

BAPTISM



RESONATE CHURCH

Introduction

Baptism is one of the most beautiful things we get to experience as a body of believers at Resonate Church. Our baptism services every year are a party – not only because of the celebration of the saints, but because of what it represents – an act of God that transforms a person from death to life, from darkness to light. In the following pages, we hope to answer any questions you may have about what the Bible has to say about baptism, and how we seek to be faithful to that at Resonate Church.

What is baptism?

Every time a person enters into a new life with Jesus Christ, the Bible tells us that all of heaven rejoices. Baptism is an outward proclamation of an inward reality that God has created a new life within that person. Baptism is the new believer's testimony to the public of his belonging to Jesus. As he is immersed beneath the waters, he is proclaiming that his old self, enslaved to unbelief and sin, has died. And as the believer is raised up out of the waters, he is proclaiming that his new self, freed from sin and death, has been raised in the resurrection of Jesus. He is proclaiming that he now belongs to Jesus.

"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." – Romans 6:4

As a symbol, baptism illustrates a number of significant realities:

1. Christ's death and resurrection
2. The disciple's union with Christ in His death and resurrection
3. The new life in which a disciple walks
4. Cleansing and washing away of sin

Why do we baptize?

We baptize because Jesus modeled it Himself and made it part of His ministry and part of our mission. Simply put, we baptize because Jesus commanded us to; however, there is also purpose and wisdom in that command. Baptism provides a decisive, public way of taking a stand that Jesus has saved you, that you're crazy about Him, and that you're going to follow Him all the days of your life.

Essentially, you are publicly proclaiming three things in Baptism:

TO GOD:

Thank you for saving me. I'm Yours. Help me to live a life that shows Jesus to the world.

TO BELIEVERS:

Celebrate with me! Jesus has saved me! Remember when He saved you? Encourage me, help me, and keep me accountable to following Jesus.



TO UNBELIEVERS:

I want you to know the Jesus that I know. If you see any change in my life, if you see anything good in my life, it's not me – it's Him! He wants you to know Him.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” – Matthew 28:19-20

Who should be baptized and when?

Baptism is an outward proclamation of faith, and is therefore only for believers. Our understanding of the Bible is that every baptism in the New Testament was preceded by confession of sin and repentance, which is something that neither an unbeliever nor an infant can do. Because baptism represents a union with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, we believe only in the baptism of believers.

*“For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”
– Galatians 3:27*

We believe that as soon as a new believer has proclaimed faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ, he should begin pursuing baptism as the next natural, biblical step of obedience. If a professing believer has declined the call to be baptized, we believe he is engaged in ongoing, unrepentant sin, unwilling to humbly obey this biblical command. With that said, we invite such a believer to pursue obedience through the baptism process immediately.

“And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.” – Acts 22:16

The desire to be baptized should be motivated by a desire to glorify God in faithful obedience. Any other motivation (to join a particular local church, to please a friend or family member, etc.) should not be the ultimate reason for seeking to be baptized.

Should a person be re-baptized?

For those who were immersed at an earlier age, it is important to understand that we should only be baptized once. If you trusted in Christ at that time, your baptism is valid and need not, and in fact should not, be repeated. If, however, you experienced immersion in water before being born again and making a personal decision to follow Christ, your experience was not baptism, and thus you need to be baptized.

The question is therefore, “Was I truly trusting in Christ when I was baptized?” There should always be seasons of growth and greater periods of maturity in the life of those who have trusted in the gospel. Believers must not be rebaptized each time they experience greater joy and sanctification.

However, if you believe that your original experience was prior to truly trusting in Christ as Lord and Savior, you should pursue obedience in this area by being baptized now.



What does baptism look like?

The word “baptism” in Greek means “dip” or “immerse.” Going “into the water” and “coming up out of the water” is the common biblical language associated with baptism. Baptism by immersion was the universal practice of the early church.

We also believe that a physical submersion into the water is the best way to show the death and burial of the old self and that a physical emersion from the water best represents the new self being raised from the dead.

“And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.”

– Mark 1:10

Does baptism save you?

We are saved solely by God’s grace applied to us by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Nothing we do can save us – our salvation is not a result of our works. We are, however, called to do good works and obey the commands of Jesus, baptism being one of them. So like all the other “good works,” we baptize and are baptized not in order to be saved, but because we are saved. Just because a Christian is not yet baptized doesn’t mean he isn’t a Christian.

Baptism is an outward demonstration of what has already occurred inside of us. Though baptism doesn’t save you, God is pleased when His child proclaims to the world that the salvation of Christ has come into his life.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” – Ephesians 2:8-10

Why do we require biblical baptism for Ownership?

Baptism following conversion is a requirement for anyone who wishes to become an Owner of Resonate Church.

As the foundation of this policy, we consider Scripture to clearly highlight the command to be baptized, as we have already explained. Based on the stories we see in the New Testament, the idea of a non-baptized “Christian” in the times of the epistles was completely foreign. In fact, in many of Paul’s writings, he uses baptism into Christ as a euphemism for salvation (Romans 6:3, Galatians 3:27). This serves to further reinforce that baptism, while not being necessary to attain salvation, is the natural overflow and result of such redemption. In other words, we believe that all of God’s people at all times in all places should pursue baptism as an expression of obedience to Scripture and the God who authored it.

As an explicit and universal command within Scripture, we believe baptism is not merely an issue of wisdom to be applied subjectively, but of humble obedience to God’s declared will for His people. In light of this position, we would hold that one who professes to be a believer and yet has refused and still declines the call to be baptized is engaged in ongoing, unrepentant sin. In order to head off the subsequent need for church discipline created by pursuing Ownership in such a situation, we have established this issue as a potential litmus test of a heart of humility and worshipful obedience to the commands of the God, who is worthy of our deepest praise and submission.



I've decided to follow Jesus. What now?

We rejoice with you in the miraculous event that has occurred in your life, and believe that baptism is the natural next step of obedience as you pursue a life of following Jesus. Resonate Church has at least one baptism service each semester, so we encourage you to begin pursuing participation in the next scheduled service.

The Resonate Baptism Process

In order to be baptized at Resonate Church, we expect that you are known in community, or pursue such a course if you have not yet done so. Participation in a Village is the easiest way to make new friends, be encouraged and challenged as you walk with Christ, and be deeply known by others. Your Village leader will also walk with you through the baptism process.

We believe that baptism is a perfect opportunity to share the story that God is writing in your life – one of the most powerful evangelistic tools you have as a follower of Jesus Christ. To participate in a baptism service, you will film a short 3-4 minute video sharing how Jesus has brought you from death to life. The goal of these videos is not to make much of ourselves, but to bring glory to the God who has saved us. We believe these videos serve to reinforce the weight of what has happened in your life, allow you an opportunity to express the change that has happened in your heart, encourages the saints to celebrate with you in your story and be reminded of their own, and points those who do not know Jesus to the truth of the gospel.

To pursue participation in a baptism service, follow these steps:

1) Fill out our baptism application at resonate.net/baptism

This application will be reviewed by a member of our staff and allows us to know a bit of your story. We will then follow up with you and your Village leader about filming your baptism video.

2) Practice sharing your story.

We ask that before you film your baptism video, you have processed through your story with your Village leader. This allows you to think through how to condense your story into 3 or 4 minutes, how to share the gospel and make much of Christ through your story, and prepares you for a much smoother filming process.

3) Film your video

A video will be sent to you explaining how to film your video. Film your video with your Village leader.

4) Invite everyone you know to celebrate your baptism with you!

Like we've said, our baptism services are a party. We encourage you to not only invite people close to you within your community, but also to invite people in your life who don't know Jesus. We have celebrated many stories at Resonate Church of people choosing to follow Jesus because they came to support a friend's baptism, and were changed because they related to the stories they heard and were presented with the gospel over and over again.



How to Share Your Story

We hope the following outline provides you with a starting point as you process through how to share your story in preparation for filming your baptism video.

1) Start with a killer lead sentence.

In one sentence, tell us a way that your life has changed. Instead of starting chronologically, we want to draw people in immediately. Some examples of this could be -

“I never thought I needed to believe in Jesus.”

“It wasn’t until I lost everything that I found myself searching for God.”

“3 weeks ago I gave my life to Christ, and I will never be the same.”

2) Tell us who you were.

Describe briefly what life was like before you placed your faith in Jesus Christ. This section is more about who you used to be rather than what you have done in your life. While events about growing up can be significant, focus on what led you to the point where you put your faith in Christ.

3) One moment changed everything.

Tell us about the moment when you placed your faith in Christ as Savior and began to follow Him with your life. Not everyone can point to specific moment, but we have all experienced a time when things changed, and it’s helpful to be as specific as you can. What caused the change in your heart to put your hope in Jesus? What was that experience like?

4) Response to the rescue of Jesus.

Baptism is a public declaration symbolizing death to our old way of life and an entering in to the new life we have received in Christ. How does your life today reflect the change Christ has made in you? Our lives are not perfect, but understanding Christ’s sacrifice means that our lives will look different. How has Jesus changed your desires, your actions, and your heart? Why are you choosing to get baptized? What are you looking forward to for the future?

5) You can be saved too.

End with an invitation to others to experience the same transformation you have experienced in Christ. Our stories are one of the most powerful evangelistic tools we have. There are people listening who will relate to your experiences, and hearing you share may change their perspective, their mind, and their life. Take this opportunity to explain that the same hope you have is available to them also.

