

“Basic Biblical Beliefs Series: “The Sacrament of Baptism”

2017: The Reflection Year Series

Scripture: Romans 6:3-5 (NIV)

³Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We 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. ⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Subject Question: What three unique privileges are revealed to and for the believer in Jesus Christ as they participate in the sacrament of Baptism?

Compliment answer: The Privilege of Belonging to Christ (Vs.3), The Privilege of Behaving like Christ (Vs.4), and The Privilege of Being with Christ (Vs.5).

Big Idea: The three unique Privileges that are revealed to and for the believer In Jesus Christ as they participate in the sacrament of Baptism are: The Privilege of Belonging to Christ (Vs.3), The Privilege of Behaving like Christ (Vs.4), and The Privilege of Being with Christ (Vs.5).

Homiletical Idea: “I see God’s Possession”

Purpose: Twofold: First, generally speaking, I want the congregation to understand the key elements regarding baptism for the Believer. Then second, I want the congregation to understand the specific, good, glorious and challenging implications for every Believer who passes through the Baptismal waters.

Introduction: So far in our sermon series concerning Basic Biblical beliefs, we have considered: Human Depravity, Abundant Salvation, and Eternal Security. We have gone from “I see Dead people,” to “I see God’s people,” to “I see God’s Perspective.” Today we tackle our fourth topic: The Sacrament of Baptism. And for the next two weeks we’ll be “seeing God’s Precious Possession.” i.e. you and I as believers... And part of “seeing” us, as it were, is seeing and considering this church “event” or sacrament that literally solidifies our hearts as those who really belong to Christ, with Christ, and by Christ. To be baptized “into” Christ, as the scriptures point out, is to be baptized for

Christ. Baptism itself is an outward physical sign of an inward spiritual grace. Baptism solidifies our Belief in Christ, our Belonging to Christ, our Behavior for Christ, and our someday, Being with Christ forever and ever in His Glorious Loving Kingdom among His Most Holy Loved people. For the next two weeks we are going to move from generalities about baptism to specifics and implications.

Next week, we'll consider those specifics as Paul teaches us in the Book of Romans chapter 6: The Privilege of Belonging to Christ (Vs.3), The Privilege of Behaving like Christ (Vs.4), and The Privilege of Being with Christ (Vs.5). But first... some generalities: This morning we consider 7 Questions: 1) What is this Baptism in the sense that we call it a "sacrament..." what is a sacrament? 2) What does the act of baptism symbolize and thus, infer? 3) What are some of the scripture verses that challenge us about the necessity of being willing to partake in this experience? 4) What's so significant about this earthy plunge or sprinkling? 5) What about the difference between Believers Baptism and Infant Baptism? 6) And where do various denominations such as Baptists, Presbyterians and Catholics agree and differ? 7) And finally, when all is said and done what can we agree on here concerning how we view this mysterious sacrament?

(Believing, Belonging, Behaving... Being)

Groundwork:

- 1. What is this Baptism in the sense that we call it a sacrament... what is a sacrament? a Christian rite (such as baptism or the Eucharist) that is believed to have been ordained by Christ and that is held to be a means of divine grace or to be a sign or symbol of a spiritual reality**

What Is a Sacrament?

The word sacrament is the Latin translation of the Greek word "mysterion." From the early days of the church, baptism was associated with the mystery that surrounds God's action in our lives. That means that at best our words can only circumscribe what happens, but not define it. We cannot rationally explain why God would love us "while we were yet sinners" and give his only begotten Son that we should not perish but have eternal life. That is the most sacred and unfathomable mystery of all. We can experience God's grace at any time and in any place, but in the sacrament of baptism we routinely experience that amazing grace.

--UMC Website

2. **What does the act of baptism symbolize and thus, infer?** a Christian sacrament marked by ritual use of water and admitting the recipient to the Christian community

Baptism

It is well known that ablution or bathing was common in most ancient nations as a preparation for prayers and sacrifice or as expiatory of sin. In warm countries this connection is probably even closer than in colder climates; and hence the frequency of ablution in the religious rites throughout the East. Baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost is the rite or ordinance by which persons are admitted into the Church of Christ. It is the public profession of faith and discipleship. Baptism signifies--

1. A confession of faith in Christ;
2. A cleansing or washing of the soul from sin;
3. A death to sin and a new life in righteousness. The mode and subjects of baptism being much-controverted subjects, each one can best study them in the works devoted to those questions. The command to baptize was co-extensive with the command to preach the gospel. All nations were to be evangelized; and they were to be made disciples, admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, by baptism. (Matthew 28:19) It appears to have been a kind of transition from the Jewish baptism to the Christian. The distinction between John's baptism and Christian baptism appears in the case of Apollos, (Acts 18:26 Acts 18:27) and of the disciples at Ephesus mentioned (Acts 19:1-6) We cannot but draw from this history the inference that in Christian baptism there was a deeper spiritual significance. -- Smith's Bible Dictionary

3. **What are some of the scripture verses that challenge us about the necessity of being willing to partake in this experience?**

Bible Verses on Baptism

Baptism is a cornerstone to our Christian beliefs. John the Baptist was ordained by God to be the predecessor of Jesus - he preached about His coming and even baptized Jesus. Being baptized is an important part of Christianity and although not everyone gets baptized, it's an important part of our beliefs that you should be knowledgeable about. That's why we gathered together these Bible verses on baptism - so that you could learn more about this important part of Christianity!

1. **John 1 :33** And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizes with the Holy Ghost.
2. **John 3 :5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
3. **John 3 :23** And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.
4. **Acts 1 :5** For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.
5. **Acts 1 :22** Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.
6. **Acts 2:41** Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. (Church in Jerusalem)
7. **Acts 8:13** Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.
8. **Acts 9:18** And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. (Apostle Paul)
9. **Acts 11 :16** Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.
10. **Acts 19 :4** Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.
11. **Acts 19 :5** When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
12. **Acts 22 :16** And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.
13. **Romans 6 :3** Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

14. **Romans 6 :4** 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.
15. **1-Corinthians 12 :13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.
16. **Galatians 3 :27** For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
17. **Ephesians 4 :5** One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
18. **1-Peter 3 :21** The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:
<http://www.godvine.com/bible/category/baptism>

4. *What's so significant about this earthy plunge or sprinkling?*

What is the significance of baptism? R.C. Sproul

Just as an aside, the word significance has as its root the word sign. A sign is something that points to something beyond itself. We all recognize that whatever baptism signifies, Jesus obviously thought it was very important because he gives a command to baptize all nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Whatever else it is, baptism is the sign of the new covenant that God makes with his people. We do have the clear mandate in the New Testament that Christians are to be baptized.

I personally do not believe that baptism is essential for salvation. If I believed that, I would think that the thief on the cross who was promised paradise with Jesus would have been disqualified because he obviously didn't have an opportunity to get baptized. But I do believe that baptism is essential for obedience because Christ commands it. It's just the same thing as when people say, "Do you have to go to church to go to heaven?" I would say, "Obviously not." But do you have to go to church to obey Christ? Yes, you do. And if you are not inclined to obey Christ and have no inclination to follow his mandates, that may be a sign that you are not headed for heaven. So church involvement becomes a very serious matter of obedience.

I would say the same about the sacrament of baptism. It's a sign of the new covenant. It's a sign of our participation in Jesus, of being partakers in his death and resurrection, which are at the heart of the gospel. It's also a sign of our cleansing from sin and guilt by the work of Jesus and the washing of

regeneration. What we do outwardly with water, the Spirit does inwardly with his grace. So it's a sign of our cleansing. It's also a sign of our sanctification. It's a sign of our baptism of the Holy Spirit. It's a sign of our being set apart from the world and given the holy task to fulfill the commission that Christ gives to his church.

So there are several things that baptism signifies. I think one of our tendencies is to reduce those to one—making it merely a cleansing rite or merely a sign of empowering by the Holy Spirit—when in fact it is a sacrament that is rich and complex with meaning and significance.

5. **What about the difference between Believers Baptism and Infant Baptism? The 2 sides:** *Believers baptism asserts a person must have a professed and possessed faith to be baptized, proclaimed that faith, and has evidence of God's transformative work in their life, and then are baptized. Infants are not seen as capable of "having" faith, thus, "dedicating" not baptizing, them to the Lord is seen as a valid way to include them in the church family. On the other side. Those of us who practice infant baptism. These proponents absolutely agree with the practice of Believers Baptism when it comes to older children and adults. Who wouldn't! (As an aside, I personally prefer an older person to be immersed—it carries more symbolic weight, not with God but with the one being baptized). However, Proponents of infant baptism see infants as already a part of the church family due to the belief and covenant that their presents have experienced with God. And in faith and by faith, baptize those children who are already considered a natural, as a biological by product, an included part of the baptized community)*

Infant Baptism R.C. Sproul

"For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself" (Acts 2:39).

The divisions over baptism become most evident when discussing the proper recipients of the sacrament. Most American evangelicals only baptize those who have verbally professed faith. Yet many Christians follow the majority practice of church history and administer the ordinance to adults and their infant children.

The New Testament nowhere commands us to baptize infants, but neither does it anywhere forbid it. Recognizing this fact, we will offer a brief case for infant baptism in the hopes of understanding why it is practiced by many Christians.

First, in the Old Testament, there is no standard chronology for faith and circumcision. Abraham was circumcised after professing faith (Gen. 17:22–27), but Isaac was circumcised before his confession (21:4). Faith in the Lord was necessary in both cases to appropriate all the benefits that circumcision promises, but the administration of the sign and seal was not tied to the timing of their faith. Circumcision and baptism are linked (Col. 2:8–15), and so baptism, like circumcision, need not be tied to the moment of profession.

Second, the old covenant promises were given to adults and their children, and this was depicted in circumcision. Thus, it is hard to imagine that the greater new covenant promises and signs should not also be given to the infant children of believing adults. In today's passage, Peter actually tells us the new covenant promises are gifts for the children of believers (Acts 2:38–39).

Twenty-five percent of the baptisms found in the New Testament are of entire households, and these homes likely included children.

Finally, Paul says the children of a Christian parent are set apart to God (1 Cor. 7:12–14). Circumcision visibly set a child of believers apart under the old covenant, and so it would be hard for Jewish converts to believe the Lord would not include new covenant children in the seal that sets people apart as part of the visible community. Like circumcision, baptism without personal faith avails nothing. But baptism does mark the child as part of the visible church and liable to stricter judgment if the recipient never trusts God (Luke 12:41–48).

Coram Deo

Whether or not we baptize infants, 1 Corinthians 7:12–14 reveals that children of believers have a relationship to the Lord that the offspring of non-believers do not share. They are in the visible church where they enjoy hearing the preached Word of God. But while the church does play a part in teaching children about Christ, the church is not to do all the work. We as parents, family, and friends must impress the teachings of Jesus upon the children we know.

6. And where do various denominations such as Baptists, Presbyterians and Catholics agree and differ? (Of the major denominations: Catholic,

Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran and Reformed (Presbyterian) there is more agreement than disagreement when it comes to Baptism. All five denominations agree that Baptism is either a sacrament or ordinance that was instituted and ordained by Christ—it provides a visible door into membership in the church universal. All use the same words of institution (Viz a viz. *In the Name of the Father and the Son... etc.*). Immersion is considered appropriate and accepted by all, but prescribed and insisted on by only one or two. All with the exception of the Catholics do not believe that baptism is necessary for salvation. All, except the Baptists practice and believe in Infant baptism. All use water. All rely heavily on the imagery and the visual aspect of the precious ceremony. All consider baptism as vital part of the Christian experience. There is simply so much more than we can agree on than disagree when it comes to this sacrament. Let's not let the enemy do more damage to the Church of Christ than he already has. We are brothers. We are sisters in the Lord. Baptism should be seen for what it signifies: a celebration, a victory lap, the sign of a changed life, a better life, acceptance and belonging, a life that has come to age, a life of one who has finally come home.

Denominational Statements concerning Baptism Presbyterian Church

Baptism is one of two sacraments practiced by Presbyterians; Communion is the other. The act of baptism is deceptively simple—but in a handful of water, there is a deep well of mystery and meaning.

In baptism, we are called to a new way of life as Christ's disciples, sharing the good news of the gospel with all the world.

Presbyterians describe baptism as a sign and seal of the covenant of grace made by God through Jesus and extended to us. In baptism, God claims us as beloved children and members of Christ's body, the church, washing us clean from sin as we renounce the power of evil and seek the will and way of God.

Presbyterians have recognized baptism as one of two sacraments initiated by Christ in Scripture. All four Gospels report the baptism of Jesus by John in the Jordan River (Matt. 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22; John 1:29–34). When we are baptized with water in the name of the Trinity, we share in Christ's own baptism.

Presbyterians celebrate baptism as a communal act of public worship. In the Middle Ages, baptism came to be an increasingly private, family affair, separated from worship. The Protestant Reformation sought to change that, arguing that the power of baptism did not come from the act itself but from its connection with the promise of God conveyed in Scripture. That's why Presbyterian baptism is always accompanied by the proclamation of the Word in the context of

public worship. Luther and Calvin also insisted that baptism be followed by ongoing instruction in the faith, particularly through the study of the Bible and catechisms.

Presbyterians practice both adult and infant baptism. Infant baptism expresses that it is God who chooses us for faith, discipleship, and salvation; without God, we have no power to claim these things for ourselves. However, we affirm that people come to faith at different stages in life, and recognize the baptism of older believers as an equally valid expression of the sacrament.

While pouring or sprinkling water upon the head is most common, Presbyterians also allow for baptism by immersion. Whatever the method, the deep significance of baptism demands a visible and generous use of water, conveying the lavish outpouring of God's grace, filling believers with the gifts of the Spirit, and overflowing in lives of faithfulness, service, and love.

A teaching elder—a pastor—must preside at the baptism, but it is a congregation's session (or ruling council) that authorizes baptisms and provides for the spiritual growth and nurture of members. That's why a ruling elder of the church always presents the candidate for baptism. In turn, both the family and the congregation promise to contribute to the baptized person's Christian formation.

Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod)

QUESTION: Can you please clarify the Lutheran view of Baptism and its purpose? Does the child become a Christian when baptized?

ANSWER: Lutherans believe that the Bible teaches that a person is saved by God's grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

The Bible tells us that such "faith comes by hearing" (Rom. 10:17). Jesus Himself commands Baptism and tells us that Baptism is water used together with the Word of God (Matt. 28:19-20).

Because of this, we believe that Baptism is one of the miraculous means of grace (another is God's Word as it is written or spoken), through which God creates and/or strengthens the gift of faith in a person's heart (see Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:1-4; Col. 2:11-12; 1 Cor. 12:13).

Terms the Bible uses to talk about the beginning of faith include "conversion" and "regeneration." Although we do not claim to understand fully how this happens, we believe that when an infant is baptized God creates faith in the heart of that infant.

We believe this because the Bible says that infants can believe (Matt. 18:6) and that new birth (regeneration) happens in Baptism (John 3:5-7; Titus 3:5-6). The infant's faith cannot yet, of course, be verbally expressed or articulated by the child, yet it is real and present all the same (see e.g., Acts 2:38-39; Luke 1:15; 2 Tim. 3:15).

The faith of the infant, like the faith of adults, also needs to be fed and nurtured by God's Word (Matt. 28:18-20), or it will die.

Lutherans do not believe that only those baptized as infants receive faith. Faith can also be created in a person's heart by the power of the Holy Spirit working through God's (written or spoken) Word.

Baptism should then soon follow conversion (cf. Acts 8:37) for the purpose of confirming and strengthening faith in accordance with God's command and promise. Depending on the situation, therefore, Lutherans baptize people of all ages from infancy to adulthood.

The LCMS does not believe that Baptism is ABSOLUTELY necessary for salvation. All true believers in the Old Testament era were saved without baptism. Mark 16:16 implies that it is not the absence of Baptism that condemns a person but the absence of faith, and there are clearly other ways of coming to faith by the power of the Holy Spirit (reading or hearing the Word of God).

Still, Baptism dare not be despised or willfully neglected, since it is explicitly commanded by God and has His precious promises attached to it. It is not a mere “ritual” or “symbol,” but a powerful means of grace by which God grants faith and the forgiveness of sins.

Baptist Church (SBC)

Baptism & the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water. ... It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members ... memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Methodist (UMC)

Who tells you who you are? We receive our identity from others, from the expectations of friends and colleagues, from the labels society puts upon us, and from the influence of family. To become Christian is to receive a new identity. You no longer allow others to tell you who you are. Christ now claims you and instructs you. A Christian is one who has “put on Christ.” Baptism celebrates becoming that new person. That is why the church’s ritual begins with putting off the old, renouncing sin and the evil powers of the world, and pledging our loyalty to Christ.

God Initiates the Covenant. We also believe that in baptism God initiates a covenant with us, announced with the words, “The Holy Spirit works within you, that being born through water and the Spirit, you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.” This is followed by the sign-act of laying hands on the head, or the signing of the cross on the forehead with oil. The word covenant is a biblical word describing God’s initiative in choosing Israel to be a people with a special mission in the world, and Israel’s response in a life of faithfulness. The baptismal covenant calls us to a similar vocation.

God Has Chosen Us. Christians have also understood the baptismal covenant in light of Jesus’ baptism. At Jesus’ baptism, God said: “This is my son.” While Jesus’ relation to God as Son is unique, for Christians baptism means that God has also chosen us as daughters and sons, and knows us intimately as a parent. So the most important things about us, our true identity, is that we are now sons and daughters of God. That is why the introduction to the United Methodist Baptismal Covenant states, “We are incorporated into God’s mighty acts of salvation and given new birth through water and the Spirit.” The introduction also says, “Through the Sacrament of Baptism, we are initiated into Christ’s holy church.”

Baptism Is the Door. From the beginning, baptism has been the door through which one enters the church. It was inconceivable to many that one could respond to God’s grace by reciting the renunciations, affirming one’s faith in Christ and loyalty to the Kingdom, without joining the fellowship of those who are committed to mature in that faith. As the “Body of Christ” in the world, baptism commissions us to use our gifts to strengthen the church and to transform the world.

Why Baptize Babies? From the earliest times, children and infants were baptized and included in the church. As scriptural authority for this ancient tradition, some scholars cite Jesus’ words, “Let the little children come to me... for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs” (Mark 10:14). However, a more consistent argument is that baptism, as a means of grace, signifies God’s initiative in the process of salvation. John Wesley preached “prevenient grace,” the grace that works in our lives before we are aware of it, bringing us to faith. The baptism of children and their inclusion in the

church before they can respond with their own confirmation of faith is a vivid and compelling witness to prevenient grace.

Baptism Is Forever. Because baptism is a sacrament of God's grace and a covenant that God has initiated, it should not be repeated. However, God's continuing and patient forgiveness, God's prevenient grace, will prompt us to renew the commitment first made at our baptism. At such a time, instead of rebaptism, The United Methodist Church offers the ritual for the reaffirmation of baptismal vows, which implies that, while God remains faithful to God's half of the covenant, we are not always faithful to our promises. Our half of the covenant is to confess Christ as our Savior, trust in his grace, serve him as Lord in the church, and carry out his mission against evil, injustice, and oppression.

Baptism Is the Beginning, Not the End You have heard people say, "I was baptized Methodist," or "I was baptized Presbyterian," which could mean that in baptism they got their identity papers and that was the end of it. But baptism is not the end. It is the beginning of a lifelong journey of faith. It makes no difference whether you were baptized as an adult or as a child; we all start on that journey at baptism. For the child, the journey begins in the nurturing community of the church, where he or she learns what it means that God loves you. At the appropriate time, the child will make his or her first confession of faith in the ritual the church traditionally calls confirmation. Most often, this is at adolescence or at the time when the person begins to take responsibility for his or her own decisions.

Catholic Church

Baptism is necessary for salvation

Baptism is necessary for salvation for anyone who has heard the Gospel of Christ and has the possibility of requesting Baptism.

If a man has lived to be a hundred and had a healthy and "successful" life, it means nothing without Baptism. Once he dies, how could health or worldly success matter at all if this person has missed out on the one thing for which he was made—eternal union with God?

There is no escaping the absolute necessity of Baptism.

"Unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," Jesus told Nicodemus (John 3:5). And His command to the Apostles was: "Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe" (and, by inference, is not baptized) "shall be condemned" (Mark 16: 15-16).

There is no "if" or "maybe" about those two statements; no way around them.

(The Catechism's section on Baptism also describes this requirement; see numbers 1257-1261.)

Infant baptism

We can understand, then, why it is that the Church insists that babies be baptized as soon as possible after birth—as soon as the infant can safely be carried to church.

It is an article of faith that anyone who dies in the state of original sin is excluded from heaven, from the vision of God. However, the Church has never officially taught that the souls of infants who die without Baptism do not see God; it may be that God has some way of compensating in such souls for their lack of Baptism. But if so, God has not revealed it to us.

Most theologians are of the opinion that the souls of unbaptized infants enjoy a high degree of natural happiness (to which they give the name of "limbo") but not the supernatural and supreme happiness of the beatific vision. In any event, our obligation is to follow the safer course: never through our fault to let a soul enter eternity without Baptism.

For parents, this means that they should not unduly delay the Baptism of their newborn child. Parents who unnecessarily delay or neglect the Baptism of their child become guilty of grave sin. It would be very wrong, for example, for parents to put off Baptism simply because Uncle George is coming to town next month, and they want Uncle George to be godfather of the baby. Right now, the baby needs Baptism more than he needs Uncle George—and Uncle George still can be godfather by proxy.

It would be still worse to postpone Baptism so the parents can put together an elaborate party. The baby's big party is with God and the angels and saints at the baptismal font; none of them are interested in a keg of beer.

Who can baptize?

The ordinary minister of Baptism is a priest or a deacon.

But in an emergency, anyone can baptize—even a non-Catholic or non-Christian. All that is required is that the person baptizing:

- Intend to do what the Catholic Church does in this sacrament
- Pour water upon the head (ordinary tap water is fine in an emergency)
- Say audibly the words of Baptism while pouring water, similar to: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

These are words that every Catholic should know as well as he knows his own name. Someone's eternal salvation may one day depend upon the knowing of these words.

If the person receiving emergency Baptism is of the age of reason (at least seven years old or so), then they must have the necessary faith to receive Baptism:

- Faith in God the Blessed Trinity as the rewarder of the just and the punisher of the wicked and in Jesus Christ as God's own Son and our Redeemer
- The willingness to accept all that the Catholic Church teaches

Such opportunities to administer Baptism may never come to us, but it is of profound importance that we be prepared.

Those who die without Baptism

If Baptism is so absolutely necessary in order to get to heaven (and it is), then what about all those people who die without even having a chance to be baptized? What about those who perhaps don't even know about Baptism? Will they lose heaven when it's no fault of theirs at all?

No one who has reached the age of reason loses heaven except through his own fault. It is an article of Christian faith, defined by the Church that God gives to **every** soul He creates sufficient grace to be saved. No one ever will be able to say: "I lost heaven because I couldn't help it."

For those who have no opportunity to be baptized, the path to God is the path of **love**.

A person who loves God above all things else and desires to do all that God wants him to do has "Baptism of desire." If circumstances make it impossible for him to receive sacramental Baptism, his Baptism of desire will be sufficient to open for him the gates of heaven.

Just as supreme love for God forgives all sin, even mortal sin, in the soul of a baptized person who cannot get to confession, so also supreme love for God will take away all sin, original as well as actual sin, from the soul of one who cannot yet receive Baptism.

When a person who loves God knows about Baptism and wants to be baptized, we call that *explicit* Baptism of desire. When a person ignorant of Baptism loves God and has the desire to do all that God wants, we call that *implicit* Baptism of desire. In other words, the desire for Baptism is contained implicitly in the desire to do God's will. If the person knew about Baptism and knew that God wanted him to receive it, the person would be baptized; what God wants, he wants.

A person taking instruction in preparation for Baptism would have explicit Baptism of desire if his faith were accompanied by a love for God for His own sake. A devout Jew or Muslim with supreme love for God might well have implicit Baptism of desire.

7. And finally, when all is said and done what can we agree on here concerning how we view this mysterious sacrament? It's all about Grace. It's all about love. It's all about identity and acceptance. Every Christian life follows the same gracious pattern: Believing, Belonging, Behaving, and Being. We believe in Christ. We belong to Christ, We behave for Christ, and we will be, someday, with Christ. Baptism is an outward sign and seal that we have started, and are on that journey. Along the way, the Lord gives to us friends to share our journey, family to enjoy our journey, and a church home to be a part of on our journey. Baptism is a part, a crucial, a wonderfully mysterious but glorious part of that journey.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers

(3) **Know ye not.**—It should be as in the Greek, *Or know ye not*. Do you not admit this principle; or am I to suppose that you are ignorant? &c.

Were baptized into Jesus Christ—*i.e.*, “into communion with Him and incorporation in His mystical body” (Ellicott on Galatians 3:27). “As many of you as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ.” Your baptism signified an intimately close and indissoluble attachment to Christ.

Were baptized into his death.—And this attachment had a special relation to His death. It involved a communion or fellowship with His death. This fellowship is ethical, *i.e.*, it implies a moral conduct corresponding to that relation to Christ which it assumes.

Why has baptism this special connection with the *death* of Christ? In the first place, the death of Christ is the central and cardinal fact of the Christian scheme. It is specially related to justification, and justification proceeds from faith, which is ratified in baptism. In the second place, the symbolism of baptism was such as naturally to harmonize with the symbolism of death. It was the final close of one period, and the beginning of another—the complete stripping off of the past and putting on of the “new man.”

(4) **We are buried with him.**—Burial, is the consequence of death. It is the seal set upon it, as it were, which shows that no revival is possible. Besides, it is the

one step which separates it from resurrection. The idea of “buried with Christ” is therefore introduced, on the one hand, to show that the ethical death with Him was final and decisive, and on the other, to prepare the way for an ethical (as well *as* physical) resurrection with Him.

Into death.—The ideas of physical and moral death and resurrection and life are inextricably blended in the thought of the Apostle.

By the glory of the Father.—The resurrection of Christ is more usually and more naturally ascribed to the power or Omnipotence of God. The word “Glory” is here to be taken as standing for the sum of the divine perfections, power being included among them, “the Majesty on High.”

Even so.—It is to be observed that the mysticism is here resolved into a relation of resemblance. The resurrection of Christ, and the new life of the Christian, are *compared* instead of being identified. The Apostle does not say “being dead with Christ, let us rise with Him;” but, “*as* Christ rose again, *so* we also should walk in newness of life.” The mystical expression for this is given in the next verse.

(5) **If we have been planted together.**—“If (so surely as) we have *grown into—become conjoined with.*” The metaphor is taken from the parasitic growth of a plant, but applies to *natural* growth, not “*planted* together with,” as in the Authorized Version. The idea would correspond to the growth of a bud or graft regarded as part of that of the stock in which it is inserted; But without reference to the operation of budding or grafting. It is used here to express the closest intimacy and union.

In the likeness of his death.—Not here “His death itself,” but “the *likeness* of His death,” *i.e.*, an ethical condition corresponding to, or *conformable* to, the death of Christ. If our nature has grown “into conformity with” His death, it will be also conformable to His resurrection.

This conformity means, of course, dying *to* trespasses and sins, being completely removed from the sphere of their influence, and entering a new sphere corresponding to the glorified life of the Redeemer. The ethical resurrection of the Christian begins (or is ideally supposed to begin, and with the early Christian usually did begin) in baptism, is continued through life, and is completed with his physical resurrection.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

6:3-10 Baptism teaches the necessity of dying to sin, and being as it were buried from all ungodly and unholy pursuits, and of rising to walk with God in newness of life. Unholy professors may have had the outward sign of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, but they never passed from the family of Satan to that of God. The corrupt nature, called the old man, because derived from our first father Adam, is crucified with Christ, in every true believer, by the grace derived from the cross. It is weakened and in a dying state, though it yet struggles for life, and even for victory. But the whole body of sin, whatever is not according to the holy law of God, must be done away, so that the believer may no more be the slave of sin, but live to God, and find happiness in his service.

Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

“Know ye not that so many of us as, You must know this, you cannot be ignorant of it, that whoever were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death: and therefore must be dead to sin, and consequently ought not to live, nor can they live in sin.” This does not suppose, that some of this church were baptized persons, and others not; but that some might be baptized in water who were not baptized into Christ: there is a difference between being baptized in water in the name of Christ, and being baptized into Christ, which believers in their baptism are; by which is meant, not a being brought by it into union with Christ, which is either secretly from eternity, or openly at conversion, and both before the baptism of true believers; nor a being brought by it into the mystical body of Christ the church, for this also is before it; but rather it designs a being baptized, or a being brought by baptism into more communion with Christ, into a participation of his grace and benefits; or into the doctrine of Christ, and a more distinct knowledge of it: the power of which they feel upon their hearts, and so have really believed in Christ, heartily love him, and make a sincere profession of him; though rather the true meaning of the phrase "baptized into Christ", I take to be, is to be baptized purely for the sake of Christ, in imitation of him, who has set us an example, and because baptism is an ordinance of his; it is to submit to it with a view to his glory, to testify our affection for him, and subjection to him, without laying any stress or dependence on it for salvation; such who are thus baptized, are "baptized into his death"; they not only resemble Christ in his sufferings and death, by being immersed in water, but they declare their faith in the death of

Christ, and also share in the benefits of his death; such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and atonement: now this proves, that such persons are dead to sin, who are so baptized; for by the death of Christ, into which they are baptized, they are justified from sin; by the death of Christ, their old man is crucified, and the body of sin destroyed; besides, believers in baptism profess themselves to be dead to sin and the world, and their baptism is an obligation upon them to live unto righteousness.

(Believing, Belonging, Behaving, Being)

1. The Privilege of Belonging to Christ (Vs.3). ³ *Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?* The first point of consideration is the paradoxical way in which this verse is written. In reality it's more Christ that is baptized into us than the other way around. Next, that little preposition, "into" speaks volumes. As Ellicott points out: **Were baptized into Jesus Christ**—i.e., "into communion with Him and incorporation in His mystical body." "As many of you as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ." Your baptism signified an intimately close and indissoluble (permanent) attachment to Christ. In other words, if we have gotten this far in our faith, then for our sake we pass through the baptismal waters, solidifying, the fact that not only do I belong to Christ, but He belongs to me. Not only does He love me, but I am desirous of loving and being identified with Him. . And in doing so we come to realize that through it all, We belong, have always belonged, and thus, will always belong to Him! We have passed from death to life, from the path of futility to the road to glory. God has gifted us with His calling, His choosing, His claiming and His changing. He has promised to never leave us, never forsake us, never abandon us, and never give up on us. We are His sheep, His children, His people... His own. He, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, has gifted us with none other than Himself. But what's interesting is that we are not left to idly live out the rest of our life looking back to our baptism... The verse goes on...
2. **Were baptized into his death.**—Notice that it doesn't say, we were baptized into His life. Again, our commentator adds; And this attachment had a special relation to His death. It involved a communion

or fellowship with His death. This fellowship is ethical, *i.e.*, it implies a moral conduct corresponding to that relation to Christ which it assumes.

- a. Why has baptism this special connection with the *death* of Christ? In the first place, the death of Christ is the central and cardinal fact of the Christian scheme. It is specially related to justification, and justification proceeds from faith, which is ratified in baptism. In the second place, the symbolism of baptism was such as naturally to harmonize with the symbolism of death. It was the final close of one period, and the beginning of another—the complete stripping off of the past and putting on of the “new man.”
3. The question for all of us who have come through the waters of baptism is, how much of an impact, a real impact, a real life changing impact has and more, is, that event that symbolized and proven that we are indeed, in Christ, bearing its intended fruit. Are we really, have we been, living for, devoted to, in love with, directed by... Christ Himself.
4. Yes, we belong to Christ, but Christ also belongs to us. Yes, God has gifted us with His presence though being is us. But, are we in turn gifting God with ourselves and as such being God’s very gift to the friends and family around us. It’s a privilege to belong to Christ; it’s a privilege to be baptized into Christ. Are we acting as such, is the real question. O yes, Baptism specifically spells out The Privilege of Belonging to Christ.

(Believing, Belonging, Behaving, Being)

1. The Privilege of Behaving like Christ (Vs.4). *⁴We 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*
2. Baptism is our personal journey. It’s our individual trek and task. Its symbolism takes us out of the wilderness where we once lived, through the waters of redemption and cleansing, , and up to our Canaan land to claim our territory as God’s reprehensive in the land of the Living. . It’s a God ordained, God directed, journey taking us and showing His deliverance from Satan’s domain and control and future to God’s control and domain and our glorious future with Him. It is in its most simplistic symbolism, a resurrection; but more than that—it’s a high calling, a Divine mandate, an eternal whisper and invitation to die to the old man,

the old way of living, and put on the new—striving for holiness and sold out to righteousness.

3. Paul sums up this new life attitude in Galatians chapter 2 where in verse 20 he penned, *²⁰I 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.* How many things in our life would change if we woke up every morning with these words on our hearts and minds. More, what would life really look like if we really believed the words from 1 Corinthians, *¹⁹Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.*
4. In reality it's not a hardship to be like Christ, to act like Christ, to make a stand for Christ, in front of others if you really are in love with Christ. *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.* Oh, it's one thing to glory in the fact that we belong personally to Christ. Amen! But, it's just as much a privilege my brother and sister; to let your new life shine before others, become the salt that stirs us a spiritual thirst in others, be the light, a very beacon of hope in this O so cold and dark world. Take your baptism seriously and personally and you won't have a choice not to behave like Christ.

(Believing, Belonging, Behaving, Being)

1. The Privilege of Being with Christ (Vs.5). *⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.*
2. We end up our deeper look at baptism by considering one of the sweetest prayers I know; Jesus' High Priestly prayer in John 17. Listen to His words: *⁴“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. ²⁵“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶I have made you²⁶ known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”*

3. What does baptism really represent? A New life... sure... a new lifestyle... absolutely. But more, a new life purpose...without doubt. We do belong to Christ. We are indeed learning to behave more like Christ. But in reality, the greatest privilege that we have is Jesus Himself actually living out His life and His purpose, His calling people, His caring for people, His willingness to come to people though you and me. A little water goes a long way...
4. Baptism is about belonging. Belonging to an eternal family. Belonging to a heavenly Kingdom. More, belonging to Christ. But our belonging is not just to, it's for. For Christ... for others... for ourselves. Baptism is something that we do not to belong, but because we already belong,