

STAGE: BELIEVER

BAPTISM GUIDE

YOUR PUBLIC DECLARATION

Real Testimonies. Radical Transformations.

A Comprehensive Guide to Water Baptism: Meaning, History, Practice, and Personal Preparation

By Kyle Lauriano · kylelauriano.com

© 2025 All Rights Reserved

Baptism Guide — Your Public Declaration

A Comprehensive Guide to Water Baptism for Believers: Meaning, History, Practice, and Your Public Declaration. Understanding Baptism's Significance, Historical Practice, Theological Perspectives, and Personal Preparation for Your Life-Changing Public Commitment.

For New Believers, Mature Christians Re-examining Baptism, and Those Seeking to Understand This Essential Act of Faith.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction — Baptism Is Your Public Declaration
2. Part 1: The Theological Foundation of Baptism
3. Part 2: Why Baptism Matters — The Five Reasons
4. Part 3: Historical Perspectives on Baptism
5. Part 4: Biblical Examples of Baptism
6. Part 5: When You Should Get Baptized
7. Part 6: How to Get Baptized
8. Part 7: What to Expect on Baptism Day
9. Part 8: Different Baptism Formats
10. Part 9: After Baptism — Your Ongoing Journey
11. Part 10: Commonly Asked Questions
12. Conclusion: Take the Plunge
13. Next Steps

INTRODUCTION — BAPTISM IS YOUR PUBLIC DECLARATION

Baptism Is Your Public Declaration

When you get baptized, you're telling the world: "I'm a follower of Jesus."

This isn't a private spiritual experience hidden in the privacy of your prayer closet. This is public, visible, undeniable commitment to Jesus Christ made in front of witnesses.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. — Matthew 28:19-20 (KJV)"

Jesus commanded baptism. Not suggested. Not optional. Commanded.

For the believer, baptism is:

- Your first act of public obedience
- Your identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection
- Your witness to the watching world
- Your entry into a community of faith
- Your declaration of allegiance to King Jesus

What This Guide Covers

This resource takes you beyond basics:

- **Historical context** — How baptism has been practiced through centuries of church history
- **Theological depth** — Different Christian perspectives on what baptism means and does
- **Practical preparation** — Step-by-step guidance for your baptism journey
- **Your testimony** — How to prepare the personal story you'll share
- **What to expect** — The real experience of baptism day
- **Ongoing growth** — What comes after your baptism

Whether you're a new believer ready to take this step, a mature Christian reconsidering baptism's significance, or someone helping others prepare—this guide provides comprehensive understanding and practical preparation.

PART 1 — THE THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF BAPTISM

What Is Baptism?

Baptism is a public act of obedience and identification with Jesus Christ.

More specifically, baptism is:

- An ordinance (a command by Jesus to practice regularly)
- A sacrament (in some traditions, a means of grace)
- An outward sign of an inward spiritual reality
- Full immersion in water (not sprinkling or pouring)
- A public declaration of faith in Jesus Christ
- An identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection
- A commitment to follow Jesus as Lord

The Meaning of the Greek Word “Baptizo”

The English word “baptism” comes from the Greek word “baptizo.”

Baptizo literally means:

- “To immerse”
- “To submerge”
- “To dip”
- “To plunge”

Historical usage: The word was used of a ship sinking in water, cloth being dipped in dye, someone drowning—situations involving complete submersion.

This is why baptism = full immersion in water, not sprinkling or pouring.

When Jesus was baptized, He went “into the water” (Matthew 3:16) and “came up out of the water” (Matthew 3:16). This language suggests complete submersion.

Water Symbolism in Scripture

Water appears throughout Scripture with consistent symbolism:

Water as Death/Judgment:

- The Flood judgment (Genesis 6-7)
- The Red Sea judgment on Egypt (Exodus 14)
- Death by drowning used as execution

Water as New Life/Cleansing:

- Baptism (new life in Christ)
- Washing for cleansing in the Tabernacle/Temple
- Living water for spiritual thirst (John 7:37-38)

In baptism, the water symbolizes both:

Going under = Death

Your old life—old self, old habits, old way of living, old sinful nature—goes “under.” It’s submerged. It’s gone.

Being submerged = Burial

Like a burial, your old life is gone, finished, complete. Not just died—buried. Completely done.

Coming up = Resurrection

You emerge to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). You’re raised with Christ. You’re alive to new purposes, new identity, new power.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. — Romans 6:3-4 (KJV)”

You’re literally acting out your spiritual reality. You’re performing the gospel in water.

What Baptism Is and Is Not

Critical clarifications:

Baptism IS:

- A command of Jesus (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38)
- An act of obedience (Luke 3:21-22 shows Jesus modeling it)
- A public commitment to Jesus
- An identification with Christ’s work
- Your first major step in discipleship
- A witness to believers and non-believers
- Part of how you become a member of Christ’s church

Baptism IS NOT:

- Necessary for salvation
- A magical work that saves you
- A work that earns God’s favor
- A requirement to receive the Holy Spirit
- Something done to infants (believer’s baptism requires personal faith)
- Merely a religious ritual or tradition

Baptism vs. Salvation: Critical Distinction

This is perhaps the most important theological clarification:

Your salvation happens the moment you believe in Jesus.

You become saved when you:

- Recognize Jesus as God's Son
- Acknowledge He died for your sins
- Believe He rose from the dead
- Repent of your sins
- Receive Jesus as your Savior and Lord

Baptism comes after salvation. It's the public declaration that salvation has already occurred.

The thief on the cross (Luke 23:43):

- Was never baptized
- Yet Jesus promised him paradise
- Why? Because baptism isn't required for salvation

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. — Ephesians 2:8-9 (KJV)"

Baptism is not "works"—it's obedience. Your works don't save you, but your obedience to Christ demonstrates your faith.

Think of it this way:

- **Salvation** = You're adopted into God's family (past tense—already happened)
- **Baptism** = You publicly declare your family membership (present tense—what you're doing)
- **Sanctification** = You grow in your faith family (ongoing)

PART 2 — WHY BAPTISM MATTERS: THE FIVE REASONS

Reason 1: Jesus Commanded It

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. — Matthew 28:19 (KJV)”

This is **the Great Commission**. Jesus’ final instruction to His disciples before ascending to heaven included baptism.

This is not a suggestion. It’s a command.

If you love Jesus, you’ll do what He commands. Obedience is the evidence of love (John 14:15).

Reason 2: Jesus Modeled It

“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. — Matthew 3:13-17 (KJV)”

If Jesus—who never sinned—was baptized, how much more should you be?

Jesus didn’t need baptism for forgiveness (He was sinless). He was baptized to:

- Model obedience to us
- Fulfill righteousness
- Identify with sinners
- Show the pattern for His followers

If Jesus did it, followers of Jesus should do it.

Reason 3: It’s Your First Act of Obedience

Baptism is where you step out publicly, visibly, undeniably and declare: **“I’m not ashamed of Jesus. I’m willing to obey Him even when it’s uncomfortable.”**

This tests your resolve. Anyone can claim to follow Jesus privately. Baptism is where you prove it publicly.

“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. — Matthew 10:32-33 (KJV)”

Confessing Jesus before others matters. Baptism is that confession acted out.

Reason 4: It Identifies You with Christ

When you're baptized, you're saying to the watching world:

- "I died with Jesus" (going under)
- "I was buried with Jesus" (submerged)
- "I rose with Jesus" (coming up)
- "I've been raised to walk in newness of life"

Your story becomes His story.

"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. — Romans 6:5-6 (KJV)"

This identification is powerful. You're not just believing in Jesus—you're identifying with Him.

Reason 5: It's a Witness to Others

Your baptism is a public gospel proclamation:

For non-Christians watching:

- "Wow, they're serious about Jesus"
- "They're willing to stand up publicly for their faith"
- "This isn't just private religion—they're committed"

For other Christians watching:

- "Yes! Another brother/sister has joined our family"
- "The kingdom is growing"
- "God is at work"

For the devil watching:

- "They're publicly committed now. They're going to be dangerous to my kingdom"
- "This person isn't ashamed to stand for Jesus"

Your baptism is a line in the sand. You're declaring whose side you're on.

PART 3 — HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON BAPTISM

Baptism in the Early Church

What did baptism look like in the first century?

Evidence from Scripture:

- Full immersion (going into water, coming up out of water)
- Immediate (often same day as conversion)
- Followed belief (believer's baptism, not infant)
- Public (witnessed by the church)
- By water (rivers, pools, wherever water was available)

Examples:

- Acts 2:41 — 3,000 baptized the same day they believed
- Acts 8:38 — Ethiopian eunuch baptized in roadside water
- Acts 16:33 — Philippian jailer baptized at midnight
- Acts 19:5 — Disciples of John baptized into Jesus

Development of Baptism Practices

As the church grew, practices developed:

In the 2nd-3rd centuries:

- More formal instruction before baptism
- Fasting before baptism
- Anointing with oil
- Laying on of hands after baptism

By the 4th century (after Constantine):

- Infant baptism becomes more common (for politically Christian empire)
- Sprinkling and pouring develop as alternatives to immersion
- Baptism becomes more formalized, less urgent
- Connection to “salvation by baptism” develops in some traditions

Medieval period:

- Baptism highly formalized
- Theological debates about how salvation works through baptism
- Infant baptism normative in Western Christendom
- Immersion becomes rare; sprinkling/pouring standard

Reformation (16th century):

- Some groups (Anabaptists) return to believer's baptism by immersion
- Others (Lutherans, Reformed) continue infant baptism with sprinkling
- Theological clarifications about baptism's role vs. salvation

Modern era:

- Evangelical churches emphasize believer's baptism by immersion
- Mainline denominations continue infant baptism with sprinkling
- Pentecostal/Charismatic churches emphasize believer's baptism
- Theological diversity on meaning continues

Different Theological Views**The Symbolic View**

What it teaches: Baptism is a symbol and testimony of salvation already received.

Key points:

- Baptism doesn't save; it's a symbol of salvation
- The meaning is in the believer's faith, not the water
- It's an outward sign of inward grace
- It's obedience to Christ's command

Who holds this view: Evangelicals, Baptists, most Pentecostals

The Sacramental View

What it teaches: Baptism is a means of grace that God uses to effect salvation.

Key points:

- God works through the sacrament itself
- Baptism accomplishes what it symbolizes
- The faith of the church (not just individual) matters
- Baptism connects us to Christ's work

Who holds this view: Catholics, Orthodox, some liturgical Protestants

The Covenantal View

What it teaches: Baptism is an entry into God's covenant community.

Key points:

- Baptism incorporates you into the church covenant
- It's both personal commitment and communal act

- The community's support matters for the baptized
- It's the sign of belonging to God's people

Who holds this view: Reformed churches, some Presbyterian traditions

Infant vs. Believer's Baptism

A major historical and ongoing debate:

Infant Baptism (Paedobaptism) says:

- Infants of believing parents should be baptized
- Baptism parallels circumcision in Old Testament
- God's grace extends to children of believing families
- Personal faith develops after baptism
- Practiced by: Catholics, Orthodox, Lutherans, Reformed, Methodists

Believer's Baptism (Credobaptism) says:

- Only those who have personally believed should be baptized
- Baptism follows and confirms personal faith choice
- Each person must make their own commitment
- Baptism is a believer's act of obedience
- Practiced by: Baptists, Evangelicals, Pentecostals, most Independents

The key difference: Should baptism precede or follow personal faith?

Your baptism as an adult believer is believer's baptism regardless of your denominational background.

Sprinkling, Pouring, Immersion Debate

Three methods developed historically:

Immersion

- **Method:** Full submersion underwater
- **Etymology:** Matches Greek "baptizo" (to immerse)
- **Symbolism:** Death, burial, resurrection
- **When practiced:** Early church, modern evangelicals, Baptists, Pentecostals
- **Advantage:** Most clearly symbolizes Romans 6:3-4

Pouring (Affusion)

- **Method:** Water poured over the head
- **Etymology:** Doesn't match "baptizo" precisely
- **Symbolism:** Cleansing, anointing, Holy Spirit
- **When practiced:** Developed in medieval period; used when immersion inconvenient

- **Why used:** Accommodates cold climates, large numbers, infants, elderly

Sprinkling (Aspersio)

- **Method:** Water sprinkled on the head
- **Etymology:** Doesn't match "baptizo"
- **Symbolism:** Cleansing, covering
- **When practiced:** Medieval and modern period; predominantly with infant baptism
- **Why used:** Most convenient, least physically demanding

Scripture's pattern: The language of going "into the water" and "up out of the water" suggests immersion.

Current practice: Most evangelical churches emphasize immersion, though some accept other methods. If you're an adult believer being baptized, immersion is typical.

PART 4 — BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF BAPTISM

Jesus' Baptism

Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34

The Event:

- Jesus went to John the Baptist
- John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River
- Jesus came up out of the water
- The heavens opened
- The Holy Spirit descended like a dove
- God the Father spoke affirmation

What This Teaches Us:

- Baptism is important enough for Jesus to model it
- Baptism involves public commitment
- The Trinity is involved (Father speaks, Spirit descends, Son is baptized)
- Baptism is followed by the Holy Spirit's empowerment
- God affirms those who step out in obedience

Pentecost: The Day of 3,000

Acts 2:38-41

The Event:

- Peter preaches the gospel
- People ask what to do
- Peter tells them to repent and be baptized
- 3,000 people were baptized that day
- They were immediately added to the church

What This Teaches Us:

- Baptism followed immediately after conversion
- Baptism was part of the salvation response
- Baptism wasn't delayed—same day
- Baptism incorporated believers into the church
- Baptism was practiced publicly in water

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

Acts 8:26-40

The Event:

- Philip met an Ethiopian official reading Isaiah 53
- Philip explained Jesus
- The eunuch asked why he couldn't be baptized
- They stopped and baptized him in roadside water
- The eunuch continued his journey rejoicing

What This Teaches Us:

- Baptism followed belief immediately (same conversation)
- Any water is sufficient (roadside water, not special tank)
- Baptism could happen anywhere, anytime
- Baptism was essential enough to stop for on a journey
- Baptism brought joy and assurance

Paul's Baptism

Acts 9:17-19; Acts 22:16

The Event:

- Ananias visited Paul (then Saul) after his Damascus Road conversion
- Paul received his sight
- He was baptized
- He ate food (recovering)
- He stayed with the disciples in Damascus

What Paul Later Recalled:

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. — Acts 22:16 (KJV)"

What This Teaches Us:

- Even the apostle Paul was baptized
- Baptism was within 3 days of conversion
- Baptism was associated with "washing away sins" (cleansing of past, new start)
- Baptism happened quickly once faith was established

Lydia and the Philippian Jailer

Acts 16:14-15, 25-34

Lydia:

- Heard Paul's gospel
- Believed and was baptized
- Opened her home for ministry

Philippian Jailer:

- Experienced earthquake and thought prisoners escaped
- Paul prevented his suicide
- Believed the gospel at midnight
- Was baptized that very night
- Rejoiced with his household

What This Teaches Us:

- Baptism happened immediately upon belief (same day/night)
- Baptism wasn't delayed for classes or waiting periods
- Entire households could be baptized
- Baptism brought rejoicing
- Baptism sealed commitment

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:5

Important distinction:

Water baptism = Public act of obedience in water

Spirit baptism = The Holy Spirit entering you at conversion

Relationship:

- You receive the Holy Spirit at conversion (regeneration)
- You practice water baptism as public declaration
- Some traditions emphasize a second "baptism in the Holy Spirit" with speaking in tongues (Pentecostal view)
- Most traditions see Spirit baptism as part of conversion

Don't confuse them: Your baptism in water is your public declaration. The Holy Spirit's work in you is internal.

PART 5 — WHEN YOU SHOULD GET BAPTIZED

As Soon as Possible After Salvation

The biblical pattern is immediate baptism:

- **Acts 2:41** — 3,000 baptized THE SAME DAY they believed
- **Acts 8:38** — Ethiopian baptized IMMEDIATELY after believing
- **Acts 9:18** — Paul baptized WITHIN 3 DAYS
- **Acts 16:33** — Philippian jailer baptized THAT SAME NIGHT

The consistent pattern: Baptism happened quickly, not after months or years.

Common Objections and Responses

“I need to get my life together first”

Response: Wrong. Jesus saves sinners, not perfect people. You'll never be “good enough.” You're not good enough now, and you won't be good enough a year from now. Baptism is an act of faith saying “I'm surrendering control to Jesus.”

The standard isn't personal perfection. The standard is personal faith.

“I don't feel ready”

Response: Feelings aren't the measure. Obedience is. You might feel nervous (normal), but that's not “not ready.” Ready means: “I believe Jesus is my Savior and Lord, and I'm willing to publicly declare it.” That's the only requirement.

“I'm still struggling with sin”

Response: So is every other Christian. You're not required to be sinless to be baptized. You're required to be a believer who has repented and trusts Jesus. Sin and struggle don't disqualify you from baptism.

Paul said, “I do the very thing I hate” (Romans 7:15). He was still baptized.

“Let me think about it”

Response: Delayed obedience is disobedience. Don't overthink this. You've already made the decision to follow Jesus. Baptism is the natural, immediate next step.

Talk to your pastor this week. Get baptized this month.

“What if I make a mistake or change my mind?”

Response: Your baptism is your obedience to Jesus right now. If you later walk away from faith, that reflects on you, not on your baptism. Baptism marks your commitment at this moment.

Don't let fear of future failure prevent present obedience.

The Danger of Delaying Obedience

When you delay baptism, you risk:

- **Spiritual dishonesty:** You know what you're supposed to do but won't
- **Satan's interference:** Delayed decisions are vulnerable decisions
- **Emotional fading:** The urgency fades; excuses multiply
- **Identity confusion:** Are you all-in with Jesus or hedging bets?
- **Missing blessing:** Immediate obedience brings immediate joy
- **Disobedience pattern:** If you delay this, what else will you delay?

Delayed obedience trains you to delay other commitments too.

Don't do this. Obey now.

PART 6 — HOW TO GET BAPTIZED

Step 1: Talk to Your Pastor

Go to your pastor and say:

"I want to get baptized. What's the process?"

Your pastor will guide you through:

- Whether baptism classes are required
- When baptism happens
- How to prepare your testimony
- What to expect

This conversation is important. Your pastor ensures you understand what you're committing to.

Step 2: Understand What You're Committing To

Baptism is a public commitment to:

- **Follow Jesus as Lord** — Not just Savior, but Lord (He gets to direct your life)
- **Live for Him, not yourself** — Your life isn't your own anymore
- **Obey His Word** — The Bible is your authority
- **Join His church community** — You're not a lone ranger Christian
- **Identify with His death and resurrection** — You've died to self; you're alive to Him
- **Abandon other allegiances** — Nothing takes priority over Jesus

Make sure you're ready for this commitment.

If you're not ready to surrender control to Jesus, wait until you are. Half-hearted baptism is better than no baptism, but whole-hearted baptism reflects genuine commitment.

Step 3: Prepare Your Testimony

Your testimony is your story of how you came to faith in Jesus.

Most churches ask you to share a 2-3 minute testimony before baptism (while standing in the water or before entering).

This is powerful. Your personal story is your most powerful apologetic tool.

Use this structure:

Part 1: Before Christ (30 seconds)

- What was your life like before Jesus?
- What were you searching for? Money? Relationships? Meaning? Escape?

- What was missing?
- What made you realize you needed help?

“Before I met Jesus, I had everything the world said would make me happy—money, success, relationships. But I was empty. I was searching for meaning but couldn’t find it. I tried everything—partying, relationships, work—but nothing filled the void.”

Part 2: How You Met Christ (1 minute)

- How did you hear the Gospel?
- When specifically did you pray to receive Jesus?
- What changed when you believed?
- What was the moment like?

“A friend invited me to church. The pastor explained that Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead. I realized I needed a Savior. I couldn’t save myself. I went home that night and prayed: ‘Jesus, I’m sorry for my sins. I believe you’re my Savior. Please forgive me and help me follow you.’ When I prayed that prayer, I felt peace instantly. I knew something had changed.”

Part 3: After Christ (30 seconds)

- How has your life changed?
- What’s different now?
- What does following Jesus mean to you?
- Why are you getting baptized?

“Since then, everything’s different. I have purpose. I have hope. I have Jesus. I’m getting baptized today to publicly declare: Jesus is my Lord and my Savior. I want everyone to know that I belong to Him.”

Write it out. Practice it out loud 5-10 times. Memorize the key points.

Step 4: Prepare Practically

Bring:

- Comfortable clothes that you don’t mind getting wet
- A towel
- Dry clothes to change into
- A bag for wet clothes
- Shoes that can get wet (if baptized outside)
- Underwear (wear something under the wet clothes)

Most churches provide baptism robes. Ask your church. If not provided, wear comfortable light-colored clothes that won’t be too heavy when wet.

Bring people:

- Camera/phone for photos
- Friends and family to witness
- Children of your household
- Coworkers you've talked to about Jesus

Step 5: Invite People

Invite everyone you can think of:

- Family members (parents, siblings, spouse, children)
- Close friends
- Coworkers
- People from your church
- Anyone you've talked to about Jesus
- People who need to see a gospel declaration

Your baptism is a powerful gospel witness.

People who have never stepped foot in a church might come. They might hear the Gospel for the first time. Your baptism could trigger their conversion.

Don't be embarrassed or timid. This is your moment. Invite boldly.

PART 7 — WHAT TO EXPECT ON BAPTISM DAY

Before the Ceremony

Usually 30-60 minutes before:

- You'll change into dry clothes and go to the baptism area
- You might meet with the pastor for final words
- You'll go to the changing area and put on your baptism clothes
- You'll physically enter the water (cold water is typical—breathe!)

The Ceremony Flow

1. The Introduction

Your pastor will likely say something like:

"We're gathered here today to witness [Your Name]'s baptism. This is a significant step of faith and obedience. [Your Name] has trusted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, and today is their public declaration."

2. You Share Your Testimony

You'll speak your 2-3 minute testimony. Speak clearly, look at people, be authentic.

People are listening. Your story matters.

3. The Baptism Words

The pastor will say words like:

"[Your Name], upon your profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

The Physical Experience

What happens:

- You'll stand in the water with the pastor
- The pastor will position you (usually they'll have one arm around you, their other hand holding your arms crossed)
- The pastor will gently lean you back
- Your body will go under the water completely
- Hold your breath; don't panic
- The pastor will bring you back up
- Water will pour off you
- You'll emerge to applause and celebration

Practical tips:

- Hold your breath when you go under (obviously)
- Cross your arms or hold the pastor's arm for security
- Don't be stiff; relax and let the pastor guide you
- It's quick—maybe 3-5 seconds under water
- It doesn't hurt; it's not unpleasant
- If you're nervous, tell the pastor

Emotions You Might Feel

It's completely normal to feel:

- **Nervous** — You're speaking publicly and doing something significant
- **Joyful** — You're making a public commitment
- **Emotional** — Tears of joy are common
- **Peaceful** — A sense that you've obeyed God
- **Powerful** — Standing up publicly for Jesus
- **Spiritual** — God's presence is real
- **Alive** — You're stepping into a new phase of discipleship

All of these emotions are valid and beautiful.

Some people feel very little emotion. That's okay too. Baptism isn't primarily about feelings—it's about obedience.

Photography and Documentation

This is a milestone moment. Document it.

- Have someone photograph/video your baptism
- Get pictures of you before, during, after
- Capture the moment of immersion
- Get group photos with your church community
- These photos become part of your testimony

You'll want to remember this day forever.

PART 8 — DIFFERENT BAPTISM FORMATS

Church Baptismal Tank

Most common in urban churches

- Indoor temperature-controlled pool
- Usually 4-6 feet deep
- Easy for elderly or disabled to participate
- Controlled environment
- Multiple people can be baptized back-to-back

River or Lake Baptism

Common in traditional and outdoor churches

- Natural water setting
- Often in warm months
- Beautiful, scenic backdrop
- Logistically more complex
- Weather dependent
- More of a community event feel

Ocean Baptism

Popular in coastal areas

- Beautiful setting
- Large baptisms possible
- Salt water (be careful with eyes)
- Unpredictable currents (careful)
- Public declaration (people can see)
- Great photos

Swimming Pool Baptism

Sometimes used

- Any available swimming pool
- Water temperature matters
- Easy logistics
- Less “official” feeling than church tank

- Works fine—it's the faith that matters, not the location

Outdoor Considerations

If baptized outside:

- Check water depth
- Ensure it's safe
- Have lifeguards/spotters
- Consider temperature
- Plan for changing areas (privacy)
- Weather backup plan
- Consider current (rivers) or tides (ocean)

The location doesn't matter. What matters is your faith and obedience.

PART 9 — AFTER BAPTISM: YOUR ONGOING JOURNEY

Immediately After Baptism

You've just taken a major step.

The celebration is real. Enjoy it. Take photos. Celebrate with your church.

The First Days and Weeks

Immediately after, do these things:

1. Connect to Community

- Introduce yourself to church members
- Join a small group or Bible study
- Find a mentor or discipleship group
- Exchange contact info with church friends

2. Establish Spiritual Habits

- Start reading your Bible daily
- Begin a prayer practice
- Find a Bible reading plan
- Consider a Bible app
- Write down what you're learning

3. Find Accountability

- Share your baptism commitment with someone
- Let them know you're serious about following Jesus
- Give them permission to ask you hard questions
- Share your struggles and victories

4. Get Involved

- Look for ways to serve
- Join a ministry team
- Volunteer for something
- Find your place in the church body

Expect Spiritual Attack

After baptism, the devil will attack harder.

Why? You've publicly declared your allegiance to Jesus. You're dangerous to Satan's kingdom now.

Expect:

- **Doubts:** “Was that real? Did God really save me?”
- **Temptation:** Your old sins will tempt you more intensely
- **Criticism:** People might mock you (“I thought you’d changed?”)
- **Spiritual heaviness:** Times when God feels distant
- **Testing:** Situations designed to make you fall away
- **Discouragement:** “What’s the point? Nothing’s changed”

This is normal. You’re not failing. You’re being tested. Hold fast.

Remember:

- You publicly committed to Jesus
- God was watching
- The Holy Spirit indwells you
- You have a church community supporting you
- God’s power is greater than Satan’s

Stand firm. Don’t turn back.

Growing After Baptism

Baptism is a beginning, not an ending.

Your growth journey includes:

- **Reading Scripture:** Daily engagement with God’s Word
- **Prayer:** Developing your conversation with God
- **Worship:** Expressing your devotion to Jesus
- **Community:** Gathering with other believers
- **Discipleship:** Finding someone to walk with you
- **Service:** Using your gifts to serve others
- **Sharing:** Telling others about Jesus
- **Repentance:** Continuing to turn from sin
- **Obedience:** Following Jesus’ commands

PART 10 — COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

“What if I’m really nervous about speaking?”

Response: That’s completely normal. Everyone is nervous. But consider:

- You know your story better than anyone
- People aren’t judging you; they’re celebrating you
- God gives grace for obedience
- The nervousness shows it matters to you
- Practice multiple times beforehand

“What if I mess up my testimony?”

Response: You won’t. You know your story. Just be honest and real. People don’t need perfection—they need authenticity. If you forget a point, keep going. Your genuine faith matters more than a perfect delivery.

“What if I cry during my testimony?”

Response: Tears are beautiful. They show this matters. Don’t be embarrassed. Many people cry during their baptism testimony. It’s actually powerful. Keep going; you’re doing great.

“Will water go up my nose?”

Response: It might. It’s not pleasant but not dangerous. If it does, don’t panic. You’ll get out of the water and be fine. Quick dunk = lower chance of water up nose.

“What if I panic under the water?”

Response: Tell the pastor beforehand: “If I panic, pull me up immediately.” The pastor will watch for signals. Going under is only 3-5 seconds. You can hold your breath that long. The pastor won’t push you all the way under if you signal distress.

“What if I’m having doubts?”

Response: Doubts are normal. Baptism isn’t about certainty; it’s about faith. Even if you’re uncertain, if you believe Jesus is your Savior, that’s enough. Baptize. Growing certainty follows commitment.

“Can I get baptized if I was already baptized as a baby?”

Response: Yes. Many churches practice believer’s baptism for those who were baptized as infants. This is your personal profession of faith. Talk to your pastor about your church’s view, but generally yes, you can be baptized.

“Is my baptism valid if my pastor made a mistake in the words?”

Response: Yes. The words are important for understanding and tradition, but your faith is what makes baptism valid. If words are slightly different, it's still your baptism. God honors sincere faith.

“What if I’m getting baptized as an adult but my family isn’t Christian?”

Response: That’s brave and hard. It shows real faith. Your family may eventually see the change in your life and become curious. Your baptism is your declaration regardless of what others think.

“Do I need to be baptized if I already got baptized at another church?”

Response: No. One baptism, one faith (Ephesians 4:5). If you were baptized as a believer, you don’t need to repeat it. If you were baptized as an infant, you might choose to be baptized as an adult believer. Ask your pastor.

“What if my church doesn’t have baptisms?”

Response: Find another church with a baptism soon. Your obedience to Jesus’ command matters. You might temporarily attend another church just for baptism, then return. Or ask your pastor when the next baptism opportunity is.

CONCLUSION — TAKE THE PLUNGE

This Is Your Moment

Baptism is a milestone you'll remember forever.

Standing in that water, declaring publicly: “Jesus is my Lord and Savior”—that's powerful. That's courageous. That's beautiful.

Don't be afraid. Don't delay. Don't let anyone talk you out of it.

Your Story Matters

Your testimony—the story of how Jesus changed your life—is the most powerful tool you have to reach others.

Your baptism is your story acted out in water.

Final Encouragement

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. — Acts 22:16 (KJV)”

Why are you waiting? Get baptized!

That's the Holy Spirit speaking through Scripture right now.

Talk to your pastor this week. Get baptized this month.

NEXT STEPS

This Week

- Talk to your pastor about baptism
- Attend baptism class (if your church has one)
- Start writing your testimony

This Month

- Get baptized!
- Invite family and friends
- Take pictures (this is milestone-worthy!)

After Baptism

- Get connected to your church community
- Join a small group or Bible study
- Find a mentor
- Start serving
- Keep reading your Bible
- Keep praying
- Tell others what Jesus did for you

Your baptism awaits. Don't wait any longer. Begin today.

© 2025 Kyle Lauriano — The King Is Coming Ministry

All Rights Reserved