



WHAT IS BAPTISM?



Maybe you've been around the church for a little while and you've heard about baptism.

Maybe you've seen people climbing into the tank to be dunked under water and you've wondered what that is all about.

Maybe you grew up in a family who had you baptized as a baby, and you've wondered if you should get baptized again.

Whatever the reason, we're so glad you are asking questions and finding out more about baptism! In this booklet we are going to take a look at what baptism is, why someone would choose to get baptized, and what it means for you moving forward. We're going to answer some of the most common questions about baptism and take a look at some of the misconceptions and confusions that get in people's way. We hope this book is helpful for you. If, after reading it, you still have questions, we would love to answer them for you! You can always reach out to us at 907-694-7741 or email us at office@acfak.org.

Where do we get the idea of baptism?

In ancient times, before the time of Christ, God's people participated in a cleansing ritual where they fully immersed themselves in water. This cleansing often marked a time of repentance, the celebration of a new life change, or the entrance into a new community. This cleansing ritual was also a way for someone outside the Hebrew faith to become a member of God's people, symbolizing their choice to leave their old life to follow the One True God.

Later, John the Baptist (also referred to as John the Baptizer) began baptizing people in the Judean region into a "baptism of repentance" (Mark 1:4) sharing the good news that Messiah was coming. He called the people to turn their hearts toward God. People who were baptized by John did so as a declaration of their faith in God and their repentance of sin.

Jesus, Himself was baptized by John (Matthew 3:13-17), not because Jesus needed His sins forgiven or that He needed to repent, but because He was setting an example for His followers. In being baptized, Jesus made the public declaration that He was in full submission to the will of God. His baptism also marked the beginning of His public ministry on earth.

Why do we continue to baptize people?

After His death and resurrection, Jesus commissioned His followers to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you;” (Matthew 28:19-20a). In obedience to His command, the disciples and early church began a new practice of baptizing believers.

In the New Testament church, baptism became a symbol of dying to our old selves and being raised to life in the newness of Christ. When the believer goes under the water, it symbolizes our death to sin and our identification with the death of Christ. When the believer is raised out of the water, it symbolizes new birth and new life in Jesus, washed clean by the blood of Christ, and redeemed by His sacrifice and salvation.

Do I have to get baptized to be saved?

It's crucial to understand that baptism is not what saves you. It is an important step of faith in your salvation journey and is something we are all commanded to do upon salvation. Baptism is done as a response to salvation, not a requirement of it. Baptism is an outward expression of an inward change. It is a way for you to publicly proclaim that Jesus is your Lord and Savior and to show that you have decided to follow Him.

Does baptism wash away my sins?

Jesus taught us that only through His name and by His blood are our sins covered and forgiven. When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are given the righteousness of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21). No other thing is needed for our sins to be cleansed. Therefore, we do not participate in baptism as a way to cleanse us from our sins. Instead, baptism is a way for us to celebrate and declare the forgiveness we have already received in Jesus Christ.

How do I know I am ready for baptism?

We see in the New Testament that baptism was considered the first act of obedience that the new believer did in response to their decision to follow Jesus and happened immediately after conversion. No other pre-requisite is required for a believer to get baptized.

Some people have mistakenly believed that they need to get their personal lives together, be a strong Christian, learn more about Jesus, or start giving to a church before they can get baptized. But none of this is required. If you believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and you have decided to make Him the Savior of your life, you are ready to get baptized.

Can I schedule a private baptism?

Since ancient times, baptism was conducted in front of family, friends, and other believers. As your family in Christ, we in the church are excited to celebrate your new faith with you! Since the purpose of baptism is to publicly proclaim your belief in Jesus Christ, we do not participate in private baptisms.

I was baptized as a baby, should I get baptized again?

Infant baptism is something that many denominations inside and outside of the Christian faith participate in for one reason or another. Often it is a way for parents to dedicate their children, committing to raising them in the faith. However, we believe that baptism should come after someone has made a personal choice to follow Jesus. Since as an infant, you were unable to make that choice for yourself, it is completely appropriate for you to choose to do so after your personal decision to follow Christ.

Some churches don't fully immerse people. Why does ACF?

The word "baptism" comes from the Greek word *baptein* which means "to dip frequently or intensively, to plunge, or to immerse." Also, traditionally the practice of baptism always included the idea of full submersion in water. However, it is important to understand that the method of baptism is not the point. Whether someone is fully immersed, partially immersed, or sprinkled, the intention of baptism is to publicly proclaim that you are a follower of Christ. At ACF, we have chosen full immersion baptism because we believe this most accurately aligns with the Biblical and historical practice.

Can I ask some one other than the pastor to baptize me?

We believe that any person who has accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and has been baptized themselves, is qualified to baptize another believer. Therefore, if you would like to be baptized by a believing parent, spouse, mentor, or friend, we want to support that choice. Talk to our team about your wishes, and we would be happy to help you make that happen!

I was baptized once, but then I walked away from my faith.

**I am now recommitting my life to
Jesus and would like to be baptized
again. Is that okay?**

Nowhere in the bible do we see that it is a requirement to be re-baptized or baptized multiple times. If your choice to get baptized the first time was genuine and a result of genuine faith, there is no need for you to get baptized again, even if you have walked through a rough season in your faith journey. However, if you feel that the first time you were baptized your faith was not genuine or if you feel like you chose to get baptized for wrong reasons, we are happy to support you in choosing to get baptized again.

My child would like to get baptized.

**How young is too young to get
baptized?**

There is no minimum age for baptism. We love it when we see kids who understand the gospel message choose to make Jesus their Lord and Savior! And we are excited to baptize any child who is old enough to fully comprehend what salvation means and what baptism symbolizes.

