

*BAPTISM*

# *THE WATERS OF BAPTISM*

Scott Haus  
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## ***GROUP ICE BREAKER***

Do you have a family tradition that carries great meaning? If so, share with the group what it is.

## ***REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS***

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will connect with a ministry leader about serving.
- I will discover, develop and deploy my spiritual gift.
- I will encourage others in the use of their gifts.

## ***MESSAGE SUMMARY***

This week we talked about baptism, it's symbolism, meaning, and role in the life of a Jesus-follower. It's important to be clear of what baptism is not in order to know what it is. Baptism is not a Christian initiation rite or hazing ritual. It's also not what saves you, or provides forgiveness and freedom from sin.

Baptism is a beautiful picture of belief and faith in God's redemptive work in your life, an outward expression of an inward decision. It connects us to a bigger story, demonstrates a transformation of identity, and reminds us we're part of God's family.

Baptism connects us to a bigger story. There's a running use of imagery through the Bible of God using water to bring about new life. From Genesis 1 and the creation account, Genesis 6 with Noah and the flood, through Exodus 14 as God leads the Israelites out of Egypt, water is used to bring new beginnings. In these "seeds of baptism" we see is a sort of salvation pattern playing itself out.

Baptism also demonstrates a transformation of identity. With the baptism of Jesus, water baptism now shifts from what had become a practice of religious purification and now is understood as an act of identification with the message of the Gospel. It became a demonstration of a new identity as a Jesus-follower.

Finally, baptism reminds us we're a part of God's family. Throughout the New Testament, we are told that to place our faith in Jesus is to be adopted into God's family, with full rights and privileges, our own seat at the family table.

So, if you're a Jesus-follower and you haven't been baptized, maybe that's your best next step!

## ***DISCUSSION QUESTIONS***

1. What are some reasons that may keep people from being baptized? Are those reasons valid or not? If you haven't been baptized, share one thing keeping you from taking that step if you're willing.
2. If you have been baptized, share with the group why you decided to be baptized and what that experience meant to you.
3. How would you explain baptism to someone who doesn't have a belief in or relationship with Jesus?
4. Read Romans 6:1-10. List the ways this passage indicates that baptism illustrates the Gospel?
5. How is dying symbolic of our conversion to following Christ? What dies when we are saved? What is brought to life?
6. In the New Testament, baptism takes place after a person believes in who Jesus was and what He did. Have any of these misconceptions about baptism been a part of your thinking? Are they still, or how have they changed?
  - Baptism of infants.
  - Baptism as a way to cleanse from sin.
  - Baptism for the dead.
  - Baptism is not very significant.

## ***NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)***

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I will speak with someone at Blue Oaks to answer my questions about baptism.
- I will commit to getting baptized.

## ***SCRIPTURE REFERENCES***

- Genesis 6:5-6
- Exodus 14:1-4, 9-10, 13
- Romans 5:12, 15, 17
- Romans 6:1-4
- 1 Peter 3:18-22
- Colossians 2:11-13
- Galatians 3:26-29