

Wednesday - Baptism Is Weird. So Why Do People Do It? – Gal 3:27, 2 Cor 5:17

Let's just name the awkwardness up front. Baptism can feel strange for those with little to no church background. You're fully clothed, getting dunked in a tank of water in front of a crowd. People clap. Some might even be crying. Then you come up soaking wet, and everyone cheers. If that sounds a little weird to you, you're not wrong. It's okay to feel that way. So what's going on? At its core, baptism is about change. We're not talking about a surface-level, "I'm trying to be a better person" kind of change—but a deeper, identity-level kind. The kind of change that says, I'm not who I used to be. I've found something real. I'm fully stepping into it. And I'm not going back. Or maybe a better way of saying it would be, Someone found me and offered me a better way of living, and I'm finally saying yes.

When someone chooses to follow Jesus—in other words, to become a Christian—they're saying they believe His life, death, and resurrection changed everything, including them. Baptism is how they choose to show that. In fact, Jesus Himself is the one who encouraged all of His followers to get baptized. Over the next couple of days, we'll explore why this ancient, meaningful practice is so significant to Christians. For today, just remember this: At its core, baptism is about change. That's what makes this weird moment so meaningful. It's a picture of a fresh start, a turning point, and a public way to say, "This is the new direction I want my life to go." So if you've ever looked at baptism and thought, That's not for me, that's super weird, or I don't know what that even means, you're not alone. But we promise that, behind the water, the awkwardness, and the questions, there's something powerful waiting.

Challenge -

Take a moment today to reflect on this: If you could leave one part of your past behind and start fresh, what would it be? Write it down. Then ask God to show you what a fresh start might look like with Him.

Thursday: What Is Baptism, Really? Matthew 28:19-20

If you've never been to a baptism event, it can seem kind of random. Why are people getting dunked in water at church? What does it mean? And what are they actually signing up for? Let's start simple. Baptism is a symbol. It's a way for someone to publicly show that they've decided to follow Jesus. When someone chooses to follow Jesus, they're saying they believe in who He is and what He has done. They believe that through His life, death, and resurrection, God made a way for people to be forgiven, known, and made new. Baptism represents that decision. It's a visual way to say, "I've left my old life behind. I want to live a new way, with Jesus at the center."

In the early days of Christianity, baptism was how people said, "I'm in." Not to a rulebook, a religion, or a promise of an easier life, but to a way of life centered on the life and love of Jesus. That's still what it means today. In the Bible book of Matthew, Jesus tells His followers to invite others to experience this new way of life and to baptize them. Not because baptism makes us spiritually elite, or because baptism gets people into heaven—

it doesn't. Jesus told us to do it because it's a meaningful way to mark a fresh start. Later in the Bible, we see a man who's just learning about Jesus for the first time. Something about the message resonates with him. When he sees some water, he says, "Look, here's some water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" It's his way of saying, "I'm in."

So if you've ever wondered why Christians get baptized, here it is:

Not because they're perfect.

Not because they have all the answers.

But because they believe in the hope Jesus offers, and they're ready to take their next step.

Challenge

In your own words, first write down what you used to think baptism was. Has anything shifted for you, even a little? Then write your current understanding of baptism.

Friday - Why Would I Want to Get Baptized? Acts 2:37-38, Romans 10:9

If baptism doesn't make you more religious or magically fix your problems, then why do it? What would motivate someone to get dunked underwater in front of a crowd of strangers? The answer is simple but personal: Something real is happening inside, and baptism is how people have responded in faith for almost 2,000 years. In the Bible book of Acts, a crowd hears about Jesus for the first time. They're moved and something clicks in their minds. And their first question is, "What should we do?" The answer wasn't to start following rules; it was baptism. Baptism symbolizes a person's response to God's invitation. It's how someone displays their decision to trust Jesus with their whole life. The Bible book of Romans says that belief starts in the heart but also shows up in what we say and do. Baptism is often one of the first ways people choose to show it. You don't have to be perfect. You don't need to have your whole life sorted out. You don't even need to feel completely confident. You just need to be willing.

So why would you want to get baptized?

Because you believe God is meeting you where you are.

Because you're ready for a new beginning.

Because you want to say yes to something bigger than yourself.

You may not feel ready now. That's okay. But if you feel even a small tug toward it, pay attention. That might be God, inviting you to take a step you didn't expect.

Challenge

Ask yourself this question and write down your honest answer: "If I believed baptism was my next step, what would stop me from saying yes?" Bring that answer to God in prayer. You don't need fancy words, just speak from the heart. Receive His love.

We can't wait to celebrate you this Sunday at Thrive!