

## **Baptism**

Jesus introduced water baptism in connection with His Great Commission (Matthew 28:19). He said that new disciples were to be baptized in the Name of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. CORE Church believes Jesus meant this to be a permanent practice, called an ordinance. Our churches encourage water baptism.

## **Baptism for Believers**

In New Testament times, baptism followed repentance and faith. Peter invited his listeners on the day of Pentecost to “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). Three thousand people responded to the invitation, and “those who accepted his message were baptized” (Acts 2:41).

When the apostles took the gospel across the Roman Empire from Jerusalem, new churches were planted, and believers were baptized soon after they turned away from sin and put their trust in Christ for salvation. Acts 18:8 says, “Many of the Corinthians who heard [Paul] believed and were baptized.”

CORE Church follows the same practice of baptism subsequent to conversion to Christ. Those who have repented of sin and put their faith in Jesus for eternal life are encouraged to take this step of obedience.

## **What Does Baptism Mean?**

In early times baptisms were held in public places where family and friends could gather. This public witness marked the believer as a follower of Christ. Today, baptisms often take place in church buildings for the sake of convenience, but a public statement still is a part of the meaning. The person who is baptized identifies with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

The apostle Paul explained that baptism also symbolizes the believer’s union with Christ: “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” (Romans 6:3-4).

Immersion in the baptismal waters symbolizes the end of the old way of life. Coming up out of the baptismal waters pictures the new life found in Christ. The person who was previously dead in sin has been made spiritually alive by the same power that raised up Jesus from the grave. United with Him, the believer is released from the power of sin in order to obey God. Paul portrays this life change as putting on new clothes: “for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

Water baptism identifies a person as a disciple of Christ and celebrates the passage from an old life into a new life in Christ. Simply stated, it is an outward sign of an inward change.

### **How Should You Be Baptized?**

The Bible word for “baptize” means to “immerse, douse, or saturate.” In the two full descriptions of baptism found in the New Testament, individuals were immersed in water. Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River to identify Himself as God’s Son: “As soon as He was baptized, [He] went up out of the water” (Matthew 3:16).

The apostle Philip baptized the Ethiopian by going down into a body of water and coming up with him (Acts 8:38–39). In both of these examples, a large enough quantity of water was required to immerse the person.

Because of the meaning of the word baptize and the mode of the first baptisms, CORE Church practices baptism by immersion.

### **Practical Advice**

Though the Bible does not state a minimum age at which a person may be baptized, a believer should be old enough to understand the significance of baptism. Baptism is not required to receive God’s salvation. However, CORE Church encourages all who have trusted in Christ for eternal life to be baptized as a step of obedience.

Those who were baptized as believers before affiliating with CORE Church do not need to be re-baptized.

In cases where immersion is impossible due to physical limitations, an alternate mode is acceptable.