

## Celebrating Baptism

**Thesis:** We are a people who follow the command of Jesus to baptize those who respond to the invitation to follow Jesus.

**Text:** Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:1-11

Intro:

Today, we had the joy and privilege to baptize followers of Jesus.

Baptism is one of two ordinances that Jesus gave to his church: the Lord's Supper and baptism. Together, baptism and the Lord's Supper tell the story of Christ's atoning work. In the Lord's Supper, the death of Christ is acknowledged and proclaimed. In baptism, Christ's burial and resurrection are depicted.

**Regarding the ordinance of the Lord's Supper:** In the Scripture, we read about the Passover Meal which the Lord Jesus shared with his disciples. Jesus reinterprets the Passover Meal and gives us the Lord's Supper. We encounter Jesus at his Communion Table to remember all that he has done for us, all that he is doing, and all that he will do.

By celebrating the Lord's Supper, (1) we remember the Lord Jesus and his sacrifice, (2) we proclaim his gospel, and (3) we prophesy his return (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

**In this message, I want to talk about the why and what of baptism.**

Just before His ascension, Jesus **commanded** us in Matthew 28:18–20 (NIV84), *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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.”*

As we go, we are to **make disciples**. A disciple is a follower. *“It is enough that the disciple becomes like his teacher, and the servant like his master” (Matthew 10:25).*

When someone chooses to respond to the invitation to follow Jesus and to become his disciple, then, they are **marked** by baptism: *“... baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”* So, we are commanded to baptize someone after they become a follower or disciple of Jesus.

Then, we are commanded to **teach** them to follow and obey everything Jesus commanded us.

Here is good news. **We are not doing this work alone:** “*And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*” Jesus is already at work and we respond to the work and the initiative of the Spirit of God. We are a people who join Jesus on his mission in our spheres of influence together with others.

These instructions declare that the church is responsible to make disciples, baptize those disciples, and teach those disciples the words and ways of Jesus. This mission is to be done everywhere, in “*all nations,*” and until “*the very end of the age.*”

**So, if for no other reason, baptism is important because Jesus commanded it.**

Baptism was practiced before the founding of the church. The Jews of ancient times would baptize proselytes to signify the converts’ “cleansed” nature. John the Baptist used baptism to prepare the way of the Lord, requiring *everyone*, not just Gentiles, to be baptized because *everyone* needs repentance. However, John’s baptism, signifying repentance, is not the same as Christian baptism, as seen in Acts 18:24–26 and 19:1–7. Christian baptism has a deeper significance.

Baptism is to be done in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit—this is what makes it “Christian” baptism. It is through this ordinance that a person is admitted into the fellowship of the church. When we are saved, we are “baptized” by the Spirit into the Body of Christ, which is the church. In 1 Corinthians 12:13, we read, “We were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.” Baptism by water is a “reenactment” of the baptism by the Spirit.

**Baptism is a public profession.**

*Romans 6:1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 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. 5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-- 7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we*

*believe that we will also live with him. 9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:1-11).*

Christian baptism is the means by which a person makes a public profession of faith and discipleship. In the waters of baptism, a person says, wordlessly, “I confess faith in Christ; Jesus has cleansed my [life] from sin, and I now have a new life of sanctification.”

Christian baptism illustrates, in dramatic style, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. At the same time, it also illustrates our death to sin and new life in Christ. As the sinner confesses the Lord Jesus, he dies to sin (Romans 6:11) and is raised to a brand-new life (Colossians 2:12). Being submerged in the water represents death to sin, and emerging from the water represents the cleansed, holy life that follows salvation. Romans 6:4 puts it this way: *“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.”*

Very simply, baptism is an outward testimony of the inward change in a believer’s life. Christian baptism is an act of obedience to the Lord *after* salvation; although baptism is closely associated with salvation, it is not a requirement to be saved. The Bible shows in many places that the order of events is 1) a person believes in the Lord Jesus and 2) he is baptized. This sequence is seen in Acts 2:41, “Those who accepted [Peter’s] message were baptized” (see also Acts 16:14–15).

A new believer in Jesus Christ should desire to be baptized as soon as possible. In Acts 8 Philip speaks “the good news about Jesus” to the Ethiopian eunuch, and, “as they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, ‘Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?’ ” (verses 35–36). Right away, they stopped the chariot, and Philip baptized the man.

Baptism illustrates a believer’s identification with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Everywhere the gospel is preached and people are drawn to faith in Christ, they are to be baptized.

(Got Questions Ministries. *Got Questions? Bible Questions Answered*. Vol. 2. Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2014–2021.)

## Why did Jesus get baptized by John the Baptist in Matthew 3:13-17?

*Matthew 3:13–17 (NIV84) 13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” 15 Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented. 16 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. 17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*

Jesus’ baptism was a profound moment with multiple significant purposes. He chose to be baptized to identify with humanity, fulfilling “all righteousness” in response to God’s call and in obedience to divine law [1](#). This act was not about personal sin—Jesus was sinless—but about confessing sin on behalf of the nation and accomplishing God’s mission in the world [2](#).

His baptism served to anoint him for ministry and proclaim his messianic identity. When he emerged from the water, “the voice speaking from heaven” used carefully chosen words that referenced key Old Testament passages, effectively communicating God’s larger purpose in sending Jesus [1](#). This divine proclamation echoed both messianic psalms and prophetic texts, describing Jesus simultaneously as the suffering Servant who would die for humanity and the eternal King who would reign forever [2](#). As one source provocatively notes, if Jesus felt it necessary to obey the Father’s will, “surely none of us are exempt” – and to claim sonship without following his example would be “foolish” [3](#).

1. Preben Vang and Terry G. Carter, *Telling God’s Story: The Biblical Narrative from Beginning to End* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2021), 254–256.
2. Bruce Barton, Philip Comfort, et al., *Life Application New Testament Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2001), 255–256.
3. Mark White, “Baptizing Jesus,” *Christianity Magazine*, ed. Ed Harrell (Jacksonville, FL: Christianity Magazine, 1985).

### Summary:

**Baptism is a sign and a symbol.** It is a **public sign** to everyone that I am a follower of Jesus. It is the **first step of obedience** when we follow Jesus to tell everyone that I belong to the Lord. It is a **public profession** of the Lord Jesus Christ and of what Jesus has done in my life. Now, I am a part of the family of God through Jesus.

**And, it is a symbol.** It is a symbol of what has happened in my life. I have been buried with Christ and raised to walk in newness of life. I have died to the old way of living for myself and am raised to walk in the way of the Lord.

In baptism we follow the **example of Jesus** (Matthew 3:13-17) and the **command of Jesus** (Matthew 28:18-20).

### **What was the Good News which Jesus and the Apostles preached?**

1. **Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom.**
  - a. *After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:14-15).*
  - b. **Jesus preached the good news that the kingdom of God is near.**
    - i. There is a coming kingdom.
    - ii. There is a King.
    - iii. Kingdom means rule or reign.
    - iv. The kingdom of God is wherever God rules and reigns.
2. **What should our response be to the good news that there is a King and kingdom of God?**
  - a. **Repent:**
    - i. To change one's mind and start heading in the opposite direction.
    - ii. We no longer live like we are god or are in charge of our lives. Thy kingdom come; my kingdom go.
  - b. **Believe:**
    - i. We put our faith in the one who is the King of the kingdom.
    - ii. To believe in the Biblical sense is to commit, not just give mental assent or agreement.
3. **Invitation:**
  - a. I wonder if the Lord Jesus is speaking to you today by his Spirit to come and follow Jesus.
  - b. I invite you to respond to what the Lord is saying to you or doing in our life.

**PS:**

Here is a resource or discipleship guide for new followers of Jesus: [Following Jesus](#).

**Ministry Time:**