

BEGINNING TO FOLLOW JESUS THROUGH WATER BAPTISM

The Christian life is a life of constant progress. That progress is marked by transitions from one level of faith to another. Water baptism is a mark of one of the most important decisions and transitions we make in life. The practice of baptism then is a spiritual *"rite of passage"*. In life there are many of these that mark our movement from one stage to another such as graduations, weddings, retirements, becoming parents and the like. Baptism then marks a new direction in our life as we decide, in obedience, to follow after Jesus Christ.

Baptism really pictures the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus was crucified, died and He came back from the dead. Not only did He rise from the dead, but He rose to life never to die again. This is a picture of what happens to us when we are "born-again" and become Christians. We also "die" to an old way of living, our "old life" is buried with Him and we "rise" to new life. This time we belong to God and will live with Him forever. We now have "new life" with God, a life empowered by God Himself.

Just as many of life's other "rites of passage" are public, so also is baptism. In a setting with other believers and maybe some friends and family, we declare publicly our new association with Christ. We declare our new life in God. Here we are initiated into God's family. The physical act takes place when we come up out of the water declaring our new life in Christ.

Besides just the outward act of baptism, there is something deeper that happens at your baptism. Something spiritual, something that happens between you and God. Many people testify that their baptism was a real turning point in their walk with God.

If you are a believer and have found new life in Christ, then the next step for you is baptism. In fact, Jesus said that you should be baptized and this gives you an opportunity to begin obeying Him now (Acts 2:38). You see, success in the Christian life depends largely on your willingness to obey God and this is one of your first opportunities to begin obeying Him.

"Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

Please use the Connection Card, sign-up online, or call us at 860-848-7400. Or you can simply show up. Calling to register in advance allows us to send you invites for friends and family, and to prepare a certificate for presentation at baptism.

May God richly bless you in your new life as you begin to obey and follow Him.