

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Baptism was part of Jesus' final instructions to the apostles before ascending to the right hand of the Father. We read in Matthew that Jesus *commanded* His disciples to make more disciples by baptizing others and teaching them to obey everything He had taught them (Matt 28:19-20). This passage, known as the Great Commission, shows the incredible relationship between baptism and discipleship — they go hand in hand.

"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"

While scripture is clear that salvation is an act of God's grace that comes by faith and not by works, we find several occasions in the New Testament that inseparably link baptism with repentance and salvation itself. For instance, "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 2:38-39; see also 8:35-38). Again, in one of Peter's letters he writes, "Baptism...now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 3:21). Of course, not every one who has been baptized has actually known and experienced the saving love of God sweeping through and transforming their lives, but the New Testament will not allow us to treat baptism as an afterthought or some optional initiation ritual that may or may not take place after salvation.

Baptism unites us with the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13; see also Gal 3:27-28)

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. **13** For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit (1 Cor 12:12-13)

Baptism unites us to Christ in His death and resurrection life (Rom 6:1-6)

3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **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 (Rom 6:3-4).

Baptism is the sign of the New Covenant (Col 2:9-3:17)

11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, **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 (Col 2:11-12).

Baptism is linked with repentance (Acts 2:38)

38 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).

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

At Cornerstone, we practice believer's baptism, which means we only baptize those who believe and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Throughout the book of Acts, we find that belief and repentance preceded baptism, so it is our conviction that we should follow their example and only baptize those who testify to saving faith.

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

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

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

SHOULD A PERSON BE RE-BAPTIZED?

It is our conviction that there is no reason to be re-baptized if you truly trusted Christ at the time of your baptism. If you were sprinkled or immersed *prior* to trusting in Christ, then we believe you should be baptized.

There are those who have struggled in their walk after baptism, and perhaps feel the need to be re-baptized as a sign of recommitment or renewal. In these cases, we ask you to prayerfully consider whether or not you believed at the time of your baptism. If the answer is "yes" then you *should not* be re-baptized. However, if you believe that your original experience was prior to truly trusting Christ, then you should pursue baptism. Thus, the question you should ask yourself is "did I truly trust in Christ when I was baptized?"

WHEN SHOULD A PERSON BE BAPTIZED?

As soon as a person trusts Christ, he or she should be baptized. In all accounts in the New Testament, baptism is rather immediate (one such example is the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8:35-39). Unless there are convincing reasons to delay baptism, then we believe the pattern of the Scriptures is to be followed.

There are those who choose to delay baptism for improper reasons such as fear, or feeling like they're not "good enough." We will never be "good enough" for baptism, but we can boldly go into the water because of what Christ has done on our behalf.

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

HOW SHOULD A PERSON BE BAPTIZED?

While there are other denominations and theological traditions who baptize by pouring or sprinkling, we practice baptism by immersion. We do so for the following reasons:

- The Greek word translated as “baptize” literally means to immerse, dip, or submerge.
- Our union with Christ’s death and resurrection is best expressed through immersion.
- Examples of baptism in the New Testament suggest baptism by immersion (Acts 8:38-39)

WHERE SHOULD A PERSON BE BAPTIZED?

The Bible doesn't command that baptism takes place in a specific location, for that reason, a person could be baptized any place that has water. At Cornerstone, we love to baptize during our worship services because this allows the congregation to witness and celebrate with the person being baptized. That said, baptism can also take place outside of our weekly services (during Life Group, at the beach, during a retreat, etc). Should you choose to be baptized outside of a service, we ask that you take video or photos so that we can celebrate with you.