

# Made New

March 27 - April 2, 2022

(Stand Alone)

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## **MAIN POINT**

God's love for us compels us to turn to Jesus and trust in Him. Baptism is the act that symbolizes we have done so.

## **INTRODUCTION**

**What is the biggest change you've experienced in life?**

**Was it a good change or a bad change? What made it so difficult or wonderful?**

**When you became a Christ follower, what changed?**

Our lives change significantly when we come to know Christ, though sometimes we don't see or recognize the full extent of that change in ourselves until months or years later. Baptism is an important picture of just how much our lives are changed—we died to sin and have been made alive in Christ. It's a big step, but it's also a simple step.

## **UNDERSTANDING**

**READ [MATTHEW 3:13-15](#).**

**Eighteen years had passed since Jesus, at the age of 12, went to the temple and listened to the religious teachers. Why do you think He chose to go to a river to announce the start of His ministry, rather than back to the temple? What did He accomplish through this action?**

**Verse 14 records John's reaction to being asked to baptize Jesus.**

**Are you surprised by this reaction? Why or why not?**

John's hesitation in baptizing Jesus makes sense. John's baptism presupposed sinfulness, and John knew Jesus was sinless. For this reason he made a strong objection. That John recognized Jesus' superiority is reflected in his words, "I need to be baptized by you." Thus Jesus was not baptized for any sin in His life. There was none.

**What is something that has surprised you recently as you've followed Jesus?**

**Why was Jesus baptized, even though He didn't need to repent of His sins?**

Jesus' baptism has always proved to be a bit of a puzzle for the church just as it did for John. The sinless Jesus had no sin from which to turn. Why, therefore, did He desire baptism? Jesus didn't need to repent; He is repenting for others. This is His mission. He came to do what we cannot do for ourselves. Since we cannot atone for our sins, Jesus does it for us. We have the whole gospel in the opening moments of Jesus public life.

**READ [MATTHEW 3:16-17](#).**

**What do we learn about Jesus in verse 17? What do we learn about God the Father?**

**In your own words, how would you describe the importance of Jesus being both fully God and fully man? In what ways is Jesus a bridge between God and us?**

“This is my beloved Son” underscores the source of unity among the three Persons of the Trinity. Love binds and perfects. That Jesus is, in fact, the Son underscores His identity as the Messiah. “I take delight in Him” is a tender expression of the Father who is deeply pleased in the obedience of the Son who has taken fully the form of a man.

**Read [Matthew 28:19-20](#). Why do you think Jesus commanded baptism when He sent out His disciples?**

Jesus commanded baptism as a sign of their new life in Christ—it is symbolic of the fact that when we trust Jesus, all our sin is washed away and we live life as a brand new creation. In Romans 6, Paul further explains the relationship between baptism and our faith in Christ.

**READ [ROMANS 6:1-11](#).**

**How would you define God’s grace?**

**What kinds of changes would you expect to see in someone’s life once he experiences God’s grace through salvation?**

Paul argued that, as Christians, we have died to sin. Sin no longer is the primary influence in our lives. Confession of Christ as Savior and acceptance of His lordship means we have died to sin. We can’t live in that to which we have died. Baptism is a symbol of that great change that has happened in someone’s life.

**Why do you think baptism is a good picture of being dead to sin and being made alive in Christ?**

Being a believer in Christ means being united with Christ. A believer is identified with the object of his or her belief. For the Christian a mysterious but undeniable new relationship begins at the moment of confession. A union of believer and Lord occurs, thus we participate in His death and are freed from sin. Baptism serves as an illustration of death to an old way of life and resurrection to a new life. While baptism is not necessary for salvation, it is an important symbol for what has happened in the life of the believer. Not only that, baptism is a tangible way to show all those around us that we identify with Jesus.

**Why should baptism come after we have received salvation (see vv. 6-7)?**

**How would you help someone understand that baptism comes after salvation?**

## **APPLICATION**

**Read [2 Timothy 1:7-9](#). What do Paul’s words say to those of us who might have fears or worries about being baptized?**

**What are some of the excuses you have used, or have heard others use, for not getting baptized? How can you answer those excuses?**

**What are you saying to others when you take the step of baptism?  
Why is it so important?**

**What encouragement or support can you expect from the church when you declare your faith through baptism? How can we give that support to each other this week?**

## **PRAYER**

Thank God for Jesus' example in being baptized and beginning His public ministry. Pray that we would understand Jesus' role as a bridge between us and God, and that we would faithfully follow Him. Pray for those who need to take the next step of obeying God through baptism.

## **COMMENTARY**

### **MATTHEW 3:13-17**

**3:13-15.** The placement of Jesus' name and the connecting word "then" immediately following John's description of the Messiah's ministry of judgment (and salvation) identifies Jesus as that very same Messiah, judge, and Savior. It also indicates that the messianic era characterized by judgment and salvation is now beginning, even as we watch Jesus walk up to John in the River Jordan.

To this point, Jesus has spent His nearly three decades of earthly life in quiet obscurity. Galilee was the backwater of Israel, so Matthew's choice of wording here implies a "coming out," and a readiness to begin public ministry.

The need for Jesus to be baptized, and thereby to serve as our representative and model, was not optional for Him. It was important to the fulfillment of His mission on earth, in identifying with the "righteous remnant" of Israel. He said it was a necessary step in order to fulfill all righteousness (3:15). So Jesus' baptism was unique. It was not a "baptism of repentance" (as John's was) nor was it a "Christian baptism" (as ours is today). But it was an identifying step of obedience at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Jesus would not have been fully obedient if He had bypassed this step that seemed to John to be unnecessary for the Holy One (3:14).

**3:16-17.** When Jesus came up out of the water from being baptized by John, He received an immediate confirmation from His family. He saw the Spirit of God, and he heard His Father's approval. This scene is something like a family reunion—all three members of the Trinity manifesting their presence in such a way that bystanders could see or hear them. This was a testimony to human witnesses about the identity of Jesus, the Messiah. It serves as one of hundreds of exhibits in Matthew's Gospel for Jesus as the Messiah.

It was also a personal affirmation from the first and third members of the Trinity to the Son. This fact reminds us of the emotional-relational side of the Godhead, a side we often forget. Even God the Son enjoyed personal affirmation from His family. And certainly the people needed to hear from the Father ([John 11:42](#)).

Twice in Matthew the Father speaks from heaven. In both cases He speaks in third person, addressing listeners other than Jesus (compare the second-person "you are" in [Mark 1:11](#); [Luke 3:22](#); and the third-person "this is" in [Mark 9:7](#); [Luke 9:35](#)). The second instance is in Matthew 17, on the Mount of Transfiguration. The wording in this warm, fatherly statement is reminiscent of the threefold emphasis on Isaac's uniqueness and value to Abraham in [Genesis 22:2](#). There has never been, nor will there ever be, a prouder father in all the universe than God the Father.

## **ROMANS 6:1-11**

**6:1.** As is often the case in Romans, we can hear the voice of Paul's opponents in this verse. Using this style allowed Paul to quote the objections he probably had heard often when he preached the gospel in synagogues. The superabundance of grace, which Paul described in the previous chapter, raised a question that he already had addressed ([Romans 3:8](#), [3:31](#)). If it is true that where "sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more" (as Paul said), does this not seem to invite more sin? Where then is the motive to live ethically?

**6:2.** Paul rejected the invalid inference (v. 1) with the strong expression absolutely not. Phillips aptly translated it, "What a ghastly thought!" Paul argues that believers have died to sin. He does not mean that our sin nature was eliminated at the cross or at the moment of our conversion or baptism. Instead, as he says elsewhere, God "rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son He loves" ([Colossians 1:13](#)). Having experienced such a transfer, dare we go on living in sin?

**6:3.** In defense of his claim that believers have died to sin, Paul points out that through baptism we were baptized into Christ Jesus and His death. Here Paul began to descend into important details. The death Christians die to sin is a reality because we have been baptized into His death. The key to understanding Paul's theology is his insight that being a believer in Christ means being united with Christ. A believer is identified with the object of his or her belief. For the Christian a mysterious but undeniable new relationship begins at the moment of confession. A union of believer and Lord occurs, thus we participate in His death and are freed from sin.

**6:4.** Believers are symbolically buried with Christ through baptism and raised with Him from the dead in order that we may walk in a new way of life. This makes clear the absurdity of the idea that we can continue in sin so that grace may multiply (v. 1).

**6:5.** Though believers have not yet experienced resurrection, we are assured this future reality by the fact that Christ, in whose death we share, has been raised from the dead.

**6:6.** Our old self (lit "old man") is everything that we were before we became Christians. By contrast, the new self is what we are once we become Christians ([Ephesians 4:22-24](#); [Colossians 3:9-10](#)). The new self is not perfect. We still sin because we have indwelling sin in our mortal bodies ([Romans 7:13-25](#)), but we are in the process of renewal ([Ephesians 4](#); [Colossians 3](#)). Thus we have the answer to the question about whether a Christian can still live in sin. We cannot live as we once did because the old self was crucified with Him (Christ). In Christ the believer is a new creation ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).

**6:7.** Sin (personified) has no claim over a dead person and can claim no loyalty from him. The Greek verb "dikaioo" means to justify or to declare righteous. The legal aspect of these terms also involves relational concepts, for judges must promote an individual's relation to society by judging fairly. These two concepts carry over into Paul's letters, especially Romans and Galatians, as he explains how to have a right relationship with God. At the point of faith God declares the believer to be righteous ([Romans 3:30-4:9](#); [5:1](#); [Galatians 2:16-17](#); [3:8,11](#), [24](#); [5:4](#)), free from the penalty of sin and in a right relationship with God.

**6:8-9.** It was because of our sin that death fixed its grip on Jesus, but He arose to live forever. Death no longer rules the believer, for we died with Christ who no longer dies.

**6:10.** Jesus went through an irreversible transformation in His death and resurrection.

Believers also undergo an irreversible transformation: we die to the old self (v. 6) at conversion and thereafter live as new creatures ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)). Like Jesus, the believer lives to God .

**6:11.** This is the first command in the Book of Romans This verse is the ultimate conclusion to the truth being expressed here. The words “consider yourselves” are central. Paul was not describing an ideal or a possibility but a reality based on the gospel. We must accept the full reality of the Christian life. And what is this reality? Having been united with Christ in His death and resurrection, Christians too must realize we are dead to sin. The hold of sin is broken in Christians’ lives. We have a freedom we previously did not have. The balance of the sin problem has shifted decisively in our favor because of the death, resurrection, and presence of Christ in believers’ lives.