



Windsor Community Church

BAPTISM CLASS

The Bible teaches that the true believer has been “united” with or baptized into Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. In a miraculous way, believers “share with” Christ in these things when God saves them. Spiritual baptism is a work of the Holy Spirit that brings believers into union with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ so that they can live a new life. The work of spiritual baptism happens to every true believer when God saves them (see 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Colossians 2:12).

Now that you have been united with Christ by faith, there is also a *physical baptism* that demonstrates the reality of the *spiritual* one. God desires for all who are saved to be baptized publicly as an act of obedience and to give a testimony to the miracle of His glorious work in their lives.

In the most basic terms, the ordinance of water baptism is a sign and a seal prescribed by our Lord Jesus Christ as a visible symbol of invisible grace that unites the believer with Christ. It is a discernible and tangible representation of both the invisible realities of the gospel and the Spirit’s application of this gospel to our lives. As the Westminster Confession and the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith put it, baptism “*is a sign of our fellowship with Him in His death and resurrection, of our being grafted into Him, of remission of sins, and of submitting ourselves to God through Jesus Christ to live and walk in newness of life*”.

<p>The note I want to strike immediately—the tone and the truth that I want to set first and foremost—is that baptism gets its meaning and its importance from the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in our place and for our sins, and from his triumph over death in the resurrection that guarantees our new and everlasting life. Baptism has meaning and importance only because the death and resurrection of Jesus are infinitely important for our rescue from the wrath of God and our everlasting joy in his glorious presence. That’s the note that must be struck first. John Piper</p>

THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW...

WATER BAPTISM is not something a believer should just take or leave.” It is a command given by Jesus Christ for all believers to participate in, out of love for Him and a desire to publicly proclaim what He has accomplished. It is also a sign of fellowship and union with the visible body of Christ (*see Matthew 3:15-17, 28:19, and Acts 2:41-42*).

WATER BAPTISM has no significance for unbelievers, because they have not been saved by God through the miraculous *spiritual baptism* discussed on pages 1-4. There is nothing to illustrate.

WATER BAPTISM is intended to be an illustration of the washing away of sin, however the Bible does not teach that it actually *does* wash away sin. Only the blood of Christ is said to have accomplished this. The physical act of baptism does not save you (*See Hebrews 1:3, 9:14, 1 Peter 3:21, and 1 John 1:7*).

WATER BAPTISM is not observed in the church to *cause* something spiritual to happen to you. It is observed *because* something spiritual *has* already happened to you.

WATER BAPTISM does not, in itself, bring about a supernatural benefit to the one being baptized. The true believer is given the power of the Holy Spirit at the time they are saved and not at a later date when they are baptized (*See Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, John 7:37-40, 1 Corinthians 12:13*).

WATER BAPTISM is not intended to be a religious ritual or ceremony performed on babies or children to determine their eternal destiny. There is not a *single reference* in the entire Bible that indicates babies are to be baptized so they can go to heaven if they die. There are no *commands* or *specific examples* in the Bible regarding the baptism of infants.

THE AMAZING GIFT OF SALVATION

The work of Christ that gives water baptism it's meaning

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

How does the beginning of this passage (v.1-3) describe each and every one of us?

What does it say that God did for us when we were that way? (v.4-6) Why did he do this? (v.4,7)

What do these verses teach us about how we are saved, and what the result is? (v.8-10)

Read Romans 6:1-14

In verses 3-10, list or circle all of the times Paul uses the words “in,” “into” or “with.” What are these in reference to?

What does it mean to be baptized into Jesus' death?

The most beautiful part of all of this is the “newness of life” we receive by being united with Jesus in His resurrection. According to verses 5-7, how is it that we are now able live a very different (new) life?

Is this guarantee of the grace of God through Jesus Christ for all eternity a license to go on sinning once God has saved you? Why or why not according to verses 2-7?

According to verse 12-14, what does this “union” with Jesus Christ mean for day to day living?

WATER BAPTISM

An outward sign of an inward reality

Baptism is a symbolic act of obedience that portrays the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and our union with Him in those saving events. Baptism is the initial Christian Rite, because Spirit-Baptism is the initial Christian experience. It signifies both the washing of sin and the bestowal of the Spirit.

Read Matthew 28:18-19

Why is it important for a person who has placed their faith in Jesus to be baptized?

Based on what we learned in the previous lesson, is being baptized necessary to be forgiven of our sins?

Read Colossians 2:8-14 (esp. V. 11-13); Romans 6:1-11; 1 Peter 3:21-22

What do these verses say about some of the truth that baptism illustrates?

Read Acts 8:12, 35-36; 16:14-15; 18:8

How much time generally lapsed between a person believing in Jesus and being baptized in the New Testament?

ARE YOU READY?

Water baptism is not a ritual or religious ceremony that a Christian must go through out of religious obligation. Rather, it's the joyful expression of the amazing blessings of God given in salvation. If you have not had this opportunity yet even though God has saved you, you should seek it out right away (Acts 2:41, 8:12, and 18:8). In this way, you will demonstrate obedience to the Father and will give Him public praise for what He has done.

Consider the following questions in order to evaluate your own life and the possibility of a commitment to be baptized. If you need help thinking through these things, do not hesitate to call on other believers or a pastor who can help you understand. Ultimately, you are encouraged to be baptized in the context of the local church as an expression of and testimony to the wonderful work of salvation in your life and to identify with the body of Christ.

Do you know with joy and certainty that God has saved you? How and why?

Have you had the opportunity to be baptized according to the teaching in this lesson since you were saved?

Do you understand what baptism is and why God has commanded it? If you have not yet been baptized, will you commit to obey God's command for you to do so at the earliest possible opportunity?

If you answered "yes," we rejoice with you! Please seek out one of the pastors or your Community Group leader. If you are under the age of 18, talk with your parents. (The church will set a special time for all to celebrate your baptism as a sign of the new life in Christ that God has given you!!).

If you answered “no,” because you have a different understanding of Christian baptism, we would love to interact with you further on the topic. While we do not want to see division in the body of Christ over different theological positions on this doctrine, we do want to clearly teach, explain, and apply what we believe is a biblically accurate understanding of the ordinance of Believer's Baptism.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AT MY BAPTISM?

Because baptism by immersion was the practice of the early church, and best illustrates our union with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, we practice baptism by immersion. That being the case, you should wear a swimsuit with shorts and a dark-colored t-shirt for modesty's sake and bring a towel.

We will give each person being baptized an opportunity to give testimony to what God has done in your life to bring you to faith in Jesus. After that, each person will enter the water, you will be asked a few questions enabling you to give clear testimony to your faith in Jesus, and then be baptized (for more details see the “Baptism Service” at the end of this document.) After that, the person performing the baptism will dip you backwards into the water.

Who is going to baptize me?

Any of the Elders at WCC would consider it an honor and privilege to baptize you. We encourage you to think about those that have had significant impact in your Christian life, and if they are followers of Christ we would encourage you to have them baptize you. This would mean that believing parents could baptize their children, etc. If you would prefer, however, to have one of the elders at WCC baptize you, please just indicate that.

Should I invite unsaved friends and family to my baptism?

Absolutely! Your baptism is a perfectly appropriate time to clearly declare the decision you have made to put your trust and faith in Jesus to those that you care deeply about!

What if I'm not ready to be baptized right now?

If you have additional questions or concerns about baptism, or aren't yet sure of your own faith in Jesus, we would consider it an honor to continue walking with you in this journey. When you have put your faith in Christ and are ready to take this step of obedience, we would consider it an honor to be part of your baptism.

I was baptized as an infant, do I need to be baptized again?

While we understand the tradition of baptizing infants, we believe that the Bible teaches "Believer's Baptism" or that a person believes in Jesus first, and then is baptized. If you examine the passages in this study, you will see that belief or becoming a disciple always precedes baptism. Baptism is a public profession and illustration of what Jesus has accomplished for you as your Lord and Savior. If you would like more information on our stance, please let one of the Elders know and we would be happy to dialogue with you.

THE BAPTISM SERVICE

Prior to entering the water, the person desiring to be baptized will be given the opportunity to give your testimony (we will provide a testimony worksheet) of how God has worked in your life to bring you to faith in Jesus.

After entering the water, the person administering the baptism will ask the following questions:

Question: Are you, _____, trusting in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of your sins for the fulfillment of all of his promises to you, including eternal life?

Answer: I am or Yes

Question: Do you intend, with the Lord's help, to obey Jesus' teachings and to follow Him as your Lord?

Answer: I do or Yes

Elder (or person administering the baptism) response just before immersion: Upon your profession of faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, and in obedience to his command, I now baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Elder (or person administering the baptism) response during immersion: Buried in Christ

Elder (or person administering the baptism) exhortation following immersion: Go and walk in Newness of Life!

Congregation/witnesses following immersion: Until the end...forever more!

FINAL THOUGHTS ON BAPTIZING CHILDREN

The Bible does not provide us with a one-size-fits-all method for handling childhood conversion and baptism. Yet in applying biblical wisdom, we believe we can glean several principles that will help decide when a child should be baptized.

1. We should actively share the gospel with our children, and we should encourage them when they trust Christ.

We should never communicate to children that they are too young to understand the gospel or must wait before trusting in Christ. Jesus said, “Let the little children come!”

2. Those who are baptized must be able to make a credible profession of faith.

We are told in God’s Word that “*faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ*” (Romans 10:17). In order to receive salvation, the Gospel must be heard, understood and believed. A credible profession of faith, understands the “word of Christ (the Gospel), including the effect of

sin, Jesus finished work on cross and the call to walk in the newness of life. Baptism is only intended for those who have received the saving benefits of Christ through the new birth of the Holy Spirit. Parents, you should ensure, to the best of your ability, that your child understands the Gospel. This [pamphlet](#) is a helpful resource.

3. Is there a minimum age for baptism?

Because Scripture does not shackle us to a certain age or make clear prescriptions in this area, we must exercise restraint in making dogmatic assertions regarding the “proper age” for baptism. It’s wisdom we are after, not uniformity.

Generally speaking, we would encourage you to hold off on baptizing your children until they are at an age where they can understand their sin, Jesus’ finished work on the cross for the forgiveness of their sins and the call to walk in the newness of life. In most cases we would encourage you to wait until your child is 9-10 years old and has exhibited an understanding of the Gospel.

But we do believe that we should be very careful in how we handle the precious little ones that the Lord has entrusted to our care – neither discouraging them from believing in Christ nor giving them false assurance of their decision by speedily baptizing them.