

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 17TH, 2026 // BAPTISM WEEKEND

IDENTIFIES US AS CHRIST FOLLOWERS

This is a public display that we have chosen a life of faith in Jesus. We take on the “new man” or woman and are “brought to life.” It is the most evident part of our adoption into the family of God and should mark a turning point.

- **Baptism is not salvation but a response to being saved and a physical representation of it.**

AN OUTWARD SIGN OF AN INWARD WORK

Baptism is a tangible example to those in our community that we are a “new creation.”

- Baptism doesn't make us Christians. It is a symbol, like a wedding ring, that we are Christ followers.
- **We die to sin (buried in water) and are raised to new life in Christ (coming out of the water).**

WE'RE RESURRECTED

THE SYMBOLISM OF A FRESH START

Baptism symbolizes us dying to ourselves and being buried, but more importantly, it identifies us with rising again!

- We will have struggles, but from this moment on, we are labeled as new creations, no longer slaves to our former selves! We're all born into some kind of struggle; this is why we must be born again.
- *“Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life”* (Romans 6:3–4, CSB).
- *“For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be in the likeness of his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be rendered powerless so that we may no longer be enslaved to sin, since a person who has died is freed from sin”* (Romans 6:5–7, CSB).
- Becoming a Christian and choosing to get baptized doesn't mean we won't make mistakes. It does mean **we are no longer slaves to sinful lifestyles**. This means **we can be delivered and permanently changed**.
- **The point of salvation is deliverance from destruction. Jesus gives us a fresh start.**

A NEW IDENTITY

BAPTISM ISN'T A MAGICAL FORMULA

The words spoken over someone getting baptized are not as important as the genuineness of the person's heart making the public profession.

- **How we pray for people getting baptized is important, but the understanding of why this event is taking place and Whose identity they are adopting is more important.**
- *“For those of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus”* (Galatians 3:27–28, CSB).

ABOVE ALL THINGS, WE FIND OUR IDENTITY IN JESUS

Salvation only comes when we identify ourselves as followers of Jesus above all things, even gender, occupation, nationality, or skin color.

- That's why understanding our new identity in Christ is vitally important. **We are no longer identified by our past mistakes.**

THE EXAMPLE

“But Jesus said, ‘It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.’ So John agreed to baptize him. After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him” (Matthew 3:15–16, NLT).

- *“And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy’”* (Matthew 3:17, NLT).

WE FOLLOW CHRIST'S EXAMPLE

Jesus had no reason to get baptized since He had never committed sin. He got baptized to set an example for us. As followers of Jesus, **we should want to follow His example**.

- **Jesus never asks us to do anything He hasn't already done.** We also see that His baptism brought the Father “great joy.”

WE FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF OTHERS

- 1) On the day of Pentecost, about **3,000** were baptized.
- 2) Philip baptized the **Ethiopian eunuch**.
- 3) **Saul/Paul** was baptized after his Damascus road conversion.
- 4) **Cornelius and his family** were baptized.
- 5) **The Philippian jailer** and his household were baptized.

THE COMMISSION

- *“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age”* (Matthew 28:19–20, CSB).
- *“If you love me, you will keep my commands”* (John 14:15, CSB).

IT'S SIMPLY ABOUT OBEDIENCE

We are naturally rebellious because of humanity's fallen state. As people who claim to follow Christ, **we need to stop debating God and just start following His lead and instruction**.

- Though I cannot explain everything about baptism, I know **it is imperative to follow God's instruction**.

DO WE HAVE TO?

BAPTISM IS NOT WHAT SAVES US...

We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8), and faith is much more than a simple acknowledgment (James 2:19).

- **The Bible does not support a “faith” in Christ leading us to be unchanged and disobedient.** This is the difference between saving faith and the empty faith that Paul described in 2 Corinthians 6:1.
- *“Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not as the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him”* (1 Peter 3:21–22, CSB).

A LIFE “PLEDGED” TO GOD

Salvation is more than a one-time experience; it is a lifelong relationship with Jesus. Though initial salvation may happen at conversion, baptism is one of the first steps in obedience to Jesus, and **without obedience to Jesus, we cannot be saved**.

- **Baptism shows the world our pledge to live a life that obeys and honors God.**

HOW SHOULD ONE RESPOND TO THE GOSPEL?

Belief: Realizing that Jesus is the Savior. **Repentance:** Heartfelt sorrow for the sin we've committed, a desire to change, and a denial of self in order to walk in obedience to Jesus. **Daily faith:** Saving faith is personal trust in Jesus that is active every day. It is complete surrender to Him. **Baptism:** The outward profession of the inward work of grace.

WE NEED TO CHECK OUR HEARTS

If we understand the weight of sin and the grace God has shown us through His forgiveness, we will start to approach God in humility and obedience.

- **When we start asking how little we must do to please the Lord, there is a much bigger heart issue that is revealed and that needs to be addressed.**

ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS

- The questions about our relationship with God should never be centered around **“What do I HAVE to do?”**
- After we start to understand His sacrifice for us, we should respond with questions centered around **“What more CAN I do for Christ?”**

RESPONDING TO THE CROSS

- **Today, we all have an opportunity to respond to what Jesus has done for us.**
- If you don't have a relationship with Christ, we can help you **start that journey**.
- If you have recently committed to Christ, you can make that public through **baptism**.
- If you already follow, you can remember the cross through taking **Communion**.