

## WHAT IS BAPTISM?

SERIES: I LOVE MY CHURCH | WEEK 1 | 8.1.2021

This morning first hour they were lined back to that wall [MOTIONS TO HIS RIGHT] and they just kept on getting baptized, kept on getting baptized, kept on getting baptized, because they wanted to shout out, "I love Jesus," and to tell everyone they know, "I love Jesus. I want to follow Him the rest of my life." If you're not baptized this morning, I'm just gonna ask you: Would you consider making this the day you get baptized?

We just are starting a new series I LOVE MY CHURCH. The church is not just this building, it's not some organization, it's what Jesus put together when He put this thing together of all of us who put our trust in Jesus as part of the family, the family of God. And when we put our trust in Him the first thing that we want to do is get baptized. I can't tell you how many times I've shared the Gospel with someone and they've responded; they just, they knew nothing when I started talking about it and all of a sudden they're like, "I've gotta get baptized!" There's something that the Spirit of God does inside of us that says, "Yes, I'm in. I want to do it."



It's probably... when Jesus talks about it before He leaves this earth, it says at the end of the book of Matthew, He's giving His instructions—go make disciples and when you're making them, I want you to go out and I want you to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And that's what we're going to do this morning. So when Jesus is giving His instructions to the church as to how we're to respond to putting our trust in Him, how we're to respond when we decide to follow Him, His answer is let's baptize, baptize. So He's given that instruction to the Apostles, He's given that instruction to the church, and He's also giving that instruction to you individually to get baptized.

### **MATTHEW 28:16-20 (ESV)**

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, **"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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 that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**

This is the interesting thing, I've talked to a lot of people who aren't that would tell me they've put their faith and trust in Jesus, that they believe in Jesus, that they've had their sins forgiven, that they've repented of their sins, they've turned from their old way of life and are walking in the newness of life, but they're not baptized. And you ask the question: Why is that? Well, sometimes it's just purely they never got around to it and all of a sudden time passed by. Oftentimes people are sort of shy and they think, *Uh, I don't know if I want to do it.* Man, this isn't about shy. In fact, it's not even going to be about the timing or anything to do with that—it's just like going *nooo*. If that's what Jesus wants me to do, I'm in and I want everyone to know I'm in. I want to be a part of this. And that's what we're going to be doing here in a few moments today.

The Bible talks about baptism with two words, the word *bapto*, which means "to dip," it means "to dye," but when I think of dying something it has only a partial effect.<sup>1</sup> When the Scripture uses the word *baptism* it goes even to the next letter, adds a few extra letters to the word *bapto*, and says *baptize*, and when it says *baptizó* it's talking about "to completely submerge, to place under."<sup>2</sup> In fact, the original understanding of the language would have this at a much deeper level of actually being drowned. Actually, it brings to our mind the idea of death when you're thinking of that. And in fact, the picture in

<sup>1</sup> *bapto* – see Strong's Greek at <https://biblehub.com/greek/911.htm>

<sup>2</sup> *baptizó* – see Strong's Greek at <https://biblehub.com/greek/907.htm>

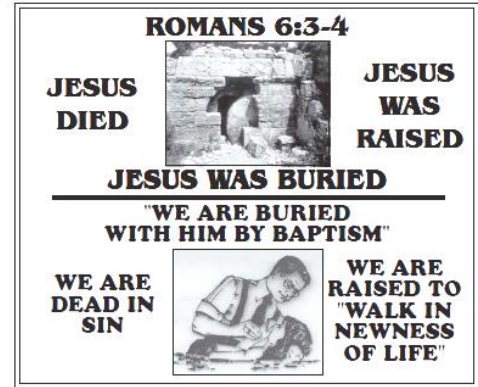
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Scripture of going under the water is that of being united with Jesus in His death. It is a picture of our sins being buried with Him. When we trusted Him we trusted Him to cover our sins, to forgive us of our sins, and so there's this picture of our sins being buried with Him, of us dying with Him, of the old self going away and then coming out of the water with newness of life. The Apostle Paul described this perfectly in the book of Romans, Romans Chapter 6, when he says this:

**<sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.**

– ROMANS 6:3-4 (ESV)



And so Paul pictures this of us being buried with Jesus.

So what we're going to do today, when we do baptisms today you're going to get a very visible picture of His death going underneath the water; His burial, being buried under that water, dying with him; and His resurrection, being raised to newness of life going, "I want to live a new life. I don't want to be who I once was. I don't want to live in those patterns that I once did, because of Jesus I don't have to. His Holy Spirit in me and empowered me to live in a new way.

In the book of Colossians he says a very similar thing, he says:

**<sup>12</sup> having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.**

**<sup>13</sup> And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,**

**<sup>14</sup> by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.**

– COLOSSIANS 2:12-14 (ESV)

We were once dead, we were once separated from Him far away. Our sin had separated us from God but when we came to forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ it made us alive. We come up here, we're going to go into this water here in a few moments, we are sharing with everyone this Gospel message: I was a sinner, I was separated from God, I was dead, I was hopeless, I had no future—but then Christ died for me and I trusted in Him and I was united with Him in that death, and I came up out of that water, I was raised with Him alive to newness of life. Because He died – my sins are forgiven. Because He was raised – I am alive and I can live to newness of life.

Now, please, please, **we want to make really clear today – BAPTISM DOES NOT SAVE YOU.** There are some traditions that have basically linked them together as being one and the same—they're not. The Scripture always pictures baptism as something that takes place *after* we've put our faith and our trust in Jesus and followed Him. Acts Chapter 2, verse 38, says:

**<sup>38</sup> And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

– ACTS 2:38 (ESV)

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Repent and be baptized. There is this response that comes when we repent of our sins, when we say, "Jesus, I am a sinner but You are holy, You are righteous, You died to forgive me," that when we repent of our sins our next response is to be baptized, to unite with Him, to share with everyone what He's done on the inside by acting it out externally in front of the church, the body of Christ. The thing that God has commanded us to do as a church, the thing that He's commanded us to do individually, something that takes place when we all gather together and serve in this way.

The day of Pentecost when the church began 3,000 people were saved.<sup>3</sup> The Scripture tells us that very day 3,000 were also baptized. The Scripture never pictures a believer that's not baptized, that is one and the same. It's – you get saved and you get baptized in response. Ephesians Chapter 4, verse 5, says:

**<sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism,**

**– EPHESIANS 4:5 (ESV)**

They come together, they're not separated. We trust Jesus by faith, we get baptized. One of the things that we just continue to say is baptism does not save you. It's throughout Scripture. The Scripture is clear about that. It is an act that always follows a personal decision to obey Jesus and follow Him. If you have first trusted Jesus as your Savior – then – then you get baptized.

So here's what's gonna happen here in a few minutes. I'm gonna say to you, "If you've trusted Jesus, will you get baptized today?" Every one of you! I mean, whoever of you has never been baptized but you know Jesus as your Savior, I'm going to say, "Will you do that today?" If you do that today, it's saying I have made a choice to follow Jesus and now I'm making this step to obey Him and to follow Him. The Scripture says all of our righteousness – the book of Isaiah, Isaiah 64, says this:

**<sup>6</sup> All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.**

**– ISAIAH 64:6 (NIV)**

All of our righteousness is like filthy rags,<sup>4</sup> so getting baptized just doesn't become another good deed or righteousness. A lot of people get that mixed up and we're like, *Okay, what's the next good thing I have to do? How do I do more things that are right, maybe that'll please God? On our best day the best we can do – it's not enough. Once we trust in Jesus it is God's righteousness that's placed on us. We're no longer in this mode of performing and now we're just responding to Him. What I love about baptism is it is a first step of obedience.*

You may be familiar with Ephesians Chapter 2, verses 8-9, it says:

**<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith.**

— and it goes on to say it's not as a result of works because if it was about works we would boast:

**And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.**

**– EPHESIANS 2:8-9 (ESV)**

The Scripture says this is what it's about: **It's all about Jesus.**

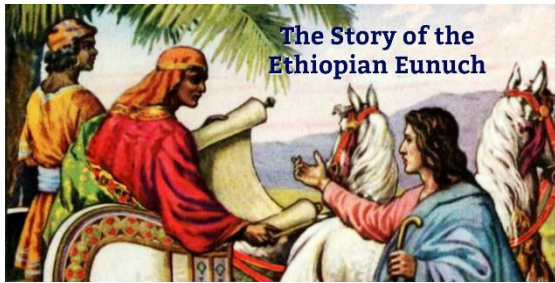
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<sup>3</sup> See Acts Chapter 2

<sup>4</sup> *Why are all of our righteous acts considered filthy rags?* The term "filthy rags" is quite strong. The word *filthy* is a translation of the Hebrew word *iddah*, which literally means "the bodily fluids from a woman's menstrual cycle." The word *rags* is a translation of *begged*, meaning "a rag or garment." Therefore, these "righteous acts" are considered by God as repugnant as a soiled feminine hygiene product. Source: <https://www.gotquestions.org/filthy-rags.html>

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There's a story in the Scripture that talks about Philip, he's one of the Apostles. He's in a chariot and he's with this guy that the Scripture refers to as the Ethiopian eunuch, and as they're traveling down the road Philip is sharing Isaiah 53 with him, which talks about this Savior that's going to come and it explains him, and Philip's explaining Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch.<sup>5</sup> When he does so, as he explains Jesus to him, the Ethiopian eunuch says, "There's water,

what keeps me from being baptized?" And the Scripture says that the chariot comes to a stop. And I can just picture them going down over the hill and Philip takes Ethiopian eunuch in and baptizes him. There is this natural next step now response to saying, "I am saved. I'm going to get baptized," and that's the picture of baptism in the Scripture.

I love that when you think about obedience, especially obedience to God, there's not many places where you can see obedience visibly. You know, when parents have little children you sort of see obedience; you see when they're obeying, you see when they're not. You see when they defy their parents and when they do what the parents say. But as they get a little bit older you can't quite tell, it changes and it morphs a little bit. As a Christian when we look around here today we don't know who's following Jesus Christ in obedience, it's a little harder to visibly see it. But baptism is one of those moments, one of these rare moments, where we as a church get to experience.

I believe it's why it brings so much joy to us when we see baptisms because we see so many people following Jesus in obedience saying, "Yes, I want to do that. I want to be a – yes, I want to take that next step." And we see so much obedience and we know that brings joy to the Father that those who are Spirit-filled following Jesus Christ that brings joy to them to see all sorts of people following in obedience, which is what you're going to get to see here in a few minutes; which is why I'm going to say to you this is a time to just be excited, come out of your seats. That's why the first hour was so thrilled because more and more people kept on getting baptized. We kept on going, Wow! This is exciting." Because we got the opportunity to see people following Jesus Christ in obedience doing what He said to do.

So I'm going to ask you in just a moment to step out of your seat, we're going to sing the next song, I'm going to have you stand up and when we do so I'm going to ask you to just slip over to that door [POINTS TO HIS RIGHT] and go out that door, and when you go outside of that door you're going to tell the person out there and say, "I want to get baptized." And the first thing they're going to ask you is, "Why do you want to get baptized?" Here's the right answer, the right answer is, "Because I put my faith and trust in Jesus alone and I want to tell everyone about it."

Now we've heard of very answer in the book over the years. "I want to turn over a new leaf" – that could mean anything. I've heard, "Well, I've been sober for 30 days and I want to mark my sobriety" – no, not about that. I had one couple one time that wanted to announce their engagement by doing it together – not about that. This is not some religious ritual that we're going to do. This is not some sort of good luck charm. This isn't some sort of a get-to-heaven moment. This is one of these moments where what has already happened inside of you where you put your faith and trust in Jesus and He's forgiven you, where you take that next step of obedience. I oftentimes say it's the first step of obedience.

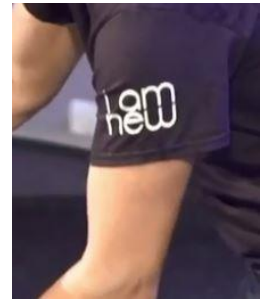
<sup>5</sup> Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch – see Acts 8:26-40

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When I've had the opportunity to lead someone to Jesus, I've been amazed; many people who knew very little about spiritual things, about Jesus, the first thing they say to me is, like, "When can I get baptized?" And it's their first step of obedience going, "I want to do this. I want to do it today." That's sometimes a little bit hard, oftentimes we only do this every few months and sometimes you're not here on that day. And so it's quick that time can go by and you miss that opportunity. If you've put your trust in Jesus, today's the day.

So we're going to ask you to go out through that door when we get up to sing, I'm going to ask you to tell them, "I put my faith and trust in Jesus." They're going to find out a little bit more about that, they're gonna write it down on a little 3x5 card, and then they're going to set you up for baptism. You say, "Well, probably can't do it today because I'm hardly dressed for that today." We thought about that in advance, we have that all solved for you; so we have shorts back there, we have shirts, they're pretty cool, you get to keep the shirt, it says, "i am new" on it. It's awesome. You get to keep the shirt. We even have towels, and I have a feeling we have hair dryers. I don't know if we have mascara, ladies, [LAUGHTER] but I'll let you all figure that out. You can slip out really fast, whatever.



Baptism T-shirt

Some might say, "You know what, I'd love to do that. In fact, something inside of me is saying I need to do that, but I really need my family to be here and of all days this is the one day they're not here, they're upstairs serving right now." I just want to encourage you, when you obey Jesus – you obey Jesus regardless of who's looking, who's watching, and who's in attendance. Obedience of Jesus is when He shows you something to do, you do it and you do it then. That's why this is an awesome first step. It's just this great moment to say, "Okay, I've got to do what He's telling me right now." And there's some of you in here you're like, *This is really weird. I've never really given it much thought. It's that... but I know I put my trust in Jesus.* Right now is the time to do it. And you take away all the excuses, today's the day.

One of the things that we hear really often from people that causes a little tension in this moment is – not sure what to do – is what will my family think? You realize when in that 1st Century when Jesus went and modeled baptism in front of the people, when the people were coming down to the Jordan River to be baptized, there were many people that when they got baptized it meant that their family would reject them. I recognize there are people in this room today that if you make that decision, you make it public and you go public with it, and you get out there with it, you may very well have a family member or a whole family system say, "I don't [GESTURES HAND STOP] – you're not one of us anymore." And one of the pieces of being a disciple of Jesus is shouting out I love Jesus more, I love Jesus more than anything else in my world. He is first and I will obey Him first.

Many people in our local area will say to me oftentimes, "I think I am baptized, my parents baptized me as a kid or as a baby," and there are religious traditions where that is the way things work. But the Bible never pictures an infant getting baptized. That may be the tradition or practice of a church you came from, but you won't find that in your Bible. In the Bible it is always of a person who has put their faith and trust in Jesus, who knows *they* made that decision. And so today I would encourage you, you may be worried about them being upset, mom being upset, grandma being upset – you're already baptized – but that wasn't your decision and that didn't save you.

We do child dedications here one of the things that we say all the time when we do child dedications is child dedication doesn't save your child, you're saying I will commit to raising that child to love Jesus. We as a church pray over that child that at a young age that child will choose on their own to follow

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Jesus and when they choose to follow Jesus then on their own they choose to shout it out to everyone I've put my trust in Jesus. So if you were baptized as an infant and you have since come to know Jesus as your Savior and never been baptized, I would encourage you to get baptized today. And again, in the same way for those of you who don't have family here today and you're like, "Oh, I ought to wait until they're here" – it's not about the family. Hey, look, when you follow Jesus it isn't about what someone did on your behalf when you were a baby, this is about you saying: Jesus, I will be the obedient to You today.

By the way one other little thought, oftentimes we'll have people come back and say hey, listen, I got baptized eight years ago, I got baptized when I was a teenager and I just feel like it didn't take. That's not really quite what they tell me, but here's what they're getting at is between then and now some really bad stuff's happened and I didn't live the way I was supposed to live. And by the way, I appreciate that conviction. I appreciate the fact that your heart is broken that you haven't lived the way you were supposed to live during that time. Again, this is not an activity where we keep doing it till we finally get it right—this is an act of obedience where we follow Jesus in obedience. Our living for God is a day-to-day thing. If you're feeling convicted of sin that's happened in the last year or week or 10 years, the Scripture says God forgives us those sins, we just need to ask Him for it and He washes us white as snow. You don't have to come in and do this again.

We've had people come up here who are really wanting to sort of start afresh—you can start afresh right where you're at. And so I would encourage every one of you who has ever been baptized as an adult where you remember saying, "Yes, I trust in Jesus and I want to get baptized," like so many are going to do here in a minute, if you've been in that spot what I would love for you to do is just take this moment and remember what you wanted when you got baptized when you were here. You want to follow Jesus in obedience. You want to live your life for Him. I'm going to ask you today to just take a moment and just say, "Jesus, I'm in. I want that same feeling back." And seek His face this morning for forgiveness, for renewal in your life, and the excitement that was once there, and just allow the excitement that we have for these people also renew you in this room.

So that's what we're going to do right now. I'm going to say a word of prayer and I'm going to ask any one of you—this is going to be a cool moment, all right?—I'll usually say if not now, when? If you're not going to stand for Jesus in this moment, when will you? If you're not going to step across that line, then maybe I don't really believe this thing. No. Today's the day. I had so many people walking out in the lobby with wet hair after the service last hour going, "I'm so glad I did it. I don't know why I haven't done it sooner." It's the right thing to do. Follow Jesus in obedience this morning and the rest of us are just going to get excited and cheer you on. Let me say a word of prayer and then I'm going to give you the opportunity. Would you stand with me?



Lord Jesus,

Thank You for the way You've saved us from our sins; the way You've changed us from within. Thank You for the cross and what You did for us. And so now, right now, Lord, I pray that as we demonstrate with this outward action what You did internally for us, Lord, I pray they would bring incredible joy to those who follow in obedience. And for those of us watching on that there would just be this moment of reminder that just excites us. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Now listen, right now we're going to ask those of you who are ready to do this just slip out through this door over here, they're wonderful, lovely people, just slip out right now. Don't wait, don't be shy, if you

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wait it won't happen, just come on out. Actually, the last time we did it a year ago it was like someone came running up at the last minute and we said, "Uh-oh, we're like ending." And they're like, "Can I just do it right now in my full clothes?" "Sure." So don't wait, just do it now. We're going to – so many of you moving across there – thank you. It's just exciting to see so many people say, "I want to obey to Jesus."

One more thing, those of you who came prepared to give your tithes and offerings today, thank you, it makes it possible to just continue to get the Gospel message out. There's a box right outside this door on the pole [POINTS TO HIS LEFT], there's a box on the pole straight outside that door [POINTS TO HIS RIGHT] where you can put your offering in, or you can go online and give to the Lord there. Thank you so much for all of you who are giving. Now let's just get excited right now, we're going to see people slipping out, they're going to talk to you over here, and our team is going to lead us right now. God bless you.



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