



Sermon Title: Why Baptism?

IN Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. (Idea for leaders) This could be a two-week study. Take one week to have each group member share about their baptism: when, where, what they understood about it, etc. Week two would be the study.
2. What are some practices that someone from outside the Church would find strange?
3. What conversation have you had that you wish you could 'redo'?

UP Time that is devoted to the Word of God

1. What are the two messages that John the Baptist preached? (Mark 1:7-8) How did these reflect the two aspects of baptism that Pastor Kent spoke about?
2. According to Paul (Romans 6:3-4), what phases of Jesus' life are represented in the act of baptism? What spiritual reality do these echo in a person's life? Why must baptism be a 'choice'?
3. 'Baptism is a seal of our new identity.' (Pastor Kent). Review the meaning of 'identity.' Read Eph 4:5, 8, 9; Col 3:9-11 and Gal 2:20. What words/phrases point to the 'new identity' a believer has?
4. What are some identification labels that a person can carry with him/her? How can your human-given labels conflict or agree with your God-given identity (i.e. Mark 1:11)?
5. Pastor Kent said, 'The idea here is that your identity consistently reflects who you really are over time and that your identity is consistent even under different pressures and conditions in life.' Discuss what he means.
6. "Everything God does is for our best interest; everything God does is for our healing...so that we find wholeness... (so that our life) has purpose and meaning and intentionality behind it" (Pastor Kent). Based on this statement and Jesus' command in Matt. 28:19, why is it important to explain the necessity of baptism to a new believer?

OUT Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community

1. What are new insights into baptism that you have learned from this study?
2. If you have never been baptized, have you ever felt nudged to do so?
3. If you have been baptized, how were your personal labels affected? What labels do you still need to examine?

UP – IN – OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

This week's writers:

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THE WORD (NIV)

Mark 1:7—11

⁷ And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Romans 6:3-4

³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Ephesians 4:5, 8, 9

⁵ to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.

⁸ Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. ⁹ But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?

Colossians 3:9-11

⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹ Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Matthew 28:19

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,



Why Baptism?

Baptism is a unique act and is a bit strange when you really think about it. Who really likes getting submerged in water with all his/her clothes on? Baptism takes place in community and it involves public speaking - answering a few questions at the very least and being encouraged to share publicly one's spiritual journey.

So why do we baptize? Jesus commanded it. He told his disciples to go and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God never asks us to do things unless it is in our best interest. Everything He tells us to do has purpose, meaning and intentionality behind it. There must be something about the act of baptism that changes us in our soul and in our relationship with God.

In Mark 1:7-8, John was preaching repentance . . . saying confess your sin, change your ways, acknowledge your brokenness and receive forgiveness and be baptized. He also added, "After me comes the one more powerful than I . . . I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." What John is saying is that there are two aspects to baptism - a human act of being submerged in water and an internal spiritual reality.

Baptism is a choice. In baptism, you are confessing that, at one point, you did not believe in God or love Him and that, now, you are surrendering all of your life to Jesus, receiving Him as your Saviour and Lord. By choosing to step into the water, you visually signify your desire to leave your old life in the past. By allowing yourself to be submerged under water, you are washed clean and you receive forgiveness from your sins. Symbolically, under water you die but because Jesus was raised from the dead and because He paid the price for your sin, you receive new Life from God. Baptism becomes a visible expression of an invisible spiritual reality. In Romans 6:3-4, Paul tells us that through baptism we are united with Jesus in His death and also in His resurrection. We are actually dying to our old life with all its mistakes and regrets and through baptism we can live a new life in Christ. We get the chance to do life over.

Along with this new life comes a new identity. Identity can be defined as the quality of being the same and remaining the same under varying conditions. In other words, your identity is integrated into all aspects of your life and your life has integrity because you are the same person everywhere. You know who you are.

Identification, however, is a means of labeling. Sometimes we take on labels that others give us or we give ourselves labels and often we use these labels to find our identity or to construct a new identity. If we are not careful, we end up with fragmented lives, being someone at home; a different someone at work; another someone with friends, and so on. At other times, we try to discover who we are through the labels we hold. While labels such as husband, teacher, married, senior, Protestant . . . bring some definition to who we are, they are not, and nor can they serve to be our true source of identity. In Colossians 3:9-11 Paul talks about putting off your old life and putting on your new life. As you learn to know God, you become more like Him. Old labels, like Jew, slave and barbaric are no longer your core identity. While labels may still identify you, they do not define who you are and they are not your true identity. Christ living in you is all that matters. Baptism is all about your identity; your CORE identity of who you are as a person.

(Mark 1: 9-11) When Jesus came out of the water at His baptism, God declared His identity - "This is My Son, in whom I am well pleased." God wants to do the same for you. He wants to be the source of who you are and to free you from the labels you have placed on yourself or others have given you. You are who you are because the one who created you has given you your identity. You become God's son or daughter the moment you place your faith in Jesus Christ.

Baptism is a visible response to the invisible reality that your life is now defined in every way by Jesus. You have new life in Jesus and a new identity in Jesus. (Gal. 2:20) Baptism is choosing to die to living life your way and coming to life in Christ.