

UNDERSTANDING BAPTISM

Getting baptized in water is the first step of obedience for a person who has committed their lives to Christ. Here is why: Jesus and the early church leaders commanded that *all* believers must be baptized in water as a form of initiation into the adventure of following Christ. See Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:37,38, Acts 10:48. We do not get baptized because we feel like it, but because we take Christ's leadership seriously.

What baptism means...

- *The baptismal waters are like a press release.* Although choosing to follow Christ is a deeply personal decision, it is not a private matter. Jesus instructed us to go public with our choice (Mark 8:38). Baptism is how we show on the outside to all what has happened on the inside.
- *The baptismal waters are like a bath.* In Acts 22:16 Paul was 'baptized, washing away his sins, calling on his name.' It depicts spiritual cleansing from the guilt of sin.
- *The baptismal waters are like a graveyard.* Romans 6:4 says that 'we were buried with Christ in baptism'. Baptism reflects an inward decision to die to 'the old you' that rejected and ignored Christ's leadership over your life. Baptism is a break from your sinful past.
- *The baptismal waters are like a maternity ward.* Baptism also reflects how we were united with Christ in his resurrection. We have a new life. 'If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come.' (2 Corinthians 5:17).

There are two reasons Christians often give for not being baptized.

1) I was sprinkled as an infant.

Infant sprinkling is not what Jesus speaks of when he says that we need to get baptized. Infant sprinkling may have been meaningful to the parents, but it has no spiritual benefits in the life of an infant. Baptism in the Scriptures always, with no exception, follows a person's choice to trust in Christ. Infants are not capable of making this choice. If you want to know more about this please ask the elders for a great biblical review on the subject of infant baptism.

2) I will do it when I feel God telling me to do it.

We agree totally! But has not God already told us to do it in the Scriptures? When we wait for some personal message from God to do it, we dangerously elevate our own thoughts and emotions over what God has spoken so clearly in his Word. Isn't that a kind of disobedience?

Getting baptized.

Once you have repented of your sins and put your trust in Jesus to give you the gift of salvation, then speak to your small group leader or an elder about getting baptized. It can happen anywhere, anytime. And any Christian can baptize you. It is also a great opportunity to invite friends and family.