

Baptism

I. What baptism is not

1. Is not a work which saves or justifies you before God (Romans 3:24)
2. It is not an act which regenerates (Titus 3:5-7)

II. What baptism is: a symbolic-sacramental expression of the Gospel of salvation which you are already experiencing

A. Fundamental truth of **Romans 6:1-10**

1. spiritual union with Christ's: (1) death (2) burial and (3) resurrection
2. symbol: (1) died to your old life (2) buried your sinful nature (3) raised to a new life free from guilt and empowered to live by the Holy Spirit

B. Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: You are baptized in the name of the Father as a recognition of His justification and adoption of you. This recognition is a result of your belief and profession of Jesus as Savior. You are baptized in the name of the Son because of your belief and profession of Jesus Christ as the One who delivered you from your sinful nature. You are baptized in the name of the Holy Spirit because by your belief and profession of Jesus as Savior the Spirit has created you a new person, empowers you to live a holy life, and seals you until the day of redemption. **Matthew 28:19**

III. Confessional nature of baptism

- A. Personal confession part of the ceremony cf Romans 10:6-11
- B. Content: profession that you (1) recognize and repent of your sinful nature (Ezekiel 18:32; Romans 2:4), (2) accept Jesus' sacrifice as your reconciliation to a just God (Colossians 1:19-20), and (3) commit to follow Jesus Christ in a new life all of your days through the Holy Spirit's strength (Ephesians 2:14ff)
- C. Immersion: symbolizes the cleansing from sin, your turning from the past, and your intent to walk a holy life with expectation of your perfection in a future state of redemption at Christ's second coming cf. Romans 6ff
- D. Practically: you are asked to: (1) give a short testimony (2) give a profession of faith (3) be immersed in the name of the Father, Son, Holy Spirit cf again Romans 10:6-11 and Matthew 28:19

IV. Readings and Reflections Prior to your Baptism

A. A first thought-**On your being born of water and spirit John 3:3-8**

This passage teaches that the person born of water has repented of their sinful nature. It is the baptism of repentance that John the Baptist called the people to. Repentance is our recognition that God is holy and we are not. It involves sadness that we rebel against God's will for us, a desire to "change our nature" that we might live in God's freedom even as He has called, and acceptance of the death of Jesus Christ in our place as payment for the price of our rebellious attitude and actions. In order to repent we

must be born of spirit meaning that upon repentance, the Holy Spirit changes our nature in order that we might begin the journey of godly obedience. Your choice to be baptized is both a step in obedience to Christ's command to make disciples (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38) and a testimony of your experience of the Holy Spirit working in your life (1 Peter 1:2).

Reflection: Stop and think about your attitude toward sinning against God. Does sinning cause you to grieve? Think about the peace God has given you because He declares you forgiven. When you are immersed in the water prepare yourself to experience it as a symbol of God's washing of your sins away and as you come up, as a symbol of the new person that God is creating you to be forever. **See also Titus 3:5**

- B. A second thought-**On Dying to Sin and Being Resurrected in Christ-Romans 6:1-11** This passage teaches that by associating yourself with Christ in His death, you not only experience forgiveness of sins but also, you experience His resurrection life in your very being. **See also Ephesians 1:18-20.** You experience both the awareness of what sin is and an awareness of what holiness is. Your declaration in baptism is indeed a statement that your old sinful nature has been put to death and buried. Further, you are aware of a new nature, His resurrection nature, that is alive in you making you into the holy person that you shall be forever.

Reflection: Spend some quiet time about how Scripture comes to mind as you walk through this week. See if it influences your life toward obedience to God. That influence is a part of the resurrection life at work within you. When you are immersed in the water prepare yourself to experience it as a symbol of burying all the sinful part of your life with Christ (past, present, and future) and as you come up, as a symbol of the resurrection life at work in you now and that you will be fully transformed into at Christ's second coming. **See also Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58**