

**JESUS SERIES ONE
CHRIST AND BAPTISM
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MATTHEW 3:13-17**

Today, we are starting a new series on the life of Christ.

I want to look at how Jesus started his ministry and why... because it has such a direct effect on how we practice our faith today.

Matt 3:13-14

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

I can understand this. John is baptizing people as an act of people turning away from doing life their way... turning away from a life of sin & selfishness, and giving their lives over to God's kingdom. God's desires, hopes and dreams.

Then Jesus comes along and he doesn't have a sin problem... the Kingdom of God... is his kingdom... he's the maker and leader of this kingdom.

Why in the world would he be baptized?

Matt 3:15-17

Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

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

This is one of only a few places in scripture that we see the entire Trinity revealed so clearly.

Part of what's happening here is Jesus is submitting to God the father. Baptism is filled with mystery.

Jesus says this is to fulfill all righteousness... Jesus is giving himself over to something grand and beautiful... He's giving himself over to the desires and dreams of his heavenly Father.

And in turn God points back to Jesus... This is my Son, whom I love and I am well pleased... Look at him... see his beauty, his love, his greatness.

Mystery of Bap

Surrounding this act of baptism we see the interaction of the entire Trinity. That is the mystery of baptism.

Every time you see a baptism it is filled with mystery... in some way it is a moment we all meet the entire Trinity.

Father, Son, & Holy Spirit – Jesus asks that when we baptize people... that we baptize them in the name of what... (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)

T>> Baptism was the first real practice of the church... and still goes on today.
It is this long standing practice with great importance, but lots of different practices surrounding it.

Just for fun Casas is a very diverse Church when it comes to theological backgrounds.
How many of you grew up in an actual Southern Baptist church?

- ✓ A more Charismatic background? *Yes, only one hand is necessary for ... with very little church background?*
- ✓ How many are from another protestant background
- ✓ Catholic?
- ✓ Very little church
- ✓ How about another religion all together?

Diversity is a good thing... but over the years I've been asked a lot of question about baptism... because of all the diversity we have around here.

Here's' what I want to do this morning. I want to roll through the most common questions I've been asked in my years as a pastor.

Q: 1. What is the meaning of Baptism?

~ It's a one time event in which a Christian declares belief and follower-ship in Jesus Christ.

It is an outward expression of an inward reality.

(ILL) Standing in water symbolizes Christ death on the cross
Going down into the water signifies Christ's death and burial
Rising out of the water states Christ's power to overcome death through his resurrection.
Death, burial, resurrection.

~ It is also a welcoming into the family of faith. Baptism has always been connected to community.

Julie Vineyard Roger was coming down from the other side, and wasn't their yet. "That's okay I'll just swim to you!" She dives in like an Olympic swimmer and swims to Roger.

It's a community thing! It's an incredibly affirming thing to feel the joy, acceptance, and love of your community.

Jesus asks us to do this At the end of Matt Jesus is giving the disciples final instructions. They are about to launch out and open a whole new chapter in God's community. This is the very beginning of the N.T. Church... and he says.

Matt 28:19 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,

Q: 2. How wet do you need to get?

This is about the **mode** of baptism. Some times you see people getting sprinkled. Other times you've seen people getting submerged all the way down under the water.

Many different traditions... some churches because of the 3 reference to Father, son, and Holy Spirit will take you under 3 times... just to make sure it takes.

~ Our practice here in Casas is a very simple one.

We're dunkers... most Sundays you will see us baptizing people all the way down in the water. We do this for two main reasons.

1st **This was the practice of the early church.** Starting with John the Baptist he baptized by having people actually come into the water and they were completely submerge under the water.

He established the practice... that's why he was called John the Baptist...

Not because it was to become a denomination. .

↳ Jesus didn't have other cousin named **Bubba the Methodist** or **Hank the Episcopalian**.

2nd **The precise language used in the New Testament.**

{Greek} βαπτίζω (baptizo) The root of this word literally means to immerse.

It was commonly used to describe immersing a garment first into bleach and then into dye.

Great illustration

- a) Bleach – picture of cleansing us of sin,
- b) Immersing in dye – picture of becoming something new... a new creature in Christ.

Immersion captures the deeper meaning.... The death, burial, and resurrection.

~ It's saying the spiritual work Christ did on the cross was done in me to make me a new creature in Christ.

Q: 3. Does baptism guarantee me a spot in heaven?

(ILL)

Charley and Chocolate Factory – Remember... these golden tickets were given out. Any one who received a golden ticket... no matter what... got to go on this heavenly tour of the Chocolate Factory.

Q: Is baptism like having a golden ticket to heaven?

This is a real important question... we come from a lot of different traditions with different beliefs. I want to be real clear on this one.

A: The answer on this is no! Baptism is filled with mystery... but not magic.

Scripture is real clear on this. Salvation comes as a result of believing and receiving Christ as the leader and savior of your life.

↳ It does not come through any system of religious works or acts.

Q: 4. Is there a certain age when a person should be baptized?

Again, sincere, well meaning Christians disagree on this one. And the difference falls primarily on what baptism signifies.

~ Two main practices on this would be: Infant baptism, and believer's baptism.

Infant Baptism

Some of you may have been baptized as infants, or attended an infant baptism ceremony.

Infant baptism signifies a child belonging to a family devoted to God. It says this child belongs.

- BUT, it is not for the remission of sin, or any kind of guarantee of heaven... baptism is not a golden ticket.

~ Infant baptism is more about the parents and family. It is a commitment to raise this child in a loving, God honoring way... that will lead the child toward a relationship with God.

At Casas we practice Children's Dedications... It is about the parents dedicating this child to being raised in a God honoring way.

- Believers Baptism** Which is what we practice here at Casas... It signifies a decision of someone to become a follower of Christ. It signifies their belief as a follower of Christ.
- children See... every child is a beautiful bundle of joy. Filled with life and beauty.. but every child... every child whether baptized or not has something else that comes bubbling up from within... and that is... **wickedness... and rebellion...** yea.
- Joke *And I know this is true because I've watched in my own children... and I know where they got it... from the nursery from some of your kids... no, no...*
- ↳ Every child grows up with sin nature... it's a part of the human condition.
- 5 year old Mom is on the phone and hears a scream from her 5 year old. "What happened?" The baby pulled my hair. Well, honey she's just a little baby she doesn't understand that, that hurts. Few minutes go by and now the baby screams. "What happened?" The 5 year old answers, now she understands!
- Truth is we all face the sin nature in our hearts... and we must all make the choice ourselves about receiving Christ as the leader and savior of our lives.
Baptism becomes a statement we make as a believer or follower of Christ.
- Wedding Ring We see it as an outward symbol of an inward reality. My wedding band is an outward symbol of the marriage relationship I have with Angie.

Q: 5. Is baptism a prerequisite to getting into heaven?

A: "Maybe baptism doesn't save me, but can it preclude me from getting in?
And the answer to this one is NO

Some Christ's believe in the doctrine of "**baptismal regeneration**". That salvation comes through the act of believing in Christ and being baptized.
↳ It takes both.

This comes really though a sincere, but naïve and mistaken understanding of a few passages of scripture.

Water & Spirit

i.e.

In John's gospel (3:5) Jesus says you must be born of the water and the spirit. Some have taken water to mean baptism. Sounds like it could but it just doesn't... Jesus is clearly speaking of physical birth, and spiritual birth. Baptism is no where in the conversation.

Repent & be baptized

I.e.

In a sermon by Peter in the book of Acts (2:38) "He says repent and be baptized... Turn to Christ for forgiveness of sins."

They say Peter is saying baptism as a condition of salvation. Again it's very poor, interpretation of the passage. An honest study of the passage reveals that Peter just isn't saying anything close to baptism is a condition of forgiveness of sins.

Rather: baptism is something that follows a life given over to Christ... a long with receiving God's spirit in us.

~ It's interesting that a few chapters later (Acts 10:43) Peter is speaking again about salvation and never even mentions baptism.

- **Baptism is filled with meaning and mystery... not magic.** It doesn't do anything that magically causes us to be saved.

Q:

6. So, if baptism is required for salvation why bother?

I understand this. Especially as an adult if feels a little strange. Maybe you've been a follower of Christ for some-time, or just became a follower... But you are from a tradition where you never saw adults being baptized.

And it's out of your comfort zone. It creates some anxiety.

Matt from Starbucks

"You baptize adults...? Yea. Are you going to do that this Sunday?"

"Wow" That's really strange.

This place was a whole new world to him.

Think of it a different way:

2,000 years ago Jesus came. He was perfect and holy. He was the very son of God. He himself was baptized himself as a model to us.

He suffered on a cross and great personal sacrifice and loss to himself... even death on a cross. He was buried, but rose from the dead in this monumental moment in history.

Then one of the first things He asks us to do is follow His lead in being Baptized.

You have an opportunity to respond... to say I want to take this step in following you. Something I know is pleasing and beautiful.

IF If you have never been baptized as a believer. You have an opportunity to experience something very beautiful.

The mystery of experiencing something that scripture is say the intire Trinty is involved in.

You become a living picture of Christ's greatest work.

Friends...

This is gorgeous stuff. Every time we see a baptism it's a changed life... another life brought into community with God and the church.... Another life, and another life...

There is a story of God active in a human life.

Lord's supper

T>> There is a second sacrament that Jesus actually modeled. The Lord's Supper. It symbolized the same thing, and he asked us to do this as well.

It is yet another moment in which we have been invited to meet God. Everything about it points to God. It carries the mystery of God's work to open the door to us knowing him.

Eph 2:8

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—