



Baptism – Light and Life Church

Why baptism?

You might be thinking to yourself; 'What would happen to me if I got baptised?' Well the word 'baptise' is a Greek word and literally means to 'immerse' or 'plunge'. So baptism involves being immersed in water for a brief moment!

Why on earth do we do this? Well partly because **Jesus did it** (*Matthew 3:13-16*), and then also **he commanded his followers to do it too.**

(*Matthew 28:19- 20*).

So, very simply, it's a way of publicly showing that you are following Jesus.

BUT WHY DO I HAVE TO GET WET?

It is very important to understand that the water of baptism is not actually doing anything to you spiritually. There is nothing special about the water.

It is just ordinary water (and in our case sea water).

In this sense baptism is just a picture or symbol of what has already happened in your life when you decided to follow Jesus.

We therefore only baptise people who have already become believers and are open about their commitment to Jesus. To see this principle in the Bible have a look at *Acts 2:38-41* and *16:14-15*. It may also be helpful to see three different pictures that illustrate what baptism is about.

WHAT DOES THE PICTURE OF BAPTISM MEAN?

1. Baptism is like a bath.

We have baths because in

life we all get dirty. We immerse

ourselves in the water to wash away any dirt and then come out with a nice 'after-bath' feeling of being really clean. Deep down everyone feels 'dirty' on the inside because we do things that we know are wrong and everyone would love to feel completely clean, by being forgiven.

Baptism is to show outwardly that when we came to Jesus and asked for forgiveness, he made us clean on the inside (*Acts 22:16*). Now we have that 'after-bath' feeling of being 'really clean' and baptism is like a public bath that symbolises this.

2. Baptism is like a funeral and a party.

The baptism pool, river or sea is also like a watery grave.

The old life that we lived before we were Christians, dies and is buried.

Romans Ch.6:3-4 tells us that when we believed in Jesus, it was as if that old self was killed on the cross with Jesus, and then buried with him. This is because Jesus' death was for all the sinful stuff that our old self was guilty of and he dealt with it and buried it for us. As Jesus died, the power of our old life of sin and its grip of eternal death also died with him. This means that just as Jesus came back to a new life, we too have been given a new life to live with God. Surely this is worth celebrating – that's why it's a party. As you go down into the water and then rise up again, it is a picture of this.

3. Baptism is like an identity parade

Baptism marks you out as one of Jesus' followers no matter what the cost. In *Mark 8:31-38*

Jesus tells us as his followers

that it will cost him his life in order to be able to forgive our sin and give us new life with God (v.31+32). But then Jesus goes on to tell us that if we are really going to follow him, we must be willing to pay the price of being publicly known as his. Baptism identifies with Jesus in every way, including his sufferings, so that we might receive eternal life as we follow him.

It is therefore a great opportunity to invite family and friends so that they can see your commitment to Christ and think through what it would mean for them to follow Jesus. The Church will therefore do the service in a way that helps them to feel comfortable and able to think this all through.

WHAT WILL I HAVE TO DO? You will be asked to simply explain how you have come to know Jesus as your Lord and Saviour. This will take place in the service before we go down to the sea. When we reach the sea you will then together make the 'baptism vows' in front of the people who have gathered. Finally, you will go into the sea one at a time with the Pastor and a helper. The Pastor will say your name followed by '*On confession of your faith in Jesus Christ and at your own request I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*'. You will be gently lowered into the water and out again. (Ask a friend to carry your towel and help you as you come out of the water.)

Baptisms are a time of real celebration as we express commitment to Jesus. It gives God pleasure to see you obeying him and expressing devotion to him, it can be a significant help for those who are not yet Christians and most of all it is a wonderful experience that you will never regret.