

# Baptism

by Mack Tomlinson

---

*Baptism is a public declaration of one's faith in Christ, where a person has come to believe that Jesus died on the cross for their sins and was raised from the dead.*

**Duration:** 42:00

**Scripture:** Acts 2:38, Acts 10:44-48, Romans 6:3-4, Romans 6:7, Romans 6:11, Romans 6:13-14, Romans 6:18, Colossians 3:3

**Topics:** "Baptism", "Sanctification"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of baptism as a symbolic act of dying to sin and rising to new life in Christ. It explores the biblical significance of baptism, highlighting the conditions of repentance and faith required for believers to be baptized. The sermon delves into Romans 6, illustrating how baptism represents union with Christ in His death and resurrection, leading to freedom from sin and a new life in Him. It concludes with a call to believe and live out the truth of being dead to sin, alive in Christ, and free from the bondage of sin.

---

## Transcript

And they cry out, men and brethren, what shall we do? Verse 37, then Peter gives an answer. Verse 38, then Peter said unto them, repent. You know, let me just interject something here.

Think of what the Bible tells sinners to do if they seek counsel or an evangelism. Today, many times, if someone asks, what do I need to do? They would say, well, you need to, when the preacher preaches and the invitation's given, walk to the front and he'll lead you in prayer, etc., etc. And often through history, God has saved people in that context, obviously.

But, my point is this, what does the Bible directly say in the New Testament that sinners ought to be told to do? This is it. Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Verse 41, Then they that gladly received His Word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Romans 6, we'll read the first four verses. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore, we are buried with Him

by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so should we also walk in newness of life.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Let's go ahead and read through verse 7. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Why don't we pray again and ask God to speak to our hearts. Father, we thank You for the Bible again this morning. The Word of Truth.

Truth unchanged, unchanging. We thank You that herein we learn all things that are revealed pertaining to God and Christ and the Holy Spirit, life eternal, man's condition, man's need, the remedy for sin in our Savior, His life, His death, the cross, and all that it means to be a Christian in the Christian life. Open our eyes this morning, we pray, to behold wondrous things.

Teach us afresh. Teach us in new ways about this ordinance of baptism, that it might be more meaningful to us than ever. And Lord, these that are being baptized today, instruct them.

Make it a joyful word for them. And make it a joyful day for them as we obey this ordinance. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray, amen.

If you've been a Christian long, you know that views of baptism vary greatly among professing Christians. Some of my dearest friends in the faith are Presbyterians. And we radically disagree on this subject.

But we radically love one another. We have never let it separate our fellowship. Why people are baptized, how they're baptized, and what they believe about baptism does for them among Christians widely, professing Christians, varies greatly.

Baptism is a very big issue not only for believers, but for religious people of all kinds. From Roman Catholics to Lutherans to Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Independents, baptism is a central issue among so many churches and denominations. And for some, it's fighting ground.

Some of you remember a few weeks ago, Philip talked about he was in a restaurant and some man saw him reading his Bible and he came over and that guy had a soapbox on which to stand and preach and it was what? Baptism. So, baptism is at the front and center of the New Testament record, both in the Gospels and the book of Acts, and it's stated obviously several places and addressed in various epistles. It is also noteworthy that baptism was both preached and administered to those only who could hear the Gospel and could repent.

Even the Presbyterian commentator William Hendrickson in referring to John the Baptist's baptizing said this, without confession of sins, no baptism. Now, John the Baptist came immersing with a sinner's baptism. He was calling out to all Israel to repent and to turn to the God of Israel in preparation that the Messiah is here.

John came calling all Israel to repentance and reception of the Messiah. Jesus' disciples then take the mode, take the ordinance. And the word spreads as the torch is handed from John the Baptist to the Lord Jesus Christ, from John's disciples to Jesus' disciples, and they begin to preach and baptize.

And John's Gospel says, Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John. But he adds the note, not Jesus. It was not Jesus who baptized, but His disciples.

So Jesus' disciples were baptizing many. And Matthew gives, remember in the last chapter of his Gospel, the statement on the Great Commission. And it's amazing what John Calvin said about baptism in the Great Commission.

Now, John Calvin, he wasn't a Baptist, right? Listen to what he said. This is amazing. Quote, Christ says, now he's talking about the Great Commission, going to the world and make disciples and baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

John Calvin says, listen closely, Christ says that those who have submitted to the Gospel and have professed to be disciples shall be baptized. As Christ commands them to teach before baptizing and desires that none but believers shall be admitted to baptism, it would appear that baptism is not properly administered unless it is preceded by faith. I knew he was a Baptist.

He was a closet one. He never came out of the closet, I guess. It's amazing.

Go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them. No disciple made, no baptism. Infant baptism, on the other hand, by a paedo-Baptist, meaning paedo is the word from Latin which means child, little one.

They all sprinkle their newborns as a symbol. Who are we talking about? Catholics, Anglicans, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Dutch Reform, Christian Reform, Presbyterians, there's others. And they do it for one of two reasons.

The more sacramental ones like Catholics and the Orthodox Church in Europe, they do it as a grace-giving sacrament. What do I mean? They believe that it washes away original sin, makes the child suddenly innocent, and regenerates the infant. This is called baptismal regeneration.

So, the better groups that are more clear on the Gospel don't believe that. They believe that infant baptism is official entrance into the covenant family of God. If you will, it's an official dedication that places the child by the rite of baptism into the covenant family.

The unregenerate child gets halfway in the covenant of grace. Infant sprinkling in the New Testament, they say, corresponds to Old Testament circumcision. They argue circumcision is an Old Testament sign of entrance into the covenant community.

Every male child was circumcised. I don't understand the issue on the female children. It's never made sense how the Pado-Baptists carry this over.

Why don't they only baptize males? Well, that's another discussion somehow. Or argument. So they say circumcision, the Old Testament sign, the New Testament sign now is not circumcision, but sprinkling the infant, which they call baptism.

I don't call it baptism. It shouldn't be called baptism. But think about the apostolic practice.

On the day of Pentecost, the crowd was exhorted, repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Now, I referred earlier to William Henderson, the Presbyterian. The Anglican Bishop Dean Alvord, these are Pado-Baptists, said this, all were baptized who professed belief in Jesus as Messiah.

The Lutheran commentator C.H. Linsky said this, a confession of Jesus as the Christ was always a prerequisite for baptism. And here's a heavyweight, Louis Burkhoff, one of the heaviest weight Pado-Baptist Reformed theologians. Listen to what he said.

This is amazing as Calvin's quote. Louis Burkhoff, it can be said from the beginning that there is no explicit command in the Bible to baptize children and there is not a single instance in which we are told infants were baptized. Yet, they all kept baptizing infants.

They never made the leap. They never made the transition. Martin Lloyd-Jones never baptized infants because he did not believe it was Scriptural.

And there is not one single shred of evidence from the Bible for infant baptism. Let us hear C.H. Spurgeon. If we could find infant baptism in the Word of God, we would believe it.

But we have looked well through the Bible. I think he did. We have looked well through the Bible and we cannot find it.

And we do not believe it is there. Nor do we believe others can find infant baptism in the Scriptures unless they first put it in there themselves. That's quite a thought.

And many paedo-baptists, those who baptize infants, admit you can't prove it from the New Testament or even find it. So, I want us to think this morning about the meaning and the conditions of baptism and some application. So, let's think about this.

The meaning of baptism. If you were to summarize to someone what does a Christian's baptism truly mean, how would you answer it? Some might say, well, it's a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. And it is, but really that's secondary.

There's a primary true theological, biblical meaning of baptism spiritually for the new Christian. What would the true meaning, the essence and heart of the theological significance of baptism be? Do you have your answer? Here it is. Union with Christ.

A person's union, spiritual union with the Lord Jesus Christ. That a person has come to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for their sins, was buried in the grave, bore their sins, He's truly dead, and three days later, He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, by the power of the Holy Spirit. That He bore our sins.

He was buried to seal and confirm that it was a true death fully. And He's raised from the dead with victory over sin and over death. And all those who place their faith in Him, they spiritually, by the Holy Spirit, working in them, they participate in His death.

They believe that they died in Him with Him on the cross, Romans 6 says, that their sins are buried and gone, and that they have been raised to walk in newness of life. And they, like Christ, were dead, and behold, they're alive now forevermore. Union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

Now, Romans 6, I read it, and we'll make some application out of it. But Romans 6, especially the first four verses, I used to believe is speaking of water baptism, believer's baptism. I don't believe it's primarily at all speaking of that.

The water baptism speaks and represents what baptism is represented there. Romans 6, verses 1-4 is not about believer's baptism, but it speaks volumes about the spiritual reality experienced by the Christian. The physical act of baptism, which we'll see this afternoon, as seven are baptized, the physical act of baptism after conversion is a picture of the spiritual reality experienced in conversion.

Let me repeat that. The physical act of baptism after conversion is an outward picture of the spiritual reality experienced in conversion. Now, think about this.

You go on a trip, or you meet friends you haven't seen in a long time for dinner. And what happens? Pictures, pictures, pictures. There's pictures that are an accurate representation of the experienced event.

Right? That's what baptism is. It is an after-the-moment picture that others see of the real event, the real reality of what was experienced. The picture isn't the experienced reality.

I mean, some among us weeks ago went to Hawaii. You talk about beautiful pictures. And yet, would you rather look at pictures of Hawaii or go there and experience it, right? Right? Baptism, only the picture, is no good unless you've experienced the reality.

I have died with Christ to my sin because He bore it. And just like He died on the cross for my sins and He bore my sins, I have died through repentance and faith in Him to who I was. And my old man is being buried in these waters, this watery grave, and I am a new creature.

And my baptism testifies it's a picture of what's happened to me. Meaning, union with Christ. As the hymn writer said, as dead to sin, we rise to walk anew.

Henceforth, not our own, but Yours. We follow only You. Baptized into Your death, with You again we rise to newness of a life of faith, to new and endless joys.

No trust in water do we place. 'Tis but an outward sign. The great reality is grace.

The fountain blood divine. Baptism is a personal testimony. Every person who has been baptized, those who are baptized today, their baptism is a personal testimony.

And by that, they are saying, I am now a follower of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. My life is His. I'm not my own.

I've been bought with a price. He bore my sins. I've died in Him.

I'm alive in Him. And I'm following Him. It's a personal testimony.

It's also like the Lord's Supper, an enacted sermon. It's a sermon illustration. When you as a Christian take the Lord's Supper, Paul says you proclaim or show forth the Lord's death until He comes.

When you take the Lord's Supper, you're declaring by that act the Lord Jesus Christ. He died in my place. His body, which was given on the cross, is the bread of life to me.

He shed His blood. This cup represents to me and to all His shed blood. The Lord's Supper is an enacted sermon.

And baptism is an enacted sermon. You're preaching the Gospel when you're baptized. It's also a means of grace.

Baptism is not a dead ritual. It's not a sacrament where by doing it, presto chango, you somehow get grace. No.

But it is a means of grace, meaning Acts 5.32, God gives the Holy Spirit more to those who obey Him. And so, there are many means of grace that believers partake of. When you go to church and you worship, God ministers to you.

And He speaks to you and He encourages you and He strengthens you. So going to worship is a means of receiving from the Holy Spirit God's fresh grace. So is hearing the Word of God.

So is reading the Bible every day. It's a means of grace. God speaks to us.

Feeds our soul. It's a means of grace. So is prayer.

So is fellowship with one another. So is the Lord's Supper. And so is baptism.

You baptismal candidates hear me today. When you are in that water and you're getting baptized, you ask the Lord Jesus Christ to anoint you and give you the power of His Holy Spirit. When Jesus was baptized, the Spirit of God came down on Him like a dove.

We could read in accounts and acts. We won't. The coming of the Holy Spirit in connection with baptism.

So, it is a means of grace. That's the meaning. Secondly, the conditions.

What are the conditions of being baptized? Having advanced knowledge of theology? Being mature in the faith? Having a perfect life? No. What are the conditions? Believing the Gospel. Believing the Gospel.

That's the condition. Those who received His Word were baptized. Acts 2 says the conditions to become a candidate for baptism are faith and trust in Christ alone with repentance.

Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. These are the conditions of becoming a candidate for baptism. Believe the Gospel.

Trust Christ. Have a clear conscience. And you are a candidate for baptism.

Now, is there a need for counsel and instruction of a new believer about baptism? Yes. We've done that with these thoroughly. We're being baptized today.

But the conditions to become a candidate is not perfect, clear understanding. We have those being baptized today that range from eight years old to adult and in between. And the New Testament tells us conditions.

Repentance and faith. Matthew 3, verse 5-11. Then went out Jesus, all from Jerusalem and Judea and all the region around Jordan, and were baptized by John, confessing their sins.

That's a condition. Mark 1, verse 5. All were baptized by John in the Jordan, confessing their sins. Acts 8, verse 12.

But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God in the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women. Now I want you to turn to Acts 10 and see this. Turn with me there to Acts 10.

44-48. Here's a picture of it showing the conditions, what was necessary. These people had just heard the clear Gospel.

Peter had come to them, sent by God through a vision to them. And in verse 34, Peter begins to preach to them the first time. Look at verse 44.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them which what? Heard the word. Brand new believers. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water that these should be baptized? There's a great proof text to say who can be baptized? Brand new believers. Can anyone forbid water that these new believers should be baptized? No! No one can.

If they evidence truly meeting the conditions. Repentance and faith in Christ. Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

Now there's an interesting thought. None of these seven have any of the elders commanded them to be baptized except in preaching. We've said who among you believes you've been converted? Who among us believes you've come to faith in Christ? If you believe that and you have assurance and you believe you're trusting in Christ, then you come to us and share your testimony with us and we will see as much as we can see if you're ready for baptism.

But here, Peter commands them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. So, there's the condition. A person hears the message.

Maybe they've heard it ten times, a thousand times, or for the first time. They hear the message and the Holy Spirit begins to work in their mind, in their conscience, in their heart, in their spirit. He begins to do invisible things, irresistible things, gracious, wonderful things.

The Holy Spirit begins, and the wind begins to blow within them. And no man knows where he's working, where he's blowing, as John 3 says. And he begins to bring conviction.

And he begins to quicken life. And he regenerates their dead soul and brings them from death to life. No one knows when that happens.

Suddenly, they're awakened and they realize I need God. My sin is real. Jesus is real.

He's alive. I need Him. I want Him.

And they're drawn with cords of love. And God grants them repentance in their heart to the acknowledging of the truth. And they are responsible to repent and believe the Gospel.

And Christ is the object of their faith. Not self-reformation. Not good works.

Not improving yourself to somehow get better so God could then save you. His contribution will be finally to save you when you've contributed enough self-improvement. No, heresy.

That's salvation by works. Nothing but Christ in this. And He draws us.

And the sinner's heart really does go out to Christ in repentant faith and trust in Him alone. They are then a candidate for baptism. And only then believe and be baptized, the Bible says.

To withhold baptism from anyone who gives biblical evidence of being a Christian cannot be right. There are some Baptists who won't baptize anybody until they're 18 years of old. They want to see some long-term evidence.

That's wrong. That or any other arbitrary age, 12 or whatever, is purely artificial. In the New Testament, there is plenty of evidence of baptism following immediately upon professed conversion.

In fact, you're hard-pressed to find any instance in the book of Acts, all the records of baptism in Acts came immediately. The Philippian jailer was baptized immediately. Lydia.

Others. I mean, I could keep naming examples. If we say credible evidence of conversion is needed, meaning a changed life, humility, spiritual hunger, repentance, honest, genuine, conscious faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that's the credible evidence of conversion.

Then the question is, how long of a period does that require? And there is no one answer. But the reality should be, a person who's been converted should want to be baptized as soon as they know that they should do it. And a church should baptize those who've been converted as soon as they give credible evidence for the conversion.

Now, let me give you several points of application in closing. Stay with me. Back to Romans 6. Go there with me if you would.

I said while I don't believe Romans 6 is speaking of believers' baptism, the physical act of water, Romans 6 is giving us the spiritual reality of true union with Christ, of which water baptism is a picture. So let me apply this to everyone who's been baptized as a believer. If it was 40 years ago for you, if it was 5 years ago, a year ago, or you seven candidates for baptism today, this is true of you and this is what baptism represents.

Number one, you are dead. You're a dead person. You are dead.

What does Colossians 1-3 say? For you're dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. The old person you were is gone. They died.

Romans 6 says, how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? A person who's been converted and regenerated by the Holy Spirit and delivered from the power of the devil and spiritual death, they cannot continue in sin. Impossible. You can't continue in sin.

Any more than Lazarus could have laid in that grave and stayed there stinking. Impossible. He came forth to newness of life.

You're dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. Verse 3, Romans 6, no you're not. Do you know this, Paul is saying, that so many of us as we're baptized into Jesus Christ, union with Christ, the Holy Spirit took you and placed you into the Lord Jesus Christ and you're one with Him.

You're in Him. And He's in you by His Spirit. No you're not, that as many of us as were baptized in Jesus Christ were baptized into His death.

When He died on the cross, you were in Him spiritually and you, the old man, your old man, died and was crucified there. Who can understand that mystery? Who can explain that mystery? How you were in Him on the cross, dying, and you died with Him and in Him. Verse 5, for if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

Let's read 6-8, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him. The old man of the believer doesn't need to be crucified. You don't have to get crucified.

You were crucified with Him. That the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we also shall live with Him. Verse 11, likewise, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed. You are, as a believer, dead.

And baptism pictures that. This person is a dead corpse laid in the grave, dead and gone. Whoa! They come out of the grave.

New life! But they're dead. And you, henceforth, your old man that was dead in Him on the cross is gone and buried forever. Secondly, you're alive again.

You're not only dead, you're alive. We walk, Paul says, in newness of life. Verse 4, even so, we should also walk in newness of life.

Verse 10, for in that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He lives unto God. That's Christ and the believer. Verse 11, likewise, reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin, but reckon yourself to be dead, reckon yourself to be alive unto God as a new creature in Christ.

Number one, you're dead. Number two, you're alive again. Number three, you are free.

Romans 6, verse 7, for he that is dead is freed from sin. Verse 14, for sin shall have dominion over you, for you're not under the law, but under grace. Verse 18, being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness.

Every believer now, before baptism and after baptism, are free from the dominion and power of sin. You've been made free. And baptism represents that.

That watery grave, your old man and those sins are gone, buried, and you come forth picturing I'm a new person, changed, I'm going to walk now in newness of life. You're dead. You're alive again.

You're free. And finally, number four, if you're dead, if you're alive, if you're free, here's the clenched pen. Believe it's all true.

For yourself, believe it is all true. Paul says, reckon yourself to be dead to sin and alive to God. Look at verse 11.

Likewise, reckon, that is count it to be so as a truth because it is so. A policeman stops you. Officer, what was I doing? Well, you were ten minutes over the speed limit.

I'm sorry, I didn't know. I was ignorant. You wouldn't say ignorant, maybe.

Okay, I was speedy. It's true, so you acknowledge that it's true. You reckon it to be so.

If you are dead in Christ, you see yourself that way because it's a fact. You reckon it to be so. If you're alive in Christ as a new creature, you reckon it to be so.

You're not the old person you used to be. You're no longer under the power and bondage of sin. You no longer are spiritually dead in your sins.

You're alive to God. So believe it and live it. Verse 13, neither yield you, your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those who are alive from the dead.

And your members, that is, all your earthly body, your mind, spirit, soul, body, every physical member of your body, you yield as instruments of righteousness unto God. Verse 17, but God be thanked that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you. What a glorious day is a believer's baptism.

What a marvelous event. What a glowing, accurate picture. It's not a fuzzy picture.

Some pictures that I've taken, delete them. Fuzzy. No, baptism's not a fuzzy picture.

It's a perfectly accurate picture of what Jesus Christ did in His death, burial, and resurrection, and of what's happened to the Christian experientially. You died in Christ. You were crucified with Him.

Your sins and the old man are buried and gone and you rise to walk in newness of life. As the hymn writer says that we sang it, we bless the name of Christ the Lord. We bless Him for His holy Word, who loved to do His Father's will and all His righteousness fulfilled.

We follow Him with pure delight. Follow Him into the waters of baptism. Follow Him all the days of our lives.

Follow, as Revelation says, wherever the Lamb goes, we follow the Lamb wherever He goes. We follow Him with pure delight to sanctify His sacred right, the right of baptism. And thus, our faith with water sealed to prove obedience that we feel.

Baptized in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit three in one. With conscience free, we rest in God in love and peace through Jesus' blood. By grace, we Abba, Father, cry.

By grace, the Comforter comes nigh. And for Thy grace, our love shall be forever only, Lord, for Thee. Amen.

Let's pray. Our Father, we often get so used to things that we've been around so long, whether it's the Bible in our hands or going to church or baptism. We get so used to things that they can lose their true meaning and the freshness of what's represented.

Don't let that be so today. We thank You for the blessed ordinance of baptism and what it truly represents. Lord, seal it to our hearts by Your Spirit.

Lord, whether it was 40 years ago for some or this afternoon, make the ordinance of baptism glorious to us all over again. And bless this afternoon, that baptismal service. And we ask that You'd pour out Your Spirit and anoint with Your Spirit each one of these who are baptized.

We bless You for newness of life in the Lord Jesus Christ. And we pray in His name, Amen.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/u6p9qRTae-o.mp4>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/mack-tomlinson/baptism/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**