

# BAPTISM

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# WELCOME

The New Testament records two ordinances instituted by Jesus: The Lord's Supper and Baptism. An ordinance is a command given by Jesus for his followers to remember and proclaim the truth of who he is, what he has done, and what he will do.

Baptism is going public about your faith and what Jesus has done in your life. Since you're here today, you've likely experienced the grace, power and love of Jesus in your life.

Today we will cover the following:

- What the gospel is.
- What the Bible says about baptism.
- What will happen on the day of your baptism.
- How to prepare your personal faith story.

# GOSPEL

## GOSPEL

Understanding the message of the gospel is essential for all who publicly identify as believers in Jesus Christ through baptism.

The word "gospel" simply means "good news" and it refers to the good news that God has made a way for us to be reconciled to him (and therefore in a right relationship with him) through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The gospel has four essential parts:

- Creation
- Fall
- Redemption
- Restoration

### CREATION

Understanding the gospel begins with acknowledging that there is a good and holy God and that he created the universe and all that is in it, including every human being (Genesis 1:1; 26-27) and that therefore he is the rightful ruler over all of creation, including you and I. This understanding becomes the foundation for our faith and the framework through which we see and understand all of life.

Do you believe that God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and of humanity and therefore the rightful ruler of all of it?

# GOSPEL

## FALL

The word "fall" refers to the moment in time when the first humans, Adam and Eve, chose to disobey God. God placed them in an amazing garden, gave them all that they would ever need and much more and set only one place off limits – the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2:15-17). However, in spite of God's incredible grace and provision they chose to disobey God's command and ate of that one tree and as a result sin entered the world and brought with it death – both spiritual death and physical death. It also separated us from God and made us liable to punishment for our rebellion against God. As a result of Adam and Eve's sin all of humanity is sinful – both born sinful and choosing to sin and therefore all of humanity is due the wrath of God for our rebellion against Him (Romans 3:23).

Do you believe and acknowledge that you are a sinner and due God's wrath for your sin and rebellion against him?

## REDEMPTION

"Redemption" means to "buy back" or to "pay the price" to set someone free from captivity or punishment. This is what Jesus did for us through his death on the cross (Romans 3:21-25). Because Jesus was the Son of God and because he lived a sinless life, his death paid the price for our sins. To receive that payment, often called "salvation", we have to repent of our sins, put our faith in Jesus, believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, thus vindicating or proving that he was who he said he was, and submit our lives to his leadership by making him the Lord and ruler of our life (Romans 10:9-10).

Do you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead?

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

**ROMANS 10:9**

# GOSPEL

## RESTORATION

The resurrection of Jesus was not only vindication or proof that he is the Son of God. It is also a picture or symbol of what God is in the process of doing – he is in the process of restoring all of creation under the rightful rule and reign of God. This is what Jesus referred to as the kingdom of God (Mark 1:15). It is everywhere where creation and the people living there are conducting their lives in the way that God always intended them to live – in peace and love and holiness, loving both God and others. To become a follower of Jesus is about more than simply a personal relationship with God through Jesus. It is about joining the work of God in all of creation to restore and renew all things in Christ. This is an ongoing process that will one day be completed when Jesus returns (2 Peter 3:13).

Do you understand that being a follower of Jesus means joining the work that God is doing throughout the world to restore and reconcile all of creation to a right relationship with him?

This is the message of the gospel. These are the most foundational truths for a follower of Jesus.

Do you have any other questions?

# BAPTISM

## WHAT IS BAPTISM?

### THE PATTERN OF BECOMING A CHRISTIAN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

By God's grace and power, there is a pattern in the New Testament of people hearing the gospel and then responding to it by repenting, believing in Jesus and being baptized (Acts 2:37-41; Acts 8:30-39; Romans 10:14-17).

It's the same pattern today. When you hear the good news about Jesus (the gospel) and then repent and believe in Jesus, you are born again. You are considered a new creation. This means that you have been cleansed from your old life. Your sins have been washed away. Now, you are a new person with a new heart and a new life. You are united to a new Saviour, living for a new Lord, adopted into a new family, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 3:8; Romans 6:3-4; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 2:11-14; Titus 3:4-7; Galatians 4:4-7). Based on God's grace and your faith in Jesus, you have a new personal relationship with him.

# BAPTISM

## BAPTISM IS A PUBLIC SIGN OF YOUR NEW PERSONAL FAITH AND LIFE

It's a **sign**. Baptism signifies your new relationship with Jesus. It functions as an illustration or picture of what Jesus has done in your life. Submersion under the water illustrates your death to your old life and rising out of the water illustrates your new life with Christ. In effect, you are announcing: "I am not just a better person; in fact, I am a new person because of Jesus Christ." In this way, baptism is an external sign that points to that inward reality.

It's a **public sign**. Baptism serves as an announcement to everyone else of God's work in that person's life. While faith in Jesus is a personal matter, it is certainly not a private one. Baptism publicly communicates that our devotion is to Christ above all else.

It is generally, although not always, an **initial sign**. Baptism is one of the first steps of obedience for a Christian. There is a close relationship and timeline between repenting, believing and baptism throughout the New Testament. For this reason, baptism is an initial expression of a person's active and genuine faith in Jesus. However, there are times when people have waited longer periods between their conversion and their baptism. While not as common, this doesn't make their faith in Jesus less real or genuine. That said, a person's willingness to be baptized even after some time is nevertheless a very important sign of their allegiance to Christ.

## WHAT BAPTISM IS NOT

**Baptism does not save us**, nor does it make you "feel better" or change your circumstances. People receive salvation by God's grace through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). The water does not wash away our sins. Jesus does that (1 John 1:7). It is his power, not baptism, that grants you salvation.

We were buried therefore with him by baptism  
into death, in order that, just as Christ was  
raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,  
we too might walk in newness of life.

**ROMANS 6:4**

# BAPTISM

## WHO IS BAPTIZED?

We will baptize any believer who professes to follow Jesus Christ, regardless of their age.

Those seeking to be baptized will need to demonstrate an understanding of the gospel. They may be asked to undergo additional steps prior to being baptized, such as an application, a class, or an interview.

If a young child (under 11) asks to be baptized the following procedures will be followed:

- We will ask the child to wait 6 months to see if they are still interested.
- If they are still interested after 6 months, we will meet with their parents to assess whether they feel that their child is ready to be baptized.
- If the parents feel that the child is ready, a member of the church staff will interview the child to see if they understand the gospel. The child may be asked to undergo additional steps prior to being baptized, such as completion of a worksheet or a similar test of the child's understanding.

Decisions surrounding who may be baptized at Ridge Church will be made on a case-by-case basis.

## HOW ARE WE BAPTIZED?

We are baptized in water by immersion. The Greek word "baptizo" means to dip or submerge, so we immerse in water rather than sprinkle with water. Immersion in water captures the meaning of baptism well, symbolizing our death to life experience.

We baptize in the name of our Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – as Jesus instructed (Matthew 28:19-20).



# BAPTISM

## WHY DO WE BAPTIZE?

**It is an act of obedience and love toward Jesus.** Baptism is an express command of Jesus (Matthew 28:19). It shows our desire and love for Jesus as well as our willingness to obey and follow Jesus above everything and anyone else. This is the first of many ways to hear and obey what Jesus asks of you.

**It is an act of identification with Jesus and his Church.** It's been happening since the time of the New Testament church. All believers, past and present, are united in Christ. We are part of one body, one Spirit, with one faith and one God and Father (Ephesians 4:4-5). Your baptism lets everyone know who we are for and who you are with. In this way, baptism not only points to people's new life with Christ, but also new life with Christ's body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:4-6).

**It is an act of worship,** as we point people to the glory and greatness of God in Jesus. In this way, our baptisms function as an apologetic for God and his grace, as we declare how he has made us new people through his Son.

# BAPTISM

## PREPARING YOUR TESTIMONY

*Use this guide as you prepare to write your testimony. Aim to tell your story in about 200 words (one page double-spaced). When you read it out loud, it should be about a minute long.*

What was your life like before Christ?

- Tell people a little about who you used to be.

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How did you realize your need for a saviour?

- Mention a person, a Bible verse, or an event that helped you realize you were a sinner in need of Jesus' love and forgiveness.

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How did you come to know Christ?

- Explain how and when you came to know Jesus as your saviour. Focus on what it looked like to surrender your life to him.

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Who was someone that God used to point you towards Christ?

- This could be your youth leader, someone who mentored you, or even a family member or a pastor.

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How has your life changed since you came to Christ?

- Share how your life is different today than it was apart from Jesus. Do you have more joy or peace? Have relationships been restored?

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*Reflect on your answers to these questions as you write your testimony. Remember, your testimony should be about a minute long. Aim to write about 200 words (one page double-spaced).*



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