

BAPTISM

BELIEVER'S

Following
Christ in
Obedience



BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

Believer's baptism is a joyful public expression of faith in Jesus Christ and an act of obedience to his command.

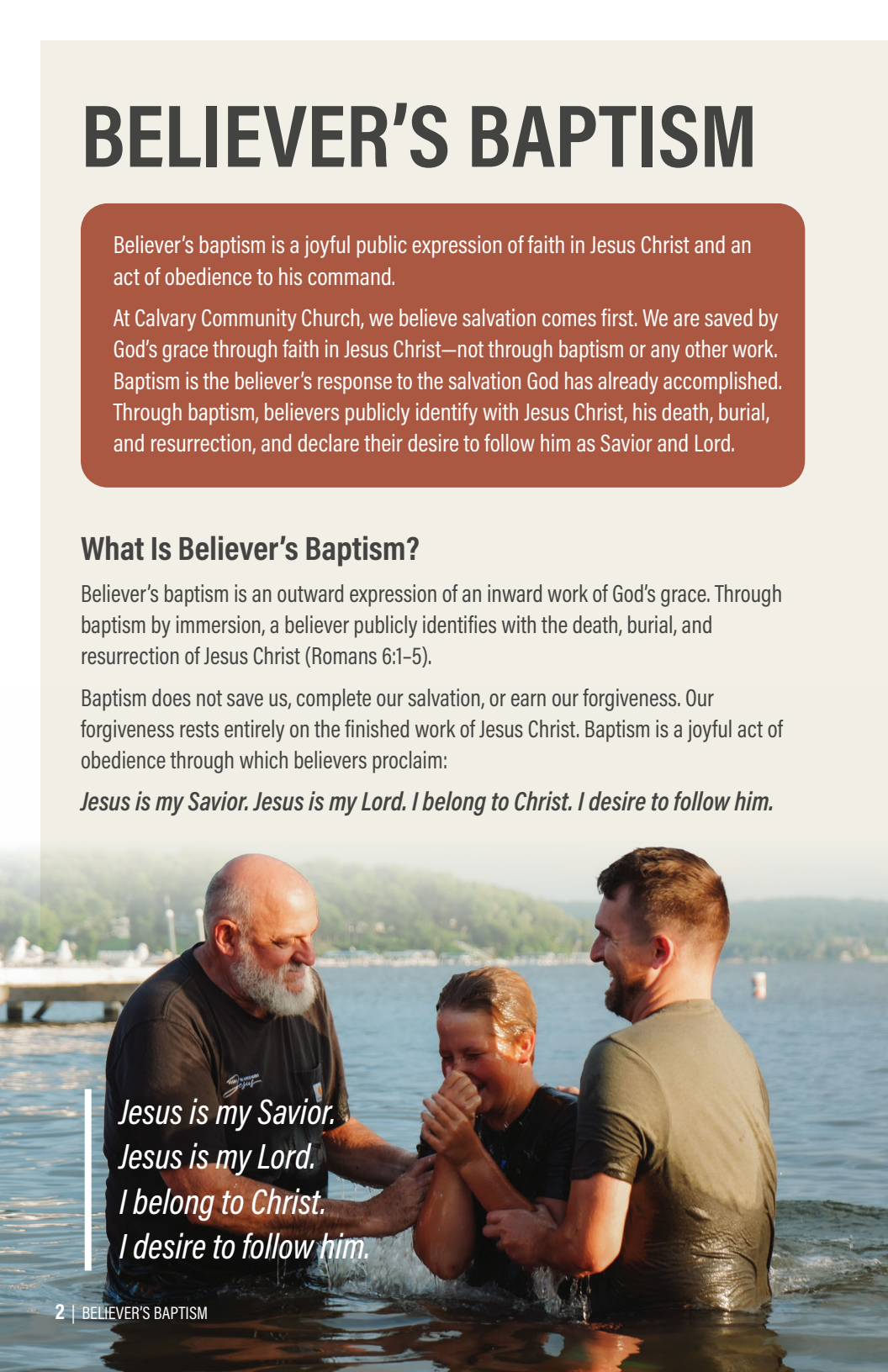
At Calvary Community Church, we believe salvation comes first. We are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ—not through baptism or any other work. Baptism is the believer's response to the salvation God has already accomplished. Through baptism, believers publicly identify with Jesus Christ, his death, burial, and resurrection, and declare their desire to follow him as Savior and Lord.

What Is Believer's Baptism?

Believer's baptism is an outward expression of an inward work of God's grace. Through baptism by immersion, a believer publicly identifies with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:1–5).

Baptism does not save us, complete our salvation, or earn our forgiveness. Our forgiveness rests entirely on the finished work of Jesus Christ. Baptism is a joyful act of obedience through which believers proclaim:

Jesus is my Savior. Jesus is my Lord. I belong to Christ. I desire to follow him.



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Jesus is my Lord.
I belong to Christ.
I desire to follow him.*

WHY SHOULD A BELIEVER BE BAPTIZED?

Because Jesus Commanded It

Jesus instructed his followers to make disciples and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19–20). Baptism is therefore an act of obedience to Christ.

Because It Publicly Identifies Us with Christ

Baptism declares we belong to Jesus. Paul describes believers as being united with Christ in his death and resurrection (Romans 6:3–5).

Because It Pictures New Life

Baptism provides a visible picture of the gospel. We were dead in sin, but through Christ we have been given new life. Going into the water and rising from it gives visible expression to this spiritual reality.

Because It Gives Us an Opportunity to Testify

Baptism is a public testimony of God's saving work. It allows believers to share what Christ has done in their lives and declare their desire to follow him.

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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28:19-20

Who Should Be Baptized?

Believer's baptism is for those who have personally placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The pattern throughout the New Testament is people hear the gospel, respond in faith, and are baptized (Acts 2:38–41; Acts 8:12; Acts 8:36–38). Therefore, baptism is not based primarily on age, background, accomplishments, or religious experience.

The important question is: Have I personally trusted Jesus Christ for salvation, and do I desire to follow him in obedience?

A person does not need to understand every aspect of Christian theology before being baptized. But they should understand the gospel, have personally trusted Christ, and be able to express their desire to follow him.

What About Infant Baptism?

The New Testament does not give an explicit example of an infant being baptized, nor does it explicitly command the baptism of infants. The clearest examples of baptism involve people responding to the gospel in faith. For this reason, Calvary Community Church practices believer's baptism rather than infant baptism.

Children are precious gifts from God and should be lovingly taught, prayed for, and dedicated to him. However, believer's baptism is reserved for those who personally trust in Christ and can meaningfully identify themselves with him.

When Should Someone Be Baptized?

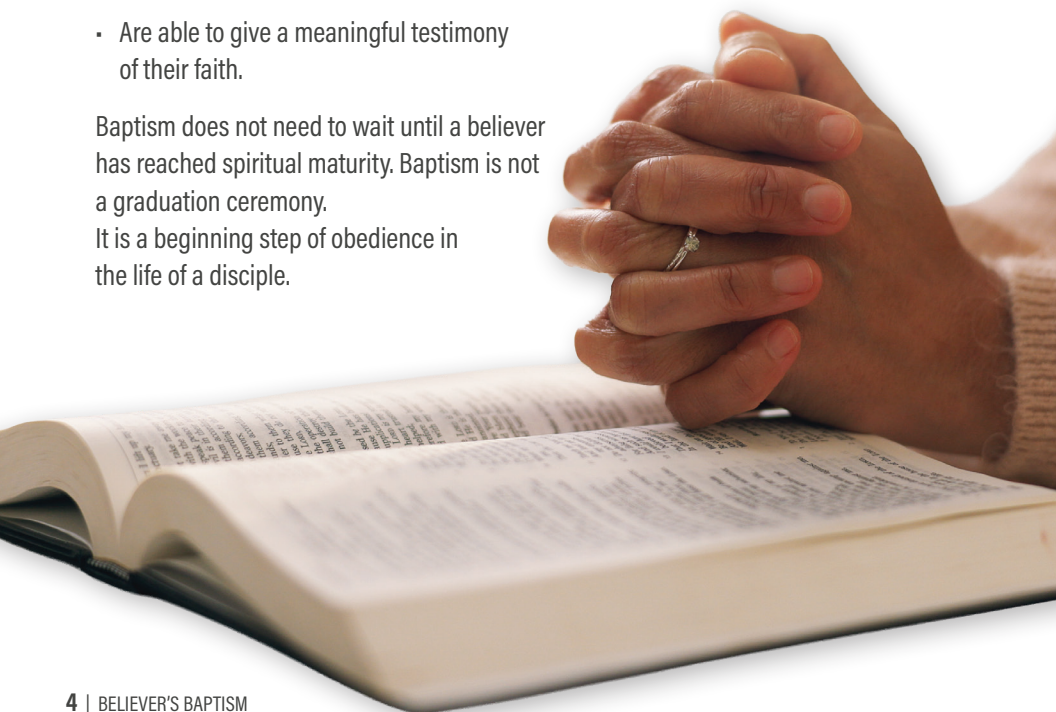
Scripture does not prescribe a specific number of days, weeks, or months between salvation and baptism. The consistent New Testament pattern is that baptism follows a person's response to the gospel.

At Calvary Community Church, we encourage believers to be baptized when they:

- Understand the basic message of the gospel.
- Have personally trusted Jesus Christ for salvation.
- Understand baptism does not save them.
- Desire to follow Jesus in obedience.
- Are able to give a meaningful testimony of their faith.

Baptism does not need to wait until a believer has reached spiritual maturity. Baptism is not a graduation ceremony.

It is a beginning step of obedience in the life of a disciple.



Why Immersion?

Through baptism by immersion, a believer publicly identifies with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The movement into and out of the water provides a visible picture of this union with Christ and the new life believers have in him (Romans 6:1-5).

The New Testament word translated *baptize* comes from the Greek word *baptizō*, which commonly carries the idea of immersing, dipping, or placing something into water. The related noun *baptisma* refers to baptism.

The New Testament descriptions of baptism fit naturally with this meaning. John baptized where there was sufficient water (John 3:23).

Jesus came up from the water after his baptism (Matthew 3:16). Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch went down into the water before coming up from it (Acts 8:38-39).

Immersion also provides a particularly clear picture of what Paul describes in Romans 6:3-5: our identification with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.

For these reasons, Calvary Community Church practices baptism by immersion. We do not believe the amount of water or the physical act itself saves a person. Christ alone saves. Immersion is the biblical practice we believe most clearly expresses the meaning and symbolism of believer's baptism.

What Does Baptism Symbolize?

Baptism points beyond the water to the gospel itself. Romans 6:1-5 connects baptism with our identification with Christ in his death and resurrection. Through immersion, this truth is given a visible expression:

Death: We identify with Christ in his death.

Burial: Immersion provides a picture of burial.

Resurrection: Rising from the water pictures Christ's resurrection and the new life we have in him.

Baptism, therefore, points us to the heart of the gospel: **Christ died. Christ was buried. Christ rose again. And those who belong to him have new life.**

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We 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. For 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.

Romans 6:1-5

Baptism and Salvation

Does baptism save me? No. Salvation is God's gift of grace received through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Does baptism forgive my sins? No. Jesus Christ provides forgiveness through his finished work on the cross.

Does baptism make me a Christian? No. A person becomes a Christian by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

If I am not baptized, am I still saved? A person is not saved by baptism, and baptism does not add anything to Christ's finished work. A believer who has trusted Christ is saved by grace through faith. However, knowingly and persistently refusing baptism after understanding Christ's command is inconsistent with faithful obedience to Christ. The issue is not whether the water saves us; it is whether we are willing to obey the Savior who commands us to be baptized.

Is baptism still important if it does not save me? Absolutely. Baptism is important because Jesus commanded it. It is an act of obedience, worship, testimony, and public identification with Christ.

Baptism and the Church

Salvation brings us into God's family, and the Holy Spirit places believers into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). Believer's baptism publicly expresses this new identity. When a believer is baptized, the church celebrates with them. We rejoice in God's saving work, welcome their public testimony, and commit to encouraging them as they continue following Jesus. Baptism, therefore, has both a personal and community dimension.

Because baptism publicly identifies a believer with Christ and his people, it naturally connects baptism with participation in the life of the local church.

Baptism and Discipleship

Baptism is not the finish line. It is part of a lifelong journey of following Jesus. Jesus commanded his followers not only to baptize disciples but also to teach them to obey everything he commanded (Matthew 28:19–20). Baptism therefore points forward to a life of discipleship.



COMMON QUESTIONS

Can someone be baptized more than once?

At Calvary Community Church, we understand believer's baptism to be a one-time public declaration of faith and obedience. If someone was previously baptized as a believer in a way consistent with their understanding of Scripture, another baptism may not be necessary.

If someone was baptized before personally trusting Christ, they may desire believer's baptism after coming to faith. We encourage individuals with questions about a previous baptism to speak with a pastor or elder.

What if I was baptized as an infant?

If you were baptized as an infant, we recognize that your family may have intended to dedicate you to God. Because believer's baptism follows personal faith in Christ, you may choose to be baptized as a believer after personally trusting Jesus.

What if I am afraid of being baptized?

It is normal to feel nervous about a public expression of faith. Church leaders will help you understand the process and provide encouragement and support. The focus of baptism is not your performance. It is God's grace and what Christ has done for you.

What if I cannot be immersed because of a physical limitation?

Because our practice is baptism by immersion, we normally baptize in this manner. When a physical limitation makes immersion impossible or unsafe, the pastor or elders can work with the believer to determine an appropriate accommodation.

What if I am still struggling with sin?

Baptism does not require perfection. Every believer continues to grow through repentance, grace, and the work of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a declaration that we belong to Christ and desire to follow him—not a declaration that we have already arrived at spiritual maturity.

PREPARING FOR BAPTISM

Before baptism, we encourage each believer to prayerfully consider their personal journey to faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism is a public expression of a personal relationship with Christ, so it is important that each person understands the gospel, has personally trusted Christ for salvation, and desires to follow him in obedience.

Our Commitment

When a believer is baptized at Calvary Community Church, we celebrate God's saving work and commit to encouraging that believer as they continue following Christ.

