

The Bridge2

“Making the Case for Going Public”

You may or may not consider yourself a private person. I guess we all are private people about certain things. I'm private about my social security number, my PIN for my financial accounts, my weaknesses and character flaws, my insecurities, sometimes, my political views, my personal doubts, my safe combination, and maybe some things I just don't want anyone to know. In an age of protecting our privacy, there are some things we shouldn't be private about. My faith is a personal matter between Jesus and me, but it is not to be private relationship that no one knows about. So why are many people private about their faith? We want to keep expectations low? We don't want to offend people who have not faith preference? I can't answer all the reasons why that may be, but Scripture speaks differently about that. Scripture speaks to our faith as being a public declaration. Baptism is a public declaration of our faith in Christ and His message. So who should be baptized and when should they be baptized? Is being baptized really that important in my faith one way or another? Am I going to Heaven if unbaptized? There is a lot of confusion about this subject; today should bring a lot of clarity about you and baptism. Let's get started on making the case for baptism.

****My goal today is, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, I want you to be baptized.***

What is New Testament baptism?

-We have an opinion about baptism, and our idea of baptism is probably entirely on the tradition we grew up in.

Matthew 28:19 NAS (Jesus is speaking)

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

baptize – means to wash, plunge, soak, or dip

Acts 2:36-38 NAS (Peter is speaking)

36 *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ - this Jesus whom you crucified."*

37 *Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren *, what shall we do?"*

38 *Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

What does it indicate and symbolize?

-Baptism indicates that you have heard the Gospel, responded to it, and now identifying with Christ and His message.

-Baptism followed the personal response; it was a public declaration of this personal decision.

-Baptism is a **public** declaration of a new association.

-Baptism is a **personal** declaration of a new association.

-Baptism is not a **condition** of salvation; it is **response** of salvation.

-Here, we are more interested in the timing rather than the form (immersion or sprinkling).

Questions people ask:

1. *Can I go to Heaven without being baptized?*

Yes (example – thief on the cross)

2. *Can't I just tell people I'm a Christian and skip baptism?*

Sure you can,...identifying as a believer in Christ is Biblical; skipping baptism is not.

Acts 2:38 NAS

Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

3. *Can't my reason for not being baptized be considered legitimate?*

-Fear of water, fear of crowds, fear of the “wet look”, fear of a video (fear seems to be the operative word; obedience, not fear, should be our motivation).

-The way we have done it here at Cross Point is a public baptism and a video (VIDEO – 2:40)

-Reason for the video: you will share your faith story with more people this way than perhaps any other single time.

Policy adjustment for Cross Point - We no longer require that a person who wants to be baptized to also shoot a video story; we still encourage it because of the encouragement value of your faith story, but we don't want your fear of a video to keep you from being obedient in being baptized. It is not Biblical, but baptism is.

Bottom Line – Baptism celebrates and transfers a personal faith in Jesus Christ into a public declaration.