

# Baptism—A Declaration

## Frequently Asked Questions

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We're so thrilled you are considering getting baptized! In fact, we believe it to be one of the most important things that you could ever do in your lifetime. We regard baptism as "an outward declaration of an inner transformation"; it is a public act that symbolized how Jesus has, is, and will continue to change you from the inside out.

For the last 2,000 years, there has been much debate over the meaning and methods of this sacrament. While we sincerely respect the many different traditions among the diverse church of Jesus, our attempt is to be as simple as the New Testament describes it. That being said, there are always a good amount of natural questions that persist. We've prepared the following FAQ Sheet to help and hope that it brings you one step closer towards declaring the incredible news of Jesus in you!

Q: What is baptism—literally?

It is three things:

1. We will ask you to give a short public testimony story of your faith in Jesus and how He is changing your life for the better.
2. As everyone lines the shore, we will invite you (and your family/friends) into the lake where two or three pastoral elders will ask you, "Are you today declaring your life to Jesus as your Lord and Savior and vowing to follow Him where ever He leads?" If you say, "I am", then we will say "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we baptize you" and then gently lean you back, immersing you fully into the water, then we will lift you back up.
3. We celebrate! We'll huddle together, pray, and high-five as everyone else cheers from the shore!

Q: What does baptism symbolize?

- Baptism is a public declaration of an inner transformation that God is doing within you. Just like a wedding ceremony, you are declaring before your family and friends that you are vowing to follow Jesus with your entire life. (See how Paul's baptism made such a declaration in Acts 9:17-19.)
- In so doing, you are also identifying with the death and resurrection of your risen Lord. When you are lowered into the waters, you are symbolizing that you are no longer living for yourself. Then, when you are raised from the waters, you are declaring that your life is now alive for Him and His purposes. (See Colossians 2:12-14)
- Lastly, you are locking arms with His community of believers. You are declaring that His church is now your spiritual family and that you will serve in a solidarity alongside them in unity and love. (See Acts 2:41; I Corinthians 12:12-14, Colossians 3:12-14)

Q: Is getting baptized essential for salvation?

- No. Baptism is, again, a declaration of your salvation and not something that gives you salvation. (See Jesus' promise he makes without baptism Luke 23:39-44?) At the same time, it is a biblical command for all believers and one that we take very seriously.

Q: What should my expectations be of this time?

- We encourage you not to have many expectations. Some experience a powerful emotion, others feel nothing at all. Some describe it as the most meaningful thing they've ever done in their life, others wonder what the hoopla is all about. Either way—the validity of your declaration is not based on emotion but on what you are declaring with your heart, mind, soul and strength. (See Luke 10:27-28)
- Now, this doesn't mean that nothing happens. When you publicly declare, you are—in essence—crossing over a line in the sand. In so doing, you are opening yourself up to Him and more boldly inviting the Holy Spirit to move in and through you. As a result, it is impossible for you not to change! But, don't fear, you won't become some unrecognizable person, some "Christian robot" type that's pumped out from a church assembly line. No, you'll become more of you—who God designed you to be. If you're funny now, He'll make you even funnier. If you're intelligent now, He'll expand your mind beyond reason. If you're a pistol, He'll give you new bullets. (See Philippians 1:6; Colossians 1:27-28)

Q: If I've already been baptized as an infant, can I be baptized again?

- Yes. Although we believe that it is not necessary and that God will confirm what your parents did for you, we encourage you to declare your love for Jesus now also as an adult.

Q: What is a 1:1 Spiritual Mentorship?

- Here is the framework of a 1:1 Spiritual Mentorship: We match you up with another Heartlander we think is the best fit both spiritually and in life experience. You will meet with this person for 6 months, and together you work through a book called Discipleship Essentials. You will meet once a week for about 1.5 hours. Many times it is over coffee, lunch, before or after church, etc. You will do the Bible study sections of the first 4 chapters together. After that you will do the whole chapter on your own. It will take you about 1.5 hours to complete. You will also naturally experience a life mentoring relationship as the study applies to life, as you and your mentor have questions and find out the answers, and just begin to share your life story with each other.