
Text: [Matthew 3:1-15](#)

Republic, July 27, 2025

Title: "The Meaning of Water Baptism"

The first recorded incidents of baptism in the Bible were performed by John.

Because of the tremendous amount of people that John was baptizing, most people called him John the baptist. 3 of the gospels Matthew, Mark, and Luke refer to John as John the Baptist. AND, Jesus Himself, called him John the Baptist.

[Matthew 11:11](#) (NKJV)

¹¹ "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than **John the Baptist**; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

What is the real meaning of baptism?

1. Water baptism is meant to be the next step after we have asked forgiveness for our sins.

[Matthew 3:5-6](#) (NIV)

⁵ People went out to him (*John the Baptist*) from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan.

⁶ **Confessing their sins**, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

[Acts 8:26-29](#) (NIV)

²⁶ Now **an angel of the Lord said to Philip**, "Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza."

²⁷ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship,

²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet.

²⁹ **The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."**

[Acts 8:34-38](#) (NIV)

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?"

³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news

about Jesus.

- ³⁶ As they traveled along the road, **they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?"**
- ³⁷ *(Some manuscripts have verse 37 with Phillip saying --->) "If you believe with all your heart you may." (Then the eunuch saying --->) "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."*
- ³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. **Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.**

So, you see the order here. Get saved, get baptized. It is what God wants from us.

But, baptism also has a fuller, deeper meaning:

2. The real meaning of Baptism is it represents a change of who's in charge.

As we go under the water we are dying to self, and what we want in life. We come up out of the water as a new person. Now we belong to God. We now want what God wants for our lives. We do not run our own lives anymore. God is in charge. We make decisions based on what God wants. He owns our decisions, our money, our time, how we handle our attitudes, and even our mouth. We now live to please Him.

These 5 verses in [Colossians 3:1-5](#) describe what the symbolism of baptism is.

[Colossians 3:1-5](#) (NIV)

¹ Since, then, **you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above**,
(*"Hearts" means what we make the most important. Your heart is supposed to be focussed on what God wants*) where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

² **Set your minds on things above**, not on earthly things. (*not just on what you want. You are now a teammate on God's team to accomplish His purposes.*)

³ **For you died, and your life is now hidden** with Christ in God.

⁴ When **Christ, who is your life**, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵ **Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature:**

In our text this morning, it gives us insight that baptism is NOT to be taken lightly:

[Matthew 3:7-10](#) (NIV)

⁷ But when he (*John the Baptist*) saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"

⁸ **Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.** (*prove that you have been saved by your actions working through God to produce fruit*)

⁹ And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell

you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

- ¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees, **and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.** (*Our job is to produce by God's guidance and help. If we are not producing fruit, the verse sure sounds like we are not going to make it to heaven - "Cut down and thrown in the fire."*)

3. Jesus felt that baptism was so important that He went to John the baptist in order to be baptized Himself. He felt He needed to be an example of what He wanted every Christ follower to do.

When Jesus came to John the Baptist in order to be baptized, this was the conversation:
Matthew 3:13-15 (NIV)

- ¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.
¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"
¹⁵ Jesus replied, **"Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness."** Then John consented to go ahead and baptize Jesus.

Jesus was basically saying **"Look people, I so believe in baptism that I want you to see me get baptized, too. I want to be an example of what I want everyone to do."**

4. After our Baptism, since it represents God is in charge, we may go through a time of testing to prove who is in charge.

Right after Jesus was baptized, in the very next chapter of Matthew, chapter 4, says:
Matthew 4:1-3 (NIV)

- ¹ Then Jesus **was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted** by the devil.
² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.
³ The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."
⁴ Jesus answered, **"It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"**

This was Jesus' first temptation, or test, that we know about. His temptations by the devil involved 3 tests. Each time, Jesus would answer Satan in the right way.

In [Matthew 4](#), keep in mind that Jesus was tested when He was worn out, had not eaten for 40 days, and His body was at a low point in His earthly life. At that point, Satan tests Jesus in at least 3 main areas:

- Use your powers as God to create bread, instead of Trusting God. (when He was very hungry)
- If you are the Son of God throw yourself down and the angels will protect you. (basically prove you are God's Son. The temptation? Pride.)
- With Chasing the things of this world (Power, wealth, and being famous)

So, 3 basic things: 1. Trust God when things are hard. 2. Do not ever become prideful. 3. And do not chase the things of this world. Instead, chase God.

What I would remind you this morning is that Consistency is the #1 thing that will be needed to keep you going in the right direction. Without consistency, there is a strong chance you could fall away:

Consistency in:

1. Church attendance.
2. Being involved with other Christians. (This is part of what Church helps us with)
Not allowing yourself to be OVERLY connected with too many unsaved people.
3. Reading your bible and praying every day.
4. Always asking forgiveness for sins when you sin.
5. Learn from your frustrations in life, instead of becoming angry & blaming others.
6. Allow God to show you things about yourself.
7. Keep God #1. *Is He more important than your relationships, your job, the things you want to own, etc?*

But, I have good news for you. 2 Things:

- 1. God will be with you, to give you strength.**

Matthew 3:16-17 (NIV)

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. **At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.** *(The Holy Spirit is our counselor and helper)*

¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

- 2. As you pass God's tests, He will make you stronger so that He will begin to**

give you help in reaching other people.

Luke's gospel says some very interesting words right after Jesus returned from being tempted by Satan in the wilderness for 40 days. It says in:

Luke 4:14-18 (NIV)

- ¹⁴ **Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread** through the whole countryside
- ¹⁵ **He taught** in their synagogues, and **everyone praised him.**
- ¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.
- ¹⁷ The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:
- ¹⁸ **"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.**

**He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,**

In other words, Jesus' ministry to others took off after He first was baptized, and after He went through His own time of testing.

The 1st most important thing in the Christian life is our relationship with God.

BUT, the 2nd most important part of the Christian life is about touching other people.

Here is what we need to know, **we have NOTHING to give to other people until we first start learning from our own struggles, and growing ourselves. We have something to share as we learn and change ourselves.**

Conclusion

Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 28:16-20 Go and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He also told them to teach the new believers. And, lastly, He told them He would be with them always.

Who has become a Christian because of your life? How are you fulfilling what Jesus said?

Baptism is what? Obedience to scripture, as well as a very important symbolism of what we are doing - dying to self, (going under the water) and we belong to God. (be raised with Him)

Today, we will celebrate the baptism of 3 people: 1. Dick Sheets 2. Katy Williams, and

3. Erin Williams. I will do Dick Sheets' baptism, and Pastor Mark Else will do Katy & Erin's.

Those who are going to be baptised, including the ones performing the baptism are dismissed to go and change clothes at this time.

The baptism location is 12 minutes from here. There is limited parking there so I recommend you ride with someone else. Do not feel like you cannot go because you have to travel there. We are out of church an hour earlier than normal. It is 12 minutes to go there, 12 minutes back. and we will probably spend no more than 20 minutes there. You will still be done and back before noon. You will also get to hear the testimonies of each person being baptised. This will be a blessing.

CLOSING PRAYER LEE CONNER