

- How does understanding baptism as a 'commissioning' rather than a 'commencement' change the way we approach this act of obedience in our Christian walk?
- Paul writes that we are baptized into Christ's death. What does it mean practically to die to our old self, and how should this reality shape our daily decisions?
- The sermon emphasizes that baptism is a public declaration of faith. Why do you think God designed this ordinance to be witnessed by others rather than a private act?
- How does viewing baptism as a rehearsal of the gospel story—death, burial, and resurrection—deepen your appreciation for what Christ accomplished on the cross?
- The Ethiopian eunuch asked, 'What can stand in the way of me being baptized?' after hearing the gospel. What might be standing in the way of someone taking this step of obedience today?
- Baptists historically faced persecution and even martyrdom for their conviction about believer's baptism by immersion. What does this history teach us about the importance of being faithful to Scripture even when it costs us something?
- The sermon mentions that some people were baptized as infants or before they truly came to faith. How should a believer discern whether they need to be baptized again after genuinely coming to Christ?
- What is the relationship between salvation and baptism, and how do we maintain that baptism is essential obedience without making it a requirement for salvation?
- How does witnessing someone else's baptism serve as a reminder and renewal of our own commitment to Christ and the new life we have in Him?
- The young girl Audrey said she needed to be baptized 'because Jesus told me to.' How does simple obedience to Christ's commands reflect the heart of genuine discipleship?

5-Day Devotional: Living the Baptismal Story

Day 1: Buried and Raised with Christ

Reading: Romans 6:1-11

Devotional: Baptism isn't merely a religious ritual—it's a dramatic reenactment of the gospel itself. When you went beneath the water, you declared your old life dead and buried. When you emerged, gasping and dripping, you proclaimed resurrection life in Christ. Paul reminds us this isn't symbolic wishful thinking but spiritual reality. Your baptism marked a genuine death to sin's dominion and a genuine birth into Christ's kingdom. Today, reflect on this profound truth: you are no longer who you were. The person controlled by sin has been crucified with Christ. You now walk in resurrection power. Let this reality reshape how you face today's temptations and opportunities. You're not trying to become new—you already are.

Day 2: Public Commitment, Private Transformation

Reading: Acts 8:26-40

Devotional: The Ethiopian official's question rings through history: "What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" His eagerness reveals baptism's true nature—a public declaration of private transformation. Philip didn't baptize him secretly or suggest he wait for a more convenient time. The moment faith sparked, baptism followed. Your public commitment to Christ isn't about performance or earning approval; it's about honest testimony. Like a wedding ring announces marital commitment, baptism announces spiritual commitment. Are you living consistently with what you publicly declared? Does your daily life reflect the death-to-self and resurrection-to-Christ your baptism proclaimed? God isn't calling you to perfection but to authenticity—letting your private devotion match your public profession.

Day 3: Following Jesus into the Water

Reading: Matthew 3:13-17

Devotional: Even Jesus, sinless and perfect, submitted to baptism. His reason? "To fulfill all righteousness." Jesus modeled complete obedience to the Father, demonstrating that no command is beneath us when God gives it. Notice the Father's response: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." God's pleasure wasn't earned by baptism but expressed through obedience. When you followed Christ into baptism, you joined a tradition Jesus himself established. You walked where he walked, obeyed as he obeyed. Today, consider what other acts of obedience God might be calling you toward. Are there commands you've rationalized away or delayed? Jesus shows us that faithful obedience, even in seemingly small things, delights the Father's heart and positions us for ministry.

Day 4: The Ongoing Work of the Church

Reading: Ephesians 4:1-16

Devotional: The church's work continues through every season—times of transition, uncertainty, and change. Baptisms happen, children learn Scripture, youth encounter Christ at camp, and the body keeps functioning because Christ, not any human leader, is the Head. Your baptism initiated you into this living organism, this family on mission. You're not a spectator but a participant in God's redemptive work. During uncertain times, remember that God's presence sustains His church. The interim seasons of life—whether in a congregation or your personal journey—aren't pauses in God's plan but integral parts of it. Today, consider your role in the body. How are you contributing to the ongoing work? Your faithfulness matters, especially when circumstances feel abnormal.

Day 5: What Are You Waiting For?

Reading: Acts 22:12-16

Devotional: Ananias confronted Saul with a piercing question: "What are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized." Perhaps you've trusted Christ but delayed baptism. Maybe you were baptized as an infant and now wonder if you should follow Christ in believer's baptism. Or perhaps you were baptized before genuinely understanding salvation. God's call to obedience is clear and present. Baptism doesn't save you—faith in Christ alone does that—but it's the first step of obedience Christ commands. Delaying obedience is still disobedience, regardless of our reasons. Today, honestly examine your heart. If the Spirit is prompting you toward baptism, don't let fear, pride, or procrastination hold you back. The water is ready. The church is waiting to celebrate. What are you waiting for?

Reflection Questions for the Week:

- How does understanding baptism as death and resurrection change how I view my daily struggles with sin?
- In what ways does my private life align with my public profession of faith?
- What acts of obedience might God be calling me toward today?
- How can I contribute to the ongoing work of Christ's church during this season?
- Is there an area where I'm delaying obedience to God's clear command?