

Baptism is Important

by Leith Anderson

Important because of our obedience to Christ

Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." When we love Jesus Christ we want to do what He says. Love and obedience include baptism. Jesus was obedient to the Father, and to fulfill all righteousness was baptized. The disciples were baptized. The early Christians were baptized. In Peter's first sermon after Pentecost, he preached saying, "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38). Obedience to Jesus Christ is a privilege, a joy, and also a responsibility. More important than our personal ideas about baptism is our Christian commitment to please Jesus Christ. And, Jesus commanded us to be baptized!

Our baptism is a powerful testimony to others

Biblical baptism is a commitment. Jesus said, "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:32,33).

Baptism is a great expression of Christian discipleship.

Biblical baptism involves us with God's people the church. When we are baptized we are declaring our participation in the body of Christ. There is a mutual responsibility; the individual is responsible to submit to and love the church; and the church is responsible to love and nurture the one baptized.

Biblical baptism is a submissive act

When we are baptized we are humbly admitting that we are sinners who can't forgive our own sins. We admit we need Jesus Christ as Savior. It is an act of submission to God to be baptized in front of witnesses.

Therefore make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

Important because of our testimony to others

Baptism is a testimony of our conversion to Jesus Christ. In the Bible, baptism always demonstrates belief in Jesus Christ. First comes faith and then comes baptism as an outward symbol of faith. Salvation comes only through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8,9); therefore, baptism is not necessary for salvation. However, salvation is necessary before baptism. In baptism we are telling others that we are now Christians.

Baptism is a testimony of the gospel story. "Having been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12). Baptism is a witness (an acting out) of the gospel story. Christ died and we are dead to sin through salvation; Christ was buried and we are burying our old sinful life; Christ was raised and we are raised to a new life in Christ.

When Jesus died, was buried and rose again he was buried in the ground. Baptism is a drama reenacting what Jesus did for us only it is in water and only for a few seconds. That's why we practice baptism by immersion at Triangle Community Church. The Christian is completely immersed in water in order to follow the Bible's practice as closely and meaningfully as possible.

At Triangle Community Church, most baptisms are conducted in the baptistry in the multipurpose room, although outdoor baptisms sometimes are scheduled during the summer.

Baptism is a testimony of our identification

The original Bible word (in Greek), *baptidzo* literally means "to dip, to plunge, to place into a liquid." Just as a cloth placed into a vat of dye is "identified" with the dye, so in baptism a Christian is identified with Jesus Christ. You have "clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

We also identify with the church (the body of Jesus Christ), "for we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free and we were all given the one Spirit to drink" (1 Corinthians 12:13).