

Water Baptism

Water baptism and communion are the two ordinances of the church. Water baptism occurs after a person has been born again by professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In water baptism, a Christian believer is totally immersed in water.

Why be water baptized?

Water baptism was commanded by Christ. So, we are baptized out of obedience to Him.

Matthew 28:18-20 – *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

The disciples in the church of the New Testament were water baptized.

Acts 2:38-39 – *And Peter replied, "Each one of you must turn from sin, return to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; then you also shall receive this gift, the Holy Spirit. For Christ promised him to each one of you who has been called by the Lord our God, and to your children and even to those in distant lands!"*

Water baptism symbolizes our death, burial and resurrection with Christ.

Romans 6:1-4 – *Well then, shall we keep on sinning so that God can keep on showing us more and more kindness and forgiveness? Of course not! Should we keep on sinning when we don't have to? For sin's power over us was broken when we became Christians and were baptized to become a part of Jesus Christ; through his death the power of your sinful nature was shattered. Your old sin-loving nature was buried with him by baptism when he died; and when God the Father, with glorious power, brought him back to life again, you were given his wonderful new life to enjoy.*

Colossians 2:9-12 - *For in Christ there is all of God in a human body; so you have everything when you have Christ, and you are filled with God through your union with Christ. He is the highest Ruler, with authority over every other power. When you came to Christ, he set you free from your evil desires, not by a bodily operation of circumcision but by a spiritual operation, the baptism of your souls. For in baptism you see how your old, evil nature died with him and was buried with him; and then you came up out of death with him into a new life because you trusted the Word of the mighty God who raised Christ from the dead.*

1 Peter 3:21-22 - *This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also - not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand-with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.*

<p>Baptism: Public Profession and Identification with God's Family Adapted from <i>Purpose Driven Life</i> by Rick Warren</p>

Healthy families have family pride; members are not ashamed to be recognized as a part of the family. However, many believers have never publicly identified themselves with the family of God as Jesus commanded - by being baptized.

Baptism is not an optional ritual, to be delayed or postponed. It signifies your inclusion in God's family. It publicly announces to the world, "I am not ashamed to be a part of God's family."

Jesus commanded all his disciples to be baptized:
"Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Why did Jesus' Great Commission give the same prominence to baptism as it does to the great tasks of evangelism and edification? Why is baptism so important? Because it symbolizes the first purpose of your life: incorporation into the fellowship of God's eternal family.

Baptism has great meaning. Your baptism declares your faith, shares Christ's burial and resurrection, symbolizes your death to your old life, and announces your new life in Christ. It is also a celebration of your inclusion in God's family.

Your baptism is a physical picture of a spiritual truth. It represents what happened the moment God brought you into his family: *"Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into Christ's body by one Spirit, and we have all received the same Spirit."*

Baptism doesn't make you a member of God's family; only faith in Christ does that. Baptism shows you are part of God's family.

A wedding ring is the symbol of the covenant between a man and a wife. People see this ring and know they are committed to someone. A wedding does not make you married. Anyone can buy a ring and wear it.

Like a wedding ring, baptism is a visible representation of an inward commitment made in your heart. It is an act of initiation, not something you put off until you are spiritually mature. The only biblical condition is that you believe and confess Jesus Christ as your Lord.

If you haven't been baptized as an expression of your faith in Christ, do so as Jesus commanded.