

Baptism

Water: We drink it, cook with it, swim in it, and bathe in it. We also use it in a Christian ritual, Baptism. But the value of water in Baptism is in symbol, not substance.

BAPTISM IS A SPIRITUAL RITE-OF-PASSAGE

Spiritual life involves constant progress. That progress is marked by transitions from one level of faith to another. Baptism is the mark of our most important transition.

The ritual of Baptism duplicates the model of Jesus Christ when He was crucified, buried, and returned to life. When Christ rose, His body was different than before. He was free from the limitations and pain of mortality. This is the transition from death to life.

The Christian life follows His pattern. We "sacrifice" our lives by giving them to God. Our old lives, with their wrong actions and evil desires, are "buried." God then gives us a new life, inspired and energized by His Spirit. Baptism represents this three-stage process. We believe in Jesus and join Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism is our rite-of-passage into the Christian life.

If we're willing to be baptized, we're ready for the sacrifices and joy of following Jesus.

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Something happens in baptism we cannot see or control. It is the invisible work of God's Spirit in the person being baptized. We tend to exaggerate the external rite of Baptism and miss the more important spiritual part.

Baptism is a physical act, but isn't "magic." When people of genuine faith are baptized as an act of obedience to Jesus, they are "initiated" into the Church, God's spiritual community on earth (1Corinthians 12:13). Their Baptism becomes a powerful witness of God's forgiveness, the end of their old life, and the beginning of their new life in Christ.

THE PHYSICAL RITUAL

The act of Baptism involves being submerged in water—or sometimes sprinkled—to symbolize the death, burial, and resurrection, which we share with Christ (Romans 6:3-7). As the person being baptized is immersed, the minister pronounces the words, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." In this way we "act out" our new allegiance to God and identify ourselves with His people.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Every Christian needs to be baptized and should try to make it one of their first spiritual acts. (Matthew 28:19) The rest of our Christian life depends on our willingness to obey Jesus and go with Him through death into new life.

Jesus commands us to be baptized because He wants to mark us as His own, fill us with His Spirit, make us members of His church, and have us grow in God.

BAPTISM IS A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE

Jesus does something special for you in Baptism by recognizing a point in time when you leave the old life and enter the new. Through Baptism He brings you another step closer to God's design for you.

Our church celebrates Baptism as an act of worship. The whole church is involved. We sing, pray, and seek to draw close to God. When you're being baptized, it's good to know God is near and, on the other side of your Baptism; the church welcomes you into a more complete, Christ-ordered life.

If you have questions, please give us a call.