



Baptism 101

Please take a few minutes to read this page. It was written to help you understand what baptism is, what it is not, and help you determine whether you are ready to be baptized. If you feel you are not ready to be baptized, that's OK too!

Why Is Baptism Important?

Just before Jesus ascended to Heaven, he gave one last command known as the "Great Commission." He said, "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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20) Those were his marching orders for his original followers, and they are his marching orders for us today. Think about it. Of all the things Jesus could have said before leaving the earth, he said those who make a choice to believe and follow him should be baptized. Baptism is a BIG DEAL! For the past 2,000 years baptism has been the way Christians have publicly declared their love for Jesus and their commitment to follow him all the days of their lives.

When Should I Be Baptized?

We're all on a spiritual journey in life, and we're all at different places on that journey. Depending on where you are on your spiritual journey, some of you will be ready for baptism while others may not be. How do you know if you're ready? This baptism event is called a

"Believer's Baptism", so it is appropriate for people who are "believers in" and "followers of" Jesus Christ. If you believe God the Father loves you so much that he sent his Son Jesus to die on the cross for your sins and you have accepted this truth in your life, then you are ready to be baptized.

Does Baptism Take Away Sin?

No! A person gets his or her sins forgiven by accepting Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior, not by doing any good things including getting baptized. The Apostle Paul wrote, "God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it." (Ephesians 2:8-9).

If I'm Not Baptized, Can I Still Go To Heaven?

Yes! Some people come to Crossline thinking they must get baptized to qualify for heaven. If you believe this to be true, consider the story of the crucifixion in the Bible when Jesus was being crucified between two thieves. One of the thieves continued to mock Jesus while the other said to him, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). This criminal was placing his faith in Jesus when he was only hours away from death. Jesus didn't say, "Thanks for placing your faith in me. It's too bad you won't get to heaven because you have never been baptized." Instead, the gospel of Luke records this: "Jesus answered him, 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.'" (Luke 23:43) Baptism was not necessary for the thief to get to heaven and it's not necessary for you to get to heaven either.

How Does Crossline Community Church Baptize Believers?

Different churches baptize people in different ways. Some sprinkle water on people. Others pour it over a person's head. These are great ways to baptize! At Crossline, we practice by what is called "immersion" which means your entire body goes under the water.

The reason we do this is the Greek word for baptism is *baptizo*, which literally means, "to dip or immerse". Back 2,000 years ago it was common to use the word "baptize" when you wanted to dye a cloth, transforming it from white to purple. To do this, you didn't sprinkle purple dye onto the cloth. Nor did you pour dye over it. Instead, you got a container filled with purple dye and "baptize" the cloth, fully immersed the cloth in it.

So, baptism by immersion seems to best capture the meaning of the word and appears to be depicted in the New Testament. For example, in the book of Acts it says, "And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him." (Acts 8:38). And yet, we need to acknowledge that in the early 2nd century, only one generation removed from the original apostles, there is evidence that Christians were baptized by ways other than immersion. These various ways to baptize have continued today.

The typical way we baptize at Crossline is by immersion, by going totally under the water. Yet, some people cannot physically be baptized in this manner. In these cases, we baptize by sprinkling. Please know that this is not a second-rate baptism, it's just a different way to do it. In the end, God doesn't care about the amount of water used. Instead, he cares about your heart.

Who Can Baptize Me?

Back in the days when the New Testament was written, there weren't any seminaries. Nor was anybody ordained. Back then, Christians simply baptized other Christians. You didn't need to be a pastor or a priest to baptize someone back then and you don't need to be one now either.

At the upcoming baptism event, we will have our pastoral staff in the water baptizing people. If you prefer, your spouse, friend, parent, or Life Group leader can baptize you. Anyone who is actively pursuing full devotion to Jesus Christ may baptize you. It is our hope you will select a baptizer you know and have a personal relationship with, since it makes your baptism that much more special and memorable.

Can I Be Baptized Alongside Someone Else?

Some people choose to get baptized side by side with another person, locking arms with them, and going totally under together. Sometimes two friends or entire families are baptized together. We are open to have as many as can fit comfortably in our baptismal.