

The Significance of Baptism

Here are some thoughts we, at Kelso Christian Assembly, have put together for you in order to help you understand the significance of baptism and the “whys” behind it. We hope you find this helpful and we are excited that you have decided to take this step in your journey as a Christian!

1. **The ceremony of baptism.** Churches all through the ages have made a ceremony of baptism. And while there is no magic in baptism, it is definitely powerful. Baptism is a significant **public** act of union; union between YOU and GOD. It is similar to a **wedding ceremony**. Everybody knows that it’s not really the ceremony that “makes” you married, but hardly anybody denies the significance of the act. There is great power in standing before God, a pastor, your family, friends, and the public to declare your love for and commitment to God.
2. **The confession of faith.** If you are going to be baptized, you **must** have made a confession of faith (**This it is the single requirement - period**), which is in many ways a confession of mutual love.

* 1 John 4:9, 10 & 19: This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. [So] we love because he first loved us.

* There really is no other union that is more important than the one between the human and his/her Maker, because it is made possibly by the power of the sacrifice of God himself in Jesus Christ.

3. **Why be baptized?** There are five good reasons.
(1) Jesus commanded it.

Mathew 28:19 records the final words of Christ on earth, and among them were instructions to his disciples to go out, telling people the good news of the gospel and that any who believed should be baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Pretty simple instruction there!

(2) He himself had people baptized during his ministry!

In **John chapters 3 and 4:1-2**, we see that the Pharisees had heard that more people were baptized in Jesus’ ministry than had been in John’s. Here we see that this was a functional part of Jesus’ ministry, and we can assume that it was important to Him.

(3) Not only does he command it for us, but, Jesus himself was also baptized which serves as a lasting example to us!

Matthew 3:13-16:

¹³ Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to talk him out of it. “I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,” he said, “so why are you coming to me?”¹⁵ But Jesus said, *“It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.”* So John agreed to baptize him.¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”

(4) As a result of Jesus’ adoption and command, baptism of new believers is a part of the unbroken history of the Christian church.

- a. **Acts 2:41**, 3,000 new converts at Pentecost “Those who accepted the message were baptized in water.
- b. In **Acts 10: 47**, when the Household of Cornelius believes and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Peter’s first thought is to see them baptized with water.

- c. After Philip meets the Ethiopian on the desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza (**Acts 8:26-39**), and explains Isaiah 53 to the man's conversion. Philip immediately baptizes that man.

(5) Finally, the act of baptism itself captures the simple but profound truth that we share in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- a. **Romans 6:3:** "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 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."

Paul goes on to explain in **Romans chapter 8**, that we vicariously share in the death of Christ and thus the penalty of sin is removed from us ("Therefore there is now NO CONDEMNATION for those who are in Christ Jesus") – even more, we share in the resurrection of Christ and thus new life is given to us! The old life is gone and the new life it says is literally coming – in process. By Christ's work we are declared clean, once and for all. Then by the Spirit, we can begin to experience the "new life."

4. Why Water and why UNDERwater?

- * Very simply, historically baptism in water was a culturally understood act. It elicited images of ceremonial cleansing which were customary in that time. Water was symbolic of washing away sin and of being clean before God and men.
- * The plunge into the water also symbolizes (on a deeper level) the descent into death and the rising into new life.
- * The amount of water, or even the water itself, is not what is significant. Baptism is an outward "declaration" of what God has done and is doing inside of you. He has "washed you clean" and given you a fresh start at a life filled with HIM, as well as the hope, future and purpose He brings.

How the service will proceed

On Sunday morning, please attend the meeting in the Accordion Room at 9AM for final directions. Check in with Rhonda. Some other information for you:

1. Please plan to share just before your baptism. You may share, for example:
 - How you got to this point in your walk with Jesus/how you ended up at KCA
 - Something God has done in your life
 2. - A simple statement of faith like "I love God and want to serve Him with my life."
 3. *Please don't allow yourself to worry about this part....this can be as simple as a 20 second statement!
 4. 2. Plan to wear something that can get wet. Sometimes girls wear a swimsuit under shorts and a t-shirt, or guys might wear swim shorts with a t shirt. Whatever you wear, be sure it is still modest when wet! And bring a change of clothes unless you don't mind heading home in wet clothes! And **don't forget to bring a towel!**
3. Invite people! This is your chance to convince friends or family members to come to church who might not normally attend! Maximize this milestone in your Christian life by sharing it with others!

This is going to be a great day. You will always look back on this event as one of the mile-markers in your walk of faith!

Please let me know if you have any questions!

Rhonda Jorgenson