



CROSSWAY

FOX VALLEY

Serve, love, and lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS

BAPTISM

BAPTISM

YOUR TESTIMONY OF GENUINE FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

AM I ACTUALLY RIGHT WITH GOD?

It's very difficult for anyone who has been saved from rebellion *against* God to truly believe that there is now peace *with* God. But there is! If you've surrendered to Jesus, you truly are RIGHT WITH GOD. The Bible teaches that the true believer has been "united" with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. In a miraculous way, you "shared with" Christ in these things when God saved you.

You didn't suffer the pain, the abuse, or the rejection. You were not beaten, spat upon, or publicly humiliated on a cross. You were not laid in a tomb and raised from the dead 3 days later. But your old sinful self *was* killed with Him, taken to the tomb with Him, and left there to rot when He rose again! That's how complete and sufficient the work of Christ is for all sinners who repent and believe. This is what the Bible calls your "spiritual baptism."

Now that you have been united with Christ in this way, there is also a *physical baptism* that demonstrates the reality of the *spiritual* one. God desires for all who are saved to be baptized publicly in order to give a testimony to the miracle of His glorious work in their lives. In addition, Jesus Christ commanded believers to be baptized and "fulfilled all righteousness" by being baptized Himself (see Matthew 3:15).

THE PURPOSE OF THIS LESSON IS:

To explain the Biblical significance of both spiritual and physical baptism and to encourage and challenge all believers to give a testimony to the work of salvation in their lives by being physically baptized.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO ME?

WALKING IN THE NEWNESS OF LIFE

Spiritual baptism is a work of the Holy Spirit that brings believers into union with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ so that they can live a new life. The work of spiritual baptism happens to every true believer when God saves them (see 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Colossians 2:12).

Before the passage below, the apostle Paul has just finished, in Romans 5, explaining how the single act of righteousness by Christ on the cross conquered the single act of unrighteousness by Adam in the garden. By the obedience of ONE MAN, Jesus Christ, we are made righteous. Where sin used to reign in death, grace is now guaranteed to reign to ETERNAL LIFE! Take a look at the first 14 verses of chapter 6 and answer the questions that follow.

Romans 6:1-14

1. Is this guarantee of the grace of God through Jesus Christ for all eternity a license to go on sinning once God has saved you? Why not according to verses 2-7?
2. In verses 3-10, list or circle all of the times Paul uses the words “in,” “into” or “with.” What are these in reference to?
3. From verses 3-10, describe the ways in which the true believer “identifies with” or “unites with” Jesus Christ in the work He accomplished for us.

4. The most beautiful part of all of this is the “newness of life” we receive by identifying with Jesus in His resurrection. According to verses 5-7, how is it that we are now able live a very different (new) life?

5. According to verse 12-14, what does this “identification” with Jesus Christ mean for day to day living (another great passage to read in order to learn more about some of the specifics is Colossians 3 and 4)?

6. Can you write down some personal ways in which sin no longer “masters” you? Are there areas of sin in your life where it seems you ARE still under its control.

7. What is your response to God for freeing you from the slavery of sin?

The bottom line is, if you have been saved by faith, you actually PARTICIPATED WITH Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. That’s why you are no longer under the control of sin, and you can be at peace with God. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 defines the gospel as the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. And you participated in it with Him when He saved you! Take a look at a summary of this miracle on the next page.

HOW DID “THE GOSPEL” ACTUALLY SAVE ME FROM SIN?

THE PROVISION OF JESUS CHRIST

This is what Jesus Christ did.

The Gospel: 1 Cor. 15:1-4

Christ DIED to pay the penalty for your sin on the cross.



ITS APPLICATION TO YOUR LIFE

This is how it was applied to YOU.

Romans 6:3,4, Col. 2:12

When God saved you, SPIRITUALLY, you were “placed into” His death and YOU DIED with Him!

Christ was BURIED with your sin in the grave.



When God saved you, SPIRITUALLY, you were “placed into” Christ’s grave and YOU WERE BURIED with Him.

Christ ROSE victorious over sin to newness of life in His resurrection.



When God saved you, SPIRITUALLY, you were “placed into” Christ’s resurrection and YOU WERE RAISED with Him to the newness of life by God’s power that raised Him from the dead physically.

NOW YOU CAN WALK IN THE NEWNESS OF LIFE!

As a result of this spiritual miracle that takes place when God saves someone, He has also established a visible and physical picture of it in water baptism...

UNDERSTANDING WATER BAPTISM

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, SON, & HOLY SPIRIT

Things you ought to know...

For believers, **WATER BAPTISM** is not something you should just take or leave.” It is a command given by Jesus Christ for all believers to participate in out of love for Him and a desire to publicly proclaim what He has accomplished. It is a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (*see Matthew 3:15-17, 28:19, and Acts 2:41-42*).

For unbelievers, **WATER BAPTISM** has no significance because they have not been saved by God through the miraculous *spiritual baptism* discussed on pages 1-7. There is nothing to illustrate.

Though **WATER BAPTISM** is intended to be an illustration of the washing away of sin, the Bible does not ever teach that it actually *does* wash away sin. Only the blood of Christ is said to have accomplished this. The physical act of baptism does not save you (*See Hebrews 1:3, 9:14, 1 Peter 3:21, and 1 John 1:7*).

WATER BAPTISM is not observed in the church to *cause* something spiritual to happen to you. It is observed *because* something spiritual *has* happened to you.

WATER BAPTISM does not, in itself, bring about a supernatural benefit to the one being baptized. The true believer is given the power of the Holy Spirit at the time they are saved and not at a later date when they are baptized (*See Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, John 7:37-40, 1 Corinthians 12:13*).

WATER BAPTISM is not intended to be a religious ritual or ceremony performed on babies or children to determine their eternal destiny. There is not a *single reference* in the entire Bible that indicates babies are to be baptized so they can go to heaven if they die. There are no *commands* or *specific examples* in the Bible regarding the baptism of infants.

Matthew 3:13-17, Acts 8:4-13 & 25-39, Acts 18:5-8

Look up these passages & consider a few more questions.

1. According to Matthew 3:13-17, who is our ultimate example of obedience to God and why did He get baptized? What was the Father's response to His Son's baptism?
2. Except in the case of Jesus, what comes before baptism in each of these cases?
3. Describe how physically "immersing" someone in water and then lifting them out illustrates the salvation that has taken place in their life.
4. Do any of the other methods of water baptism properly illustrate the death, burial, and resurrection (remember Romans 6:3-4)?

NOTE:

THE BIBLICAL MEANING of the word “baptize” is:

TO IMMERSE
TO PUT UNDER
TO BE PLACED INTO

TO DIP
TO WASH
TO SUBMERGE

5. According to the example found in the Bible, what method of baptism should the church practice (Note: John 3:23 implies that “much water” was required to baptize)?
6. Take one more look at Matthew 3:13-17. What is the ultimate motivation for participating in water baptism (see Matthew 28:19, John 15:14, and 1 John 2:3 also)?

SO...WHAT NEXT?

LOOK! WATER! WHAT PREVENTS ME FROM BEING BAPTIZED?

Like the Ethiopian in Acts 8, you need to find some water and get baptized! If you truly have received God’s gift of faith and have placed your trust in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, then **GOD HAS SAVED YOU!** Now, if you've not already done so, it’s time to say it publicly through the waters of baptism. The reason Christ gave Christians the command to be baptized in water is to provide us with a very unique way of sharing our own personal testimony of salvation.

But first, let’s sum up what this all means through a brief review of what we’ve studied...

Through your _____ baptism, you are demonstrating **publicly, outwardly, and physically**, your _____ baptism into Christ's death, burial, and resurrection that took place in you **privately, inwardly, and spiritually** the moment He saved you.

When you stand in the water at your baptism, you are publicly demonstrating that you have trusted Christ's _____ on the cross on your behalf.

As you are taken beneath the water, you are publicly demonstrating that your sins were _____ with Christ in His grave.

As you come up out of the water, you are publicly demonstrating your _____ with Christ, that He has accomplished so that you also can walk in the newness of life.

STOP AND THINK

Remember, water baptism is not a ritual or religious ceremony that a Christian must go through out of religious obligation. Rather, it's the joyful expression of the amazing blessings of God given in salvation. If you have not had this opportunity yet even though God has saved you, you should seek it out right away (Acts 2:41, 8:12, and 18:8). In this way, you will demonstrate obedience to the Father and will give Him public praise for what He has done.

Consider the following questions in order to evaluate your own life and the possibility of a commitment to be baptized. If you need help thinking through these things, do not hesitate to call on other believers or a pastor who can help you understand. Ultimately, you are encouraged to be baptized in a local church as an expression of and testimony to the wonderful work of salvation in your life and to identify with the body of Christ in a local church community.

Do you know with joy and certainty that God has saved you? How and why? (If you are not sure, work through these issues of uncertainty with a pastor or someone else who is discipling you)

Have you had the opportunity to be baptized according to the teaching in this lesson since you were saved?

Do you understand what baptism is and why God has commanded it?

If you have not yet been baptized, will you commit to observe God's desire for you to do so at the earliest possible opportunity?

If you answered “yes,” we rejoice with you! Please seek out one of the pastors or deacons at Crossway to find some water and set a time to get baptized (The church will set a special time for all to celebrate your baptism as a sign of the new life in Christ that God has given you!!).

If you answered “no,” simply because you do not want to be baptized, please ask God to give you the desire to follow Christ (If you still do not want to be baptized, please know that the Crossway pastors are always here for you and would love to spend some more time answering your questions and praying with you about salvation in Jesus Christ and His gospel).

If you answered “no,” because you have a different understanding of Christian baptism (i.e., Reformed, Presbyterian, etc.), we would love to interact with you further on the topic. While we do not want to see division in the body of Christ over different theological positions** on this doctrine, we do want to clearly teach, explain, and apply what we believe is a biblically accurate understanding of this important practice in the church.

***There are beliefs in some religious circles that require baptism as something FOR SALVATION. This has been labeled throughout history as “baptismal regeneration.” At Crossway Fox Valley, we understand this approach as fitting with a “works-based gospel” and therefore a “different gospel (Galatians 1:6-9)” than the bible teaches.*

I'VE GOT TO TELL SOMEBODY!

WRITING YOUR OWN GRACE STORY

Acts 22:1-16

This passage is the personal testimony of the apostle Paul spoken by him as a defense before the Jews. Though God saves people through many different circumstances, Paul's grace story provides a great example for us in speaking about what God has done for us through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As you read it, notice that he tells what he was like before God saved him (verses 1-5), he speaks of some of the circumstances surrounding the way in which Jesus Christ saved him (verses 6-11), and he tells what has changed and what his purposes are now that he has been saved (verses 12-16). His story follows a "before, during, and after" outline of sorts. This is a good way to speak of our own salvation as well (see 1Timothy 1:12-17 also).

After you have read the passage, prayerfully and thoroughly answer the three questions on the following pages. The goal is to develop a 3-5 minute testimony that can be read by you at your baptism or shared in many other appropriate settings. This testimony will also become your own witness of salvation to unbelievers as God gives you opportunity in this lost world. If you have already been baptized, this would still be a great "exercise" for you to walk through to review what God has done once again. Can we ever think or talk about it too much?

The lists of questions below each heading are there as guidelines for reflecting on what God has done. Try not to get too bogged down with answering every single question. Also, if you have other questions that will help with communicating your story, add them in under each heading yourself.

Use the additional pages provided to take down some notes in response to the questions. Then, on separate pieces of paper, write out your own grace story based on what you have discovered. Whether this will be used in a public setting or not, it is always to your advantage as a witness of Christ to be ready with your personal explanation of what Jesus Christ did to save you. Enjoy the process of recalling it and writing it down.

MY GRACE STORY: TESTIMONY WORKSHEET

1. What was I like before God saved me?

- ❑ Were there particular areas of sin that controlled you? Avoid digressing into the “gory details” of sin. Sin does not need to be glorified in your testimony. Christ does!
- ❑ What was more important to you than God?
- ❑ Were there ways in which you were relying on yourself to be saved? Religion? Works? etc. In what other ways were you depending on yourself and not God?
- ❑ What was your attitude toward God and God’s Son Jesus Christ?
- ❑ What was your understanding of and attitude toward sin?
- ❑ What negative things were present in your relationships?
- ❑ What direction were you headed?

2. How did God save me?

- ❑ Describe how the gospel was explained to you when you came to Christ.
- ❑ When did God save you?
- ❑ What were the events and circumstances that God used to bring you to Himself?
- ❑ What were the circumstances surrounding your specific cry to God for mercy?
- ❑ Were there other believers who helped you understand your need for forgiveness? It’s wonderful to know how God uses other Christians. But remember, other believers do not need to be glorified, Christ does!
- ❑ How did the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ save you from sin?

3. What is different now that God has saved me?

- ❑ What have you seen change in your life since God saved you?
- ❑ What were the circumstances surrounding your cry for mercy?
- ❑ What is your understanding of and attitude toward sin NOW?
- ❑ How have those negative relationship things in your life changed?
- ❑ What is your attitude toward God and God’s Son Jesus Christ?
- ❑ What is your greatest desire in this life?
- ❑ In what ways do you desire to love and serve Christ?
- ❑ What direction are you headed now?

MY NOTES ON QUESTION 1

MY NOTES ON QUESTION 2

MY NOTES ON QUESTION 3

KEY VERSES

In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

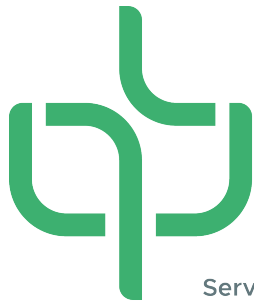
Colossians 2:11-12

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ 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 6:3-4

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Matthew 3:13-17



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