

Baptism 2021 Live

Baptism is a part of being a disciple or apprentice of Jesus Christ.

It's also a place where we meet him and we learn to follow him.

To understand baptism as experiencing and following Jesus, we must see that...It's public.

This isn't some **secret initiation**, shrouded in mystery.

That's why we are here together today.

If something is intended to be public, then there is a reason that it must be seen.

The people who see something happen are **witnesses**.

- At a **wedding** they are witnesses to promises made.
- A **notary** is a witness that you did in fact sign this important document.
- On the golf course, hitting my only Eagle.
- Catching a 40 inch pike.

What is public and has witnesses **becomes verifiable**. In other words, "yes, you did this and yes, you said this."

So not only is this public event seen, but also it **creates a shared memory** with the group who saw it.

- For American's its 911. We all saw it. Where were you when those planes hit that the twin towers.
- Our cross country camping trip.

It's important that someone sees baptism.

"If a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?" Baptism makes a sound that resonates into eternity.

When something isn't public, then the community can't **create accountability** in our relationships. If I don't tell the elders that I'm going to read a certain **number of books** or do whatever, then they can't ask me how I'm doing. Or they can't challenge me in love for **behavior that doesn't seem consistent** with what I have proclaimed.

To understand baptism as experiencing and following Jesus, we must see that...It's about going all in.

Stepping into the water is about **weight transfer**. Dipping a toe in, doesn't include this weight transfer. The weight transfer happens even though we don't know how **deep or how fast moving** the water is. **That is moving from safety to adventure, from fear to faith.**

The Greek word in the Bible that we translate into baptize is "**Baptizo**"...to immerse.

Going all in, being immersed, better describes Jesus' story. He came from heaven and totally immersed himself into our world and our lives. He was Christ, the promised King, who came to initiate the restoration of God's rule over everything. That's God's Kingdom. **On the cross He took on our sin, which brought death.** He was buried, completely given over to death. But then he was raised to new life more powerful than even before. **That is Jesus' story and part of the gospel.**

The gospel is also our response to who Jesus was and what he did. That also is about someone who **repents, believes, and follows Jesus**. That is also a life where someone **dives all in**. They were dead in their sin, buried. Then by trusting in Christ who rose, they are also raised to new life in Him.

My nephew Brian, when he faked a shower on our trip back to Ohio. He didn't go all in. He didn't really want to get clean. **When we go all in and follow Jesus into the water, we experience his purification..."washed in the blood."**

Baptism is public; it is about being all in. To understand baptism as experiencing and following Jesus, we must see that...Trust comes first...Believer Baptism.

Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation!"⁴¹ **Those who believed** what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all. **Acts 2:40-41**

I want to read a passage from Acts that **captures an actual first generation baptism.**

As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, "Go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza." ²⁷ So he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and he was now returning. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ The Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and walk along beside the carriage."³⁰ Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ The man replied, "How can I, unless someone instructs me?" And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him. ³² The passage of Scripture he had been reading was this:

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter.

And as a lamb is silent before the shearers,
he did not open his mouth.

³³ He was humiliated and received no justice.

Who can speak of his descendants?

For his life was taken from the earth."^[b]

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or someone else?" ³⁵ So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus. ³⁶ As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?"

³⁸ He ordered the carriage to stop, and **they went down into the water**, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. (Acts 8:26-39)

This man "went down into the water." And then it says he came up and the spirit confirmed that something **amazing had just happened**. Philipp was "snatched" away and in his place, this man received joy!

He followed Jesus and then experienced Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Baptism to where we meet Jesus, experience and follow him. It is public. I've got to be all in and trusting him comes first.

It's one thing to understand something, but it's a different thing to answer the question...Why do this?

It doesn't save you. "Outward sign of an inward work of grace." (Newell) **Sacrament...**"a rite that is considered to have been established by Jesus Christ to bring grace to those participating in or receiving it."

Ordinance..."worship or faith disciplines, which have specifically been ordained by Jesus in his instructions to his followers...(A further description) We believe that these ordinances are symbolic of something that is happening in the believer as a direct act of God's Spirit. **The symbolic act witnesses to an inner reality.** These symbols **affirm and remind** us of what God has done in Christ." Arlo Newell "Tell me about the ordinances"

Is trusting someone, following their lead, obediently doing what you are told natural or easy for you? No, it's something that we need to work. **Why follow Jesus into the water? Because...**It's practice for following **Jesus didn't need to be baptized,** but he allowed John to baptize him. **People needed to see Jesus do this.** He wanted to show that **he was obedient to His Father and to the calling** that was on his life.

The things he was going to have to do down the road in order to be obedient and fulfill his calling **would be much harder than going down in sketchy river** to be dunked by some crazy prophet who wore weird clothes and eat locusts.

We have been talking about **Hearing God's Voice.** These two people have heard God's voice and **they have obeyed!**

It's easy to say, "It doesn't save me, and it's just a show, so I'll pass." **But, if you can obey him in this thing, then you start exercising the spiritual muscle that life is going demand.**

Why do it? Because...It's about a story.

It tells Jesus' story and it tells your story. He died, was buried, and raised to new life. **The old person you were had to die to selfishness and the desire to be your own God.** That person died and was buried. A new person has been raised up. You have been made new. Jesus said "I make all things new." Jesus takes up residence in you through The Holy Spirit. **Now you are no longer a slave to your own desires and sin, now you are an adopted Child of Jesus, the king.**

For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. Col. 2:12

Not only are you made new but you are being made new.

- **You are new in how God relates to you.** The consequence of your sin, which is death, no longer defines you. You are a new person.
- **But you are also being made into someone who will increasingly look like Jesus.** It is a present reality and a future promise all at the same time.

If you have been baptized, are you still living that story, the one God made available to you through Christ and is continuing to write for you?

Down through the years, Christ followers have gotten to this issue by asking this question. Do you remember your baptism?

Here's another way to say it. Are you living as if it never happened? Or, are you raising your kids, who have been baptized, as if they never were.

And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. Galatians 3:27

Is this verse reflected in the life you are living? If not, then you aren't living your story. That's the dead person's story. That's not you any more.

Here's your Act of Obedience

1. Play your part as a witness. Pray, encourage.
2. Remember your baptism.

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3. If you are here today and you've been resisting being baptized and God is calling, then come forward.