



SUMMITVIEW
CHURCH

Baptism

“In baptism the form of Christ’s death is impressed upon his own. They are dead to the flesh and to sin, they are dead to the world, and the world is dead to them (Gal 6.14). Anybody living in the strength of Christ’s baptism lives in the strength of Christ’s death.”

[Dietrich Bonhoeffer]

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INTRODUCTION

The decision to be baptized is a foundational decision in the life of a true believer. Throughout the Christian world there are a variety of convictions on the role of baptism in the life of the believer. This resource is intended to bring clarity to what we at Summitview see as the Bible's teaching on baptism.

Why should I be baptized?

1. To follow the **example** set by Jesus Christ.

Mark 1:9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

Matthew 3:14-15 John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.

[J.C. Ryle] "We ought to regard the sacrament of baptism with reverence. An ordinance of which the Lord Jesus Himself partook, is not to be lightly esteemed. An ordinance to which the great Head of the Church submitted, ought to be ever honorable in the eyes of professing Christians."

2. Because Christ **commanded** it.

Matthew 28:19-20 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.

3. It **demonstrates** that I really am a disciple of Jesus.

Acts 18:8 ... and many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized.

1 John 2:3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.

4. To publicly **align** myself with Christ and **acknowledge** him before men.

Matthew 10:32-33 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

What is the meaning of baptism?

1. It illustrates Christ's death, burial and resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 Christ died for our sins ... He was buried ... and he rose again.

Colossians 2:12 ... 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.

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2. It illustrates my new life in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Romans 6:4 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.

3. It symbolizes the cleansing and washing away of sin.

Hebrews 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Acts 22:16 And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.

Matthew 23:25-26 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean."

Baptism doesn't make you a believer—it is a proclamation of allegiance to Christ and trust in the gospel. Baptism does not "save" you, only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring—it's the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Who should be baptized?

Every person who has put his or her **trust** in Christ for salvation.

Acts 2:41 So those who received his word were baptized ...

Acts 8:13 Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip ...

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the Good News about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

At Summitview, we wait until we **understand the gospel** and the **true meaning of baptism** before we get baptized. We defer to parental discernment on when children are ready to be baptized.

There are always seasons of growth and greater times of maturity in our lives as believers, but we should not be re-baptized each time a new experience of greater joy or sanctification is met. Regardless of our maturity at the time, if you have been baptized as a born-again, Christ-trusting believer, then there is no need to be baptized again.

We recommend that you be baptized again only if you have not been baptized by immersion since you became a believer. It doesn't devalue a prior experience. Rather it reflects your desire to be baptized in the same way that Jesus was baptized and follows the New Testament pattern of baptism after believing.

Is baptism necessary for church membership?

Baptism is necessary for acceptance as a member of Summitview Church. As stated earlier, baptism is an outward expression of a person's desire to follow Christ and it is fitting for those who desire to be in this local fellowship to have taken this first step of obedience.

Why be baptized by immersion?

1. Because **Jesus** was baptized that way.

Matthew 3:16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water ...

2. Every water baptism in the New Testament was by **immersion**.

Acts 8:38-39 ... they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water ...

3. The Greek word βαπτίζω (baptize) **literally** means “to immerse, dip or submerge.”
The readers of the New Testament would have fully understood the word to mean a complete immersion in water. We should take our cues from Scripture and the original meaning rather than turning to any traditions that we have received.
4. The symbol of being united in Christ’s death and resurrection is best **expressed** through immersion. Other common forms of baptism, such as sprinkling or pouring, do not best show forth the symbol that is being portrayed and talked about in Scripture. A death, burial and resurrection is best shown through a full immersion baptism.

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

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

When should I be baptized?

1. As soon as you have **believed**.

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

Acts 8:35-38 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. We believe God has intended it as the first act of obedience for the Christian.

2. Improper motivations for waiting to be baptized

a. **Fear**

Anxiety arises when we think of standing in front of people and having all their eyes on us, but the reality is that you are not ultimately being baptized because of them. Rather, God has called you as a believer to stand with him and to obey his commands. A person's obedience in baptism is a great way to fight off the fear of man and to boldly walk with Christ.

Galatians 1:10 For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

b. **Not being good enough**

Remember the symbolism of death and resurrection. Part of your baptism is a public announcement that you are putting to death the old you. If you wait until you are "perfect," there will be nothing left to put to death! Baptism is simply intended for you to make a public association with Christ, his death and his resurrection, and as a public proclamation of your faith.

Titus 3:5-7 He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

NEXT STEPS

Follow-up Questions

1. What's one thing you learned from the baptism class?
2. Did you know what baptism was before you went through this topic?
3. Why do you think it is important to be baptized?
(*Why/What sections*)
4. Why is baptism done by immersion (dipping) as opposed to pouring or sprinkling water?
(*Immersion section*)
5. According to Scripture, who should get baptized? (*Who section*)
6. Why is it important to be baptized after you decide to follow Jesus (not before)? (*When section*)
7. Do you know you've been saved by Jesus, and are you ready to tell everyone?
8. Are you ready to be baptized (or do you have any other questions)?

Homework: Developing a testimony

The question, “Why are you getting baptized?” is an important one and it builds up the entire body to hear your answer to it (1 Thessalonians 5:9-11). Part of acknowledging Christ before men is sharing what he has done in your life. At baptisms, we like to allow for 2-5 sentences to share your story of how Jesus has changed your life and why you are putting your personal faith in him.

Consider including these four topics in telling your story:

1. Before I met Jesus, I struggled with _____
2. The way I met Jesus was _____
3. Since meeting Jesus, something that (has changed/is changing) in my life is _____
4. I decided to get baptized because _____