

# BAPTISM FAQ'S



## What does baptism mean?

Baptism is a symbol and a declaration; a symbol of all that Jesus has done for us and in us, and a declaration of our commitment to follow Him. There are a number of pictures that the Bible uses to talk about baptism. Here are four with some handy Bible verses!

### 1. **It's like a grave (sorry to be morbid!)** Romans 6 v 1-11 & Colossians 2 v 11-14

The Bible says that placing our faith in Jesus means dying to our old way of life; changing and living a new life with Him at the centre. Going under the water signifies the death of our old life, like going down into a grave, and coming up out of the water signifies the start of a new life. It reminds us of what's happened and is a sign to others of our decision.

### 2. **It's like a birth** John 3 & 2 Corinthians 5

The Bible also says that to know Jesus and be part of His kingdom we need to be born again: to undergo a radical change. Similar to dying to our old way of life we need to be completely changed by Jesus, such that we are 'born again'. In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul says we are 'new creations'. As we come up from the water in baptism it symbolises this 'new birth'; starting a new life, as a new creation.

### 3. **It's like a bath** Acts 22 v 16

The Bible talks of sin as something that makes us unclean and separates us from God. Forgiveness is spoken of as making us clean. We often sing about how Jesus' death on the cross washes us clean from sin, restoring our relationship with God. Baptism is the symbol of our sins being washed away, a bit like a bath.

### 4. **It means joining a family** Galatians 3 v 26-29

The Bible says that through Jesus a new family was created; a family made up of all sorts of different people and cultures. It is faith in Jesus that is the distinguishing feature of this family. When we choose to follow Jesus, we become 'brothers' and 'sisters' with everyone else who has chosen to follow Him. Baptism signifies our transition into our new worldwide family.

## Why should I get baptised?

We encourage all followers of Jesus to be baptised for a few reasons.

1. Firstly, it's a step of obedience, Jesus told his disciples to tell people about him and baptise them (Matthew 28 v 19). In fact, Jesus, himself got baptised (Matthew 3 v 13 -17).
2. Secondly, throughout church history baptism has been seen as a 'means of grace' God uses it as a way to pour out His blessing. Often people say that baptism was a hugely encouraging experience. It gives us a chance to declare publically all that Jesus has done, reminds us of how He has changed and is changing our lives. It allows others to celebrate with us, reminding them of the goodness of God, and it testifies to those who don't know Jesus about who He is.
3. Finally, through baptism we become wonderfully unified with all other believers at all times and in all places, as everyone who comes to know Jesus is encouraged to be baptised.

## When should I get baptised?

If you're committed to following Jesus - if you've made the decision that you want to follow him for the rest of your life then baptism is an important step of obedience to take. You don't need to wait, go for it. It's not about having everything sorted, the Bible tells us that many people believed and were baptised immediately! (Acts 2 and 8). Baptism is just saying 'I believe in Jesus and I want to follow Him'.

## Do I have to be baptised?

Baptism itself doesn't save us; there is nothing magic about the water. Instead it's a symbol of something that has already happened. We are saved by faith in Jesus and all that He has done for us in His life, death and resurrection, nothing else is needed. However, having said that, for the reasons mentioned above we do strongly recommend that every follower of Jesus be baptised. Jesus commanded that we should get baptised and if it's important to Him, then it's important to us!

### **What if I've been baptised before?**

If you were following Jesus when you were baptised, then biblically there is no reason to get baptised again. If, you were christened as a child, and feel like you only made a decision about Jesus much later in life, then you may want to consider being baptised as an adult and we would be happy to talk with you about that. If you are feeling at all unsure then please feel free to get in touch.

### **Will I have to speak on stage in front of everyone?**

You don't have to share your story on stage if you would prefer not to, but it is an inspiring part of your day. It can be done conversation-style or in the form of a relaxed interview, but make sure you write down what you would like to share before the day – nerves can do wonders!

### **How long will I be under the water?**

You will be submerged under the water only briefly. You will be lowered down under the water and brought back up again with two people supporting you. If you are sensitive to being under water or unable to access the baptism pool, then just let us know.

### **What does getting baptised look like?**

When we baptise people here we tend to do so by entirely immersing them in water and then immediately bringing them up. We do this in a pool that we put up just in front of the stage. There are several reasons why we baptise in this way:

1. Firstly, it's what the word used in the bible means. The word 'baptism' comes from the Greek word 'baptismn' which means to 'be drenched' to drown or 'to immerse' something in water.
2. Secondly, every account of baptism in the New Testament seems to have been carried out in this way. The person being baptised was immersed or put completely under the water and brought back up again. It often took place in rivers because they needed that quantity of water (Mark 1 v 5, Mark 1 v 10, Acts 8 v 36 – 38).
3. Thirdly, all that baptism symbolises (see 'What does baptism mean?') is best and most effectively symbolised when someone is fully immersed. The act of going under the water and coming back up is an appropriate symbol of the reality that it points to.