



the mission

C H U R C H

A PRIMER ON BAPTISM

INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of this booklet is to inform you about the basic Biblical teachings about baptism, so you can make an informed decision to be baptized as well as rejoice in the rich meaning and significance behind the experience.

You may have some questions as you read through this information. One of our pastors or leaders from The Mission Church would be happy to talk with you. You can reach us at 760-487-8890 by phone or text.

WHY BE BAPTIZED?

The question, "Why should I be baptized?" is an important question that should be asked and answered for all Christians. There are many reasons to become baptized.

1. **The main reason is because Jesus commanded it.** Baptism isn't optional for believers. If you consider yourself a follower of Jesus Christ, then you are commanded to be baptized. Furthermore, Jesus, our Savior, and our example Himself was baptized by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13). Jesus was not baptized in repentance of sin, but so He could be an example for those who would want to follow Him.
 - Jesus emphasized the importance of baptism when He commanded his disciples to "Go and make disciples of all the nations, *baptizing* them in that name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). So, if you desire to be obedient to Jesus, then baptism is a good decision.
2. In addition, baptism symbolizes and reminds believers of the foundational truths of our faith. For example, baptism symbolizes the death and resurrection of Jesus' for our salvation, and it reminds us of our relationship to God and to one another through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:4-6).

BAPTISM ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE:

What Does Baptism Symbolize?

1. **Baptism symbolizes the UNION of the believer in the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus.** The Scriptures teach that all believers have union with Jesus. This means that the work Jesus accomplished in His life, death, and resurrection, is fully applied to us. His death to sin is ours, His righteousness is ours, and His resurrected life is ours. Therefore, baptism symbolizes how believers share in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- **For further study:** Romans 6:3-11; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:26-27; Matthew 28:18-19; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:4-6
2. **Baptism symbolizes the DEATH of the believer's old life and their RESURRECTION to new life in Christ.** By virtue of our union with Jesus, we have been made a new creation. It is significant to notice that baptism symbolizes the death of the old person we were before Jesus and the new creation we have become in Him (2 Corinthians 5:17). Baptism symbolizes the death of the old self and the raising of the new self in Him. In other words, baptism reminds us that we begin fresh lives in Christ. Going under the water symbolizes the death and burial of our old life of sin. Being raised from the water symbolizes the new life we have been raised to because of what Jesus has done. Now our lives are alive to Jesus and dead to sin!
- **For further study:** Romans 6:1-14; 2 Corinthians 5:17
3. **Baptism symbolizes our identification with and commitment to the church (Jesus' body).**
- In baptism, we publicly express that we are now no longer united with the world. Instead, we are united in fellowship and committed relationship with God's people, the church. This is why baptism should typically take place in the context of a local church. Jesus gives each of us Spiritual Gifts. These gifts are special abilities or talents that Jesus Himself possessed. When we gather together in unity, we are able to use these gifts to serve and bless each other in the same way Jesus did in His ministry. This is how we collectively are **"the body of Christ"**.
- **For further study:** 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:1-16

Who Gets Baptized?

Only those who have made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ should be baptized.

Since the act of baptism is the outward symbol of one's salvation in Jesus Christ, only those who have made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their only Savior should be baptized.

At The Mission Church we practice the *"Believer's Baptism"*. This means that we only baptize those who give a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. This differs from other Churches who practice what is called *Paedobaptism* which is the practice of baptizing infants.

Why do we practice the *"believer's baptism"*? Given the desire for this primer to be brief, we cannot give a full response to this question, but we will give a few points for our position.

1. The Bible makes it clear that only those who have REPENTED OF THEIR SINS should be baptized. This is illustrated clearly in Acts 2:38 *“Then Peter said to them, **Repent**, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* An infant, or a child that is not yet of age of accountability cannot repent of their sins and therefore should not be baptized.
2. The New Testament reveals in many places that only those who give a profession of faith should be baptized (Acts 2:41; 8:12; 10:44-48; 16:14- 15, 32-33). An infant, or a child that is not yet of age of accountability cannot make a profession of faith in Jesus and therefore should not be baptized.
3. There is no record in the Bible of infants being baptized or that infant baptism should be practiced by the church. This is an argument from silence, but we think if God intended all infants to be baptized and for it to be a common practice of the church, there would be some type of mention of infants being baptized.
4. We believe baptism is a *symbol that represents* the believer’s transition from death in sin to life in Christ by sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ through faith. Because we see it as a symbol that represents the transformation that took place at conversion, we believe it is only appropriate to baptize those who have **made a profession of faith in Jesus**. Infants cannot do such a thing and therefore should not be baptized.

What is the Method of Baptism?

The Mission Church practices baptism by immersion in water. That means we fully dunk believers into the waters of baptism until they are entirely covered by the water. The term **BAPTISM** comes from a Greek word verb **BAPTIZO** which means *“to SUBMERGE, to immerse”*. Also, the only practice of baptism in the New Testament is by full immersion under the water. In addition, baptism by immersion is a much better illustration of the Biblical truths’ baptism is supposed to reflect (i.e., death, burial, resurrection).

Errant beliefs about Baptism:

Many people think wrongly of baptism and attribute to it much more than the Bible teaches. Therefore, it will be helpful to address **what does not happen during baptism:**

1. Baptism *is not* a magical act that washes away one’s sins. Only the life, death and resurrection of Jesus has the power to wash away sins and one obtains this cleansing at the point of their coming to Christ in repentance and faith.

2. Baptism does not release sins, nor does it earn God's forgiveness.
3. Also, it is incorrect to think that baptism is a *necessary action* for salvation. The Scriptures clearly teach that forgiveness only comes through the good news of Jesus' life, death and resurrection and that forgiveness can only be obtained through faith in His atoning death. Baptism does not accomplish any kind of salvation for the believer.

At The Mission Church, we believe that baptism is a *symbolic act that represents the salvation* that Jesus brought about through His Birth, sinless life, atoning death, and bodily resurrection. In other words, baptism is the outward symbol of an inner reality. Baptism symbolizes what has already happened in the life of a Christian.

ARE YOU READY TO BE BAPTIZED?

Now that we have covered the basic truths the Bible teaches about baptism, it is appropriate to ask the question, "Am I ready to be baptized?" Given that baptism is an outward symbol of an inner reality, it is very helpful to examine where you are spiritually and if baptism is the appropriate next step. Below are some questions to work through that will help you find out whether or not you should be baptized.

1. Do you believe that your sin makes you guilty before God? Romans 3:9-20
2. Do you believe that Jesus was a man AND God and lived a sinless earthly life? That He died on a cross as the payment for your sin? And that Jesus, literally and physically, rose from the dead?
3. Read Acts **16:30-33**: Have you abandoned your attempts to save yourself and turned to trust only in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for your salvation?
4. Have you made a willing choice to turn away from all the sin you're currently aware of (Knowing there is help, time, and grace for you as you walk with Jesus) because you want to try to obey the teachings of Christ? **Acts 2:38**
5. Do you desire to follow Jesus in obedience for the rest of your life and grant Him the full authority He has over you?
6. Are you ready for all people in your life to know that you're a follower of Jesus?
7. Are you willing to make time in your life to regularly connect with other believers in fellowship, worship, and service? Do you want to become a part of the church/family that He has purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28)?

YOUR THOUGHTS:

We hope you have found this primer on baptism helpful. Thank you for studying it. Now, in your own words, explain why you want to be baptized.