jesus; it's not a Catholic or a Protestant thing.

Water Baptism is an obedience thing.

There is a significance to having the public professions in water baptism:

1. Jesus' baptism was very public-
2. When Jesus called Peter to join the disciples – it was a very public thing.
3. When Matthew was called to follow Christ at the city gate – it was a public thing.
4. Every follower Jesus called in the New Testament was done publically.

There is something powerful and necessary for us to answer Jesus' call both in salvation and in water baptism in a public demonstration:

- It needs to be a public announcement of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- **Somehow, we have adopted the idea that Christianity can be lived in the shadows – out of sight. Quietly and privately.**
- But Jesus wants us to do after our lives are given over to Him is a bold profession in a public setting that Jesus is your Lord and Savior and you're going to live for Him regardless of what anybody else does.
- The whole idea of quieting it down and hiding behind the shadows, not letting anybody know that we are Christians – does not line up with the New Testament model of Christianity.

Matt 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”

v. 14 “You are the light of the world, a city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

There is something bold about being a Christian!

When you start off as a Christian in public and give your testimony of your faith in Christ as Savior and Lord declaring – “I’m changed and I’m going to live for Jesus.”

That is the power of proclamation and once you’ve made that one proclamation; it’s easier for you to make it again and again.

Our lives are to have a public impact through our personal relationship with Jesus – is your life doing this?

Questions people ask about Water Baptism:

1. Who should be baptized? Baptism is for the domain of the believer.
 - Acts 2:38 “Repent and be baptized.”
 - You are a candidate to be baptized after you surrender your life to Christ.
2. Should infants be baptized?
 - There is no place in the scriptures that teaches or allows for infants to be baptized.
 - Infants were brought to the temple and are brought to the church to be dedicated to the Lord. We lay hands on them and the parents and bless them.
 - Baptizing an infant is only meaningful to the parent – not the child.
 - We teach Parent/Child dedication because as a parent, you need to dedicate yourself to raising this child in a godly atmosphere and doing all you can to create an atmosphere where this child will be influenced to accept Christ and live a godly life.
 - We do allow children to be baptized **IF** and **WHEN** they are mature enough and have made a personal choice/decision to accept and follow Jesus as their personal Savior.
3. Is baptism a guarantee for Heaven?
 - No, it’s not.
 - Baptism doesn’t have the power to save you – faith in Jesus alone has the power to save you.
 - Baptism is a declaration of an inward change – nothing is special or magical about the water.

- You still have to die to yourself daily and make decisions to follow Christ as your Lord and live an obedient lifestyle.
- You don't get baptized in water and then live however you want to live.
- Baptism is one step of many steps of obedience on your road to serving the Lord.

4. Can I get to heaven without being baptized?

- Am I still ok if I don't get water baptized?
- Yes, you can get to heaven without being baptized – there is scriptural evidence for that. The thief on the cross asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom. Jesus replied – “This day, you will be with Me in Paradise.”
- All the action of the crucifixion didn't stop and allow the man to get baptized.
- But the concern is: “If you are deciding to be baptized on personal comfort reasons instead of being baptized and being uncomfortable in getting wet”; then what you are saying is: “Jesus, I know you suffered for me, died for my sins and I understand You commanded all of Your followers be baptized in water as a means of declaring they belong to Your family. Jesus, I accept Your sacrifice and I accept heaven; but when it comes to making a public declaration – I'll pass!”

You need to think long and hard that you are going to obey God or not based on your comfort or an image level!

5. How should I be baptized?

- According to scripture; water baptism is done by total **immersion**.
- **Baptize** = *baptizo* = “to be immersed, put under, completely surrounded.”
- By baptism, you are saying you are dying to sin, selfishness, the worldly ways; and that there is a public burial of your old life.
- The old part is buried, the new part is raised to walk in newness of life.
- Col. 2:12 “buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God who raised Him from the dead.”

Are you a candidate for water baptism?

1. Have you received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior today?
Have you come to the place in your spiritual life that you know for sure that if you were to die that you will go to heaven?

2. If you have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior; have you followed the Lord in obedience and been baptized in water making a public declaration that you are dying to the old life and living a new life in Christ?