

NEXT STEPS...

WATER BAPTISM

THE
PEARL CHURCH

2024

FINDING HOPE, DISCOVERING PURPOSE.

NEXT STEPS: WATER BAPTISM

"I am a believer in Jesus Christ. Now what?"

INTRODUCTION

First, let me say that as a Pastor I could not be happier for you, knowing that you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. The bible tells us that all of heaven rejoiced the day that you got saved! They actually had a party because of you.

"there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." **Luke 15:7,10 NIV**

The day that you prayed asking the Lord to forgive you of your sins, you surrendered your life and the control of your life over to Him, and to him alone. Jesus is your Savior and you are now a believer or follower of Jesus. You are a Christian.

But Jesus is not only wanting to be your Savior but also Lord (**2 Peter 3:18**), and Lordship requires obedience (Luke 6:46). By placing your faith in Jesus, you also put your complete trust in who He is and what He says: that He is the Son of God and that His words are true. And the way that you put your trust in Him is to follow him and obey him.

In today's culture, to follow someone can be done with a click of the mouse or a check in a box. You can follow or unfollow at your discretion, and as often as you want. To be a follower in today's culture requires no commitment.

"TO BE A FOLLOWER IN TODAY'S CULTURE REQUIRES NO COMMITMENT."

But to be a follower of Jesus means a willingness to obey what Jesus says and to live a life that Jesus asks you to live. When you confess "Jesus is Lord" you make a decision to follow Him and there is no turning back. You don't unfollow when it's hard or difficult.

Years ago a song was written that was sung at the evangelistic crusades held by the famous evangelist Billy Graham. It was called "I have decided to follow Jesus." The song's history speaks of a believer's call to follow Jesus.

"THERE WAS A WELSH MISSIONARY WHO WITNESSED WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FIRST CONVERTS HE HAD MADE IN THIS VILLAGE OF GARO IN ASSAM. HE HAD CONVERTED A HUSBAND AND WIFE WHO HAD TWO SONS. WHEN THE VILLAGE CHIEF SOUGHT TO MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF THEM, HE HELD THE ARCHERS AT THE READY TO THREATEN THIS FAMILY TO RENOUNCE CHRIST. WHEN ASKED FOR THEIR REPLY, THE FATHER STATED "I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS, AND THERE IS NO TURNING BACK." SO THE ARCHERS STRUCK DOWN THE TWO BOYS. WHEN THEY THREATENED THE MAN'S WIFE WITH THE SAME IF THEY REFUSED TO RENOUNCE CHRIST, THEY WERE REPORTED TO HAVE SAID "THOUGH NO ONE JOINS ME, STILL I WILL FOLLOW." THE ARCHERS KILLED THE WIFE. AS THEY TOOK AIM AT THE FATHER, HE WAS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID, "THE CROSS BEFORE ME, THE WORLD BEHIND ME." THEY SHOT HIM DEAD AS WELL. THE VILLAGE CHIEF THOUGHT FOR SOME TIME ABOUT THE INCIDENT AND THEN HE DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS TOO. HE REALIZED HE COULD NOT BREAK THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE POINT OF DEATH SO THAT WAS TRUE STRENGTH. THE WHOLE VILLAGE WAS MOVED AND CONVERTED TO CHRISTIANITY AS WELL."

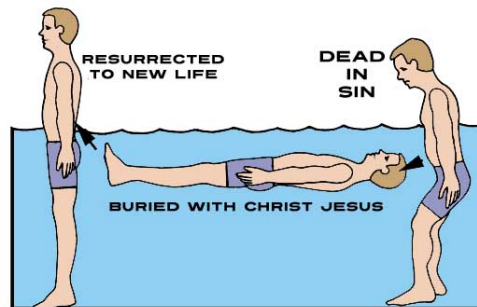
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To follow Jesus is to surrender to His ways with complete and utter abandonment, no matter the cost. But the reward is everything. All that Jesus is, all that He possesses, is given to you. He offers you a life that is full, abundant and rich with joy. (**John 10:10; 15:11**) As well, the life He offers is eternal life. (**John 3:16**)

But what's next? Your next step is **Water Baptism**.

WHAT IS WATER BAPTISM?

Water Baptism is a symbolic act that represents the death and burial of the sinful nature. When you go down into the water of baptism you identify with Christ's death and burial. When you come up out of the water, you identify with Christ's resurrection. (**Romans 6:3-10**)



HOW DOES BAPTISM RELATE TO YOU?

Jesus tells his disciples that they are to go and to tell others about the forgiveness available for their sins and the offer of eternal life that is available to all who will believe. Once they believed, they are to be baptized.

"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," **MATTHEW 28:19**

Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles,

"Brothers, what should we do?" Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." **ACTS 2:37-38**

Once you repent, which is a word to describe turning from going your own selfish way to going God's way, you are then to be water baptized.

WHAT DOES "BAPTISM" MEAN?

When the New Testament was first written, it was written in the Greek language. When it was translated into English some words were translated 'one-for-one' but a couple of words did not make the translation list. Instead they were transliterated where the Greek letters of the word were given their respective English letters and they then formed the word directly across into English. The Greek word "βαπτίζω" or baptizo was transliterated "baptize".

Baptize was a common word used everyday and meant: dip, plunge, wash, or soak. It was used in Greek literature to describe people who drown, ships that went down or sank, as well as the every day process of washing.

When Jesus' cousin John began preaching a message of repentance (turning from their wrong and selfish ways to God's ways), he told them that if they believed what he was saying and if they wanted to get right with God, they were to come down into the river Jordan and show their commitment by going under the water. They were publicly washing away their old beliefs and old way of life and coming up into this new belief system that they were hearing.

"BAPTIZE WAS A COMMON WORD USED EVERYDAY AND MEANT: DIP, PLUNGE, WASH, OR SOAK."

The Greeks who were seeing this display of **surrender**, used the word “baptize” (again meaning to wash, dip, plunge or soak) as the word to describe the act that John was performing with his disciples. Until then, this word was never used religiously or ceremonially. But now, the word baptize or baptism would be associated with the act of responding to a message as being true and the **willingness** of the hearer to **publicly** declare their belief in Jesus and they are now a follower.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

In the bible we read that believers were baptized upon receiving salvation.

“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.” ACTS 2:41

“But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” ACTS 8:12

“Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.” ACTS 18:8

“On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” ACTS 19:5

All baptisms in the bible are **decision-based**, a follow-up response to their decision to follow Jesus. That is why we at our church do not baptize babies. Babies and younger children are unable to make a willful and informed decision to repent of their sins and to place their faith in Jesus Christ’s death and thereby receive the forgiveness of sins.

We will however, gladly follow the example of Jesus and dedicate children to the Lord, as parents come forward wanting to make a public commitment of raising their children in the ways of God (**Luke 2:21-40**).

WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

Baptism should happen as soon as possible after you become a believer. This first response of baptism to salvation is recorded 27 times in the New Testament, including:

“Those who believed...were baptized...that day!” ACTS 2:41

“Then Philip began with the scripture and told him the Good News about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the man said, ‘Look, here is water! Why shouldn’t I be baptized right now?’ Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ The man answered, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So they went down into the water and Philip baptized him.” ACTS 8:35-38

NOTE: WE ARE NOT ALWAYS ABLE TO HAVE WATER BAPTISM RIGHT AFTER SALVATION DUE TO SCHEDULING AND PLANNING, HOWEVER ALL ATTEMPTS ARE MADE TO HOLD BAPTISM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WATER BAPTISM IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER?

Water Baptism **does not** save a person; it is an outward sign of an inward spiritual reality and an expression of thankfulness, love, and obedience to Jesus, who died to save us. Salvation is a free gift from God, and there is nothing that we do that has any bearing on this gift except believing or having faith.

"God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it."

EPHESIANS 2:8-9

WATER BAPTISM SYMBOLIZES THE BURIAL OF YOUR OLD SIN NATURE.

"Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." **ROMANS 6:3-4 (NASB)**

(See also: Romans 6:3-10; Genesis 8 and 9; 1 Corinthians 10:1-2)

WATER BAPTISM IS A PUBLIC CONFESSION TO GOD, YOUR CHURCH FAMILY AND THE DEVIL, THAT YOU ARE A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST.

"This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven." **MARK 1:4 (NLT)**

WATER BAPTISM FOLLOWS THE EXAMPLE SET BY CHRIST.

"Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But John tried to talk him out of it. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?" But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires." So John agreed to baptize him." **MATTHEW 3:13-15 (MSG)**

WATER BAPTISM IS AN ACT OF OBEDIENCE TO THE COMMANDS OF CHRIST.

"Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: "God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." **MATTHEW 28:19 (MSG)**

"And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" **ACTS 10:48 (NKJV)**

WATER BAPTISM DEMONSTRATES YOUR CHANGED LIFE.

"That, by the way, is what baptism pictures for us: In baptism we show that we have been saved from death and doom by the resurrection of Christ; not because our bodies are washed clean by the water but because in being baptized we are turning to God and asking him to cleanse our hearts from sin." **1 PETER 3:21 (TLB)**

WATER BAPTISM CONNECTS US TO THE 'BODY OF CHRIST', HIS PEOPLE ON EARTH.

In baptism there is a real sense of being joined with other believers, not just participating in an individual act of our own spiritual journey.

"...For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body" **1 CORINTHIANS 12:13 (NIV)**

4 BENEFITS OF WATER BAPTISM.

1. TO DECLARE YOUR ALLEGIANCE

Allegiance is declaring **whose side you are on – Jesus' side.**

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." **GALATIANS 3:27-28 (NKJV)**

In the same way a player puts on a uniform and identifies himself as a part of a team, so baptism says, "I identify with Christ's team. I belong to Jesus." You "put on" the Christ uniform. It sets you apart from the opposing team. When someone is baptized—whatever race, gender, or social status he may come from—he leaves the Devil's team and the Kingdom of Darkness. That team no longer has the rights and ownership of his life. That person belongs to the Christ's team and comes under His contract with all of its benefits. Baptism takes you from a team of losers and places you on the championship team.

It is interesting that early Christians called baptism a "sacramentum," from which we get the word "sacrament." This Latin word was used by Roman soldiers to refer to an oath of absolute devotion and obedience to their general. When a believer is baptized, he makes an oath of allegiance to his new Commander-in-Chief, Jesus Christ.

2. IN BREAKING ENEMY POWER

We break enemy power by **destroying** and **distancing** ourselves from **Satan's (and Sin's) dominion** over our lives.

"...all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" **1 COR. 10:1-2 (NKJV)**

There is a tremendous story found in Exodus 14, the story of Israel crossing the Red Sea. After being spared from the death angel by the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their houses, the people of Israel fled Egypt with Pharaoh's army in hot pursuit. Trapped between the army and the Red Sea, the people were terrified. But an amazing miracle happened. Moses stretched out his rod over the water and the sea divided. The children of Israel walked through the midst of the sea on dry ground to the other side. But that's not the end of the story. The Egyptians then followed Israel along the same path. But as they drove across the seabed, their chariot wheels fell off and the chariots got stuck in the mud. Then Moses stretched his rod out again over the sea and the water returned to its full depth, drowning the army of the Egyptians. The Bible says, *"...Not so much as one of them remained...So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians..."* **(Ex 14:28,30).**

In the same manner, when a new believer decides to follow Jesus, he is saved from the wrath of eternal judgment (eternity in hell) by the blood of Jesus shed on the cross. And so his journey begins with God where he decides to leave his old sinful selfish life where he was a slave to sin to where now he is following God in everything. But Satan doesn't want to let you go that easily. He will pursue you with everything he has to keep you in your old way of life. He will pursue you with old friends, old habits, and old ways of thinking, doubts and questions and with false promises that maybe the old way is the better way.

Satan wants to keep you in his control and keep his hold on you. He wants to pin you down before you go down through the waters of baptism. When someone goes through the waters of baptism it is the conclusive breaking of enemy powers and distancing from them. **There is a spiritual deliverance that takes place.** What appears to be just a formal strange ceremony in front of a large number of people actually carries with it a major spiritual punch

against the forces of darkness against your life. Water baptism is a major spiritual battlefield that brings great release to the new believer. It is abandoning the past and passing into the realm of great freedom in Christ.

Imagine that you had just escaped from a Prisoner of War Camp. The enemy is following you with his dogs. You are free, yet running for your life. Where do you go? You find a river or stream so the enemy will lose your scent. In the same manner water baptism takes the enemies trail of badgering us with condemnation and temptation away from us.

3. FOR DIVINE CLEANSING

Water baptism is the symbolic act where our **sins are removed** and we **stand clean** before the Lord.

"So what are you waiting for? Get up and get yourself baptized, scrubbed clean of those sins and personally acquainted with God." **ACTS 22:16 (MSG)**

As in the natural where someone would take a bath to wash away the dirt and the filth off their bodies, so water baptism removes the filth and crud of sin off our lives so we stand clean and purified before the Lord. The picture is of someone being baptized and as they go down into the water the sins wash off and float down river never to be seen again. When the person comes up out of the water he rises up clean, fresh and invigorated to begin life free of all the shame, guilt and all the dirt of the past is now gone down the drain.

4. IT'S A FUNERAL

Water Baptism is the **death of the old man** and the **rising up of the new man**.

"For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized." **COLOSSIANS 2:12 (NKJV)**

"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life... knowing this that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin." **ROMANS 6:4,6-7 (NKJV)**

Baptism is a **watery grave**, where we die to our old sinful life and rise up in resurrection power. As Jesus had to die before He could be resurrected, so without the funeral of the old man there is no resurrection power. But after baptism God's power comes upon you in a new way to help propel you so you can live your life completely and fully for God by God's grace. You are catapulted into new life.

SO, ARE YOU READY TO BE WATER BAPTIZED? LET'S DO IT!

Water Baptism takes place during a Sunday service, in front of your new church family or at a facility where it can be done . We will be there to cheer you on as you get baptized. And you can invite your family or friends to come as well.

We will provide the water, but you will need to bring a pair of pants and a dark t-shirt that you will wear over your bathing suit. Also, bring a towel and anything else that you will require after you come out of the waters.

Lastly, you will need to give a brief word or testimony declaring your desire to follow Jesus. Everyone that is baptized has done it. And believe it or not, everyone survived it!!!

Public confession is where we declare that we are not ashamed of Jesus, His gospel or to be recognized as one of His followers.

As simple method for making a public declaration is to write out your testimony of when you accepted Jesus into your life. The reason you write it out is because when you get in front of a number of people most people freeze because they are not use to public speaking.

A simple format is the BC-Cross-AD method.

Without getting into the gory details tell how your life was BEFORE (BC) you were a Christian; Then tell how you received Jesus into your life, your conversion (CROSS); And then how your life has changed since that time (AD) (peace, joy, freedom from guilt).

Water Baptism is one of the greatest events in a believer's life. Let's make it happen together!

Contact Pastor Jeff by email (jeff@thepearlchurch.ca) or connect with our leadership at the next Sunday Church service.