

WHAT IS WATER BAPTISM ALL ABOUT?

The Ethiopian asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the Ethiopian said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?"... Then they went into the water and Philip baptized him.

Acts 8:34-38

One of the most important "events" in a Christian's journey is when we make a public profession of our faith. Baptism is the appropriate next step for anyone who has accepted they are a sinner separated from God and has made the decision to trust Christ alone for their salvation. It is a public expression of the miraculous life-change that has occurred on the inside of an individual with their decision to move from being a "Seeker" to being a "Believer" and must be approached with a heartfelt sincerity of commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Considering Baptism?

Once a person admits that he or she is a sinner and turns to Christ alone for their salvation, the Bible says that person should proclaim the life change that has occurred – that the watching world needs to know. Notice that Baptism is not intended to provide salvation for an individual, only to publicly identify a person with Christ after they have decided to trust Christ alone for their salvation. Baptism has always stood as a kind of public testimony for people who have moved from being a "Seeker" to being a "Believer."

Believers are those who have realized that their sin has separated them from God. They have given up all efforts to reach God through good works or religious activity. They have concluded that Christ's death on the cross for their sins is the only thing that can bridge the gap between them and God. A Believer is someone who has decided to trust Christ alone for his or her salvation.

Have you asked Christ to come into your life and forgive you of your sins?
Are you willing to follow Christ wherever He will lead you and obey His commands as they become clear?

If you answered yes to these questions, then you have come to the point in your spiritual journey when you are ready to be baptized.

Biblical Passages Concerning Baptism

In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commands his followers to *"go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit..."* Baptism is the means by which followers of Christ are identified. And because Christ himself commanded it, Christ's followers willingly submit to it. No one would desire to be baptized unless they had made a decision to follow Christ. And no one can make that decision for them.

In passages such as Acts 2:41, 8:12 and 10:47-48, it is evident that the act of Baptism came after an individual's decision to trust Christ alone for salvation. It was an outward sign of something that had already occurred in a person's life. Baptism cannot give a person anything, spiritually speaking. It can only signify something that has already happened.

In Romans 6:1-11, the apostle Paul explains how the immersion mode of Baptism identifies the believer with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Going under the water represents Christ's death and coming out of the water illustrates His resurrection.

You do not have to be baptized to have Christ in your heart any more than you must exchange rings to be pronounced man and wife. But if the inner commitment to trust Christ alone for salvation has been made, then the outward symbol of Baptism should be as valued and as visible as the gold ring on a newlywed's finger.

LifePointe's Statement on Baptism

While recognizing the right for other churches to practice infant Baptism if it conforms to their theologies, at LifePointe Church the Scriptures are the source of our beliefs, including our view on Baptism. We understand Scripture to teach that only professing believers qualify for Baptism.

Scriptural teaching on Baptism may be summarized as follows:

- Baptism is an act of obedience to the command of Christ, fulfilled by individuals who have submitted themselves to the sovereignty of His Word. Baptism symbolizes spiritual cleansing through divine forgiveness and the newness of life experienced by believers by virtue of their identification with Christ. Going under the water represents Christ's death and coming out of the water illustrates His resurrection.
- Baptism provides an opportunity for believers to make a formal profession of their faith before the church.
- Older children who demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the symbolism of Baptism are encouraged to be baptized.

A Word Concerning Infant Baptism

If the purpose of Baptism is to publicly identify a believer in Jesus Christ, you may well be asking yourself, "What was the significance of my Baptism as a baby?" In the Bible, we find parents bringing their children to Jesus. He held them and prayed for them and told us to welcome them. But He did not baptize them and He did not tell anyone else to baptize them. Baptism is for those who have made a personal decision to trust Christ alone for their salvation.

If you were baptized as a child, it was the intent of your parents that you would one day be a follower of Christ. Your Baptism as an adult can be viewed as the fulfillment of your parents' wishes. It in no way repudiates the Baptism you received as a child.

What's the Process?

The opportunity for Baptism is usually scheduled a few times per year.

1. **Water Baptism Date Announced** - When the date and time are announced
2. **Register Sign Up** - Baptism registration forms will be available from The 411 or the Church Office. Each person desiring to be baptized must complete and submit a registration form.
3. **Prepare For Sharing Your Story Via Video Recording** - As a part of the registration process, you will be asked to write two to three paragraphs describing how and when you decided to trust Christ alone for your salvation. It is helpful for you to recognize the difference Christ has made in your life. Some of the stories may also play a significant role during the Baptism services. It has been our experience that believers find these both encouraging and an opportunity for celebration. Seekers are also challenged by the spiritual journey of others.

Each Baptism Service is recorded so each anonymous testimony will be potentially experienced by many who weren't even able to attend the service. God's grace will extend well beyond what He has done for you!

When writing your story, be sure to explain it in such a way that someone hearing it would know what to do to become a Christian. Do your best to focus on these points:

- What was your life like before you decided to trust Christ?
 - Describe how and when you decided to trust Christ alone for your salvation.
 - How has this decision made a difference in your life?
4. **Secure A Video Recording Appointment** – Contact us at mylifepointe@gmail.com
 5. **Review Water Baptism Guidelines Doc** – Go to mylifepointe.com/baptism and download the doc. Review so you will know what to expect, what proper attire to wear and what to bring.
 6. **Show Up Early On The Baptism Night** – Try to arrive at least 30 minutes early so you will have ample time to see where the changing rooms are, get instructions for the event and be prayed over.
 7. **The Baptism Service** – The baptism service will be about 1 hour and feature the following order...

1. *Greeting*
2. *Worship Song*
3. *Exhortation On Child Dedication / Child Dedications*
4. *Worship Song*
5. *Exhortation On Baptism*

6. *Video of Baptism Stories*
7. *Teenager Baptisms*
8. *Worship Song*
9. *Adult Baptisms*
10. *Worship Song*
11. *Dismiss*