

Baptism
Our Life-Defining Pledge of Allegiance to Christ
June 29, 2025

1. **Instructions: Pull out your Bible or grab one sitting under a chair near you. I am doing an experiment this morning. I want you to be in a physical Bible. Your phone app does not count!**
2. Introduction
 - a. Retell "Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch" (Acts 8:26-40) in contemporary terms.
 - b. This story is important because it provides a detailed account of one-to-one evangelism:
 - i. God is in control. He aimed Philip at the Ethiopian man.
 - ii. Philip
 1. Obedient. He went where he was told and engaged with the seeking Ethiopian.
 2. Prepared. He was skilled enough to answer the man's questions and guide him to Jesus.
 - iii. The Ethiopian.
 1. Seeking. Hebrews 11:6 **And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.**
 2. Responsive.
 3. Evangelistic encounters are much easier than we realize. God is responding to seekers by orchestrating "divine appointments". He *promises* seekers that He will answer them. **The big question for us is, "Are we available for the divine appointments happening all around us?"**
 - c. This story also captures a significant change in the role of baptism from before Jesus issued the Great Commission.
 - i. Baptism was hardly mentioned in the Gospel narratives.
 1. John the Baptist was baptizing people who responded to his call to repentance.
 2. We know Jesus was baptized.
 3. There is one mention of Jesus baptizing (John 3:26).

- ii. Baptism is clearly an important part of the Gospel story in Acts. It is mentioned in every account of people being saved. (2:38; 8:12; 9:18; 10:47; 16:14-15; 16:33-34; 18:8; 19:5)
- 3. Transition: Today's sermon is going to build a bridge from the practice of baptism in the early church to how we should be practicing today.
 - a. Our key text this morning will be the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20.
 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
 - b. We will think about baptism in three movements, like a symphony.
 - i. Why should we be baptized?
 - ii. What is baptism?
 - iii. The implications of baptism for three groups of people.
- 4. Why should we be baptized?
 - a. Jesus commanded it.
 - b. It is the gateway into new life. What is this new life?
 - i. The life of apprenticeship to Jesus begins with our acceptance of His offer of new life and is proclaimed at our baptism
 - ii. "God became man to turn creatures into sons: not simply to produce better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man." (C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity)
 - iii. Link Romans 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. To Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - iv. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies [e]through His Spirit who dwells in you. (Romans 8:11)
 - c. It is the gateway to a new way of relating to God.
 - i. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba!

Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

(Romans 8:15-17)

- ii. We can (and should) wrestle with God.
5. What is baptism? Details are in our document "Baptism - An Important Invitation"
- a. What it isn't. . .
 - i. An essential part of salvation (Ephesians 2:8-10)
 - ii. An expression of a desire for "next level" commitment to God, separating our receiving Jesus and the decision to follow Him. Those two things are inextricably linked. (Matthew 28:17-20)
 - b. Commemoration of our entry into God's family.
 - c. A metaphor
 - i. Our death symbolized by our descent under the water.
 - ii. Our resurrection to new life symbolized by our emergence from the water.
 - d. A stake in the ground
6. Implications of baptism - Three kinds of people
- a. You haven't accepted Jesus. Today is the day!
 - b. You were baptized but your life just kept on the same. It's time to look back to your baptism or be baptized again.
 - c. You are walking with Jesus in newness of life. Excel still more!
 - d. The application for all three groups of people is the same:
 - i. "Holy is the Lord" Isaiah 6
 - ii. Acknowledge you are a sinner by nature and by action, deserving the wrath of God.
 - iii. Repent of that old life.
 - iv. Accept the free gift: Jesus took your place, absorbing the fullness of the wrath of God that should have been poured out on you.
 - v. Step into the new life of apprenticeship to Jesus, learning to practice all Jesus taught.