

Explanation of Redeemer Church's Approach to

BAPTISM

"We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This demonstrates, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Rom 6:4; Col 2:12; 1 Pet 3:20-21; Acts 22:16). Baptism is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and the Lord's Supper."

From Article XIV of Redeemer Church Statement of Faith.

Summary:

We believe baptism is for the believer following repentance and faith in Christ.

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Baptism is the physical expression of a spiritual reality: someone going from death to life through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 6:1-4). Truths that go along with this description:

- Baptism is an external display of the internal reality of the miracle of spiritual birth (John 3, 1 Pet 1:3).
- Baptism depicts our union with Christ – we are baptized into Christ and His death (Gal 3:27).
- Baptism also displays our unity with other believers in Christ's body, the church (Eph 4:4-5).

Baptism is a two-part act involving the church and the person being baptized. The church is affirming and portraying a believer's union with Christ by immersing him in water¹ and the believer is publicly committing himself to Christ and His people.

WHY DO WE BAPTIZE?

Because Jesus commanded His first disciples to baptize His followers (Matt 28:19-20). We believe baptism and the Lord's Supper are practices instituted by Jesus for the church to exercise and strengthen our faith in Him until He returns.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM?

Baptism is where faith goes public. Baptism is an identity marker – identifying someone as a member of Christ and His body, the church (1 Cor 12:12-13). Baptism is the sign and symbol of this covenant relationship, much like a wedding ring. When a couple marries, they give each other a ring. This ring does not make them married; it announces what is true – that they are married. Like a wedding ring, baptism testifies before God and witnesses one's commitment to Christ. Baptism is the God-given symbol of the covenant relationship we enjoy with God in Christ.

WHAT SHOULD PRECEDE BAPTISM?

We believe genuine repentance of sin and faith in Christ should precede baptism. Repentance and faith consist of three things:

- Knowledge: The content of faith: understanding what the Bible teaches about Christ (1 Cor 15:3-4, Col 1:3-5, Jude 3).
- Assent: Agreement with the Bible's teaching about Christ (Rom 10:9).
- Trust: Personal trust and reliance upon Christ alone for salvation (John 14:6, Rom 10:10, Eph 2:8-9).

¹ We believe that the regular mode of baptism is by immersion in water. If you have been baptized as a believer, but it was not by immersion we will still receive that as a legitimate baptism.

WHEN SHOULD I GET BAPTIZED?

Biblically, baptism follows belief (Acts 2:38, 16:31-34, 18:8). Therefore, we encourage you to pursue baptism at your first opportunity following repentance and faith in Christ.

WHO DOES GOD GIVE AUTHORITY TO BAPTIZE?

Jesus gives the spiritual authority to affirm genuine professions of faith to the local church (Matt 16:13-19). While man's opinion is not ultimately determinative of one's eternal state (only God can judge the heart) the church's pronouncement is the normal means God uses to affirm saving faith. As an elder-ruled church, elders/pastors oversee the process of baptism at Redeemer Church. We will ordinarily seek to gauge the credibility of a person's profession through an interview, and we will later ask the person being baptized to share their testimony publicly with the church prior to baptism.

WHAT IF MY PARENTS BAPTIZED ME AS AN INFANT?

Because we believe appropriate candidates for baptism are those who trust in Christ alone for salvation, we do not believe infant baptism fits the Bible's teaching. Therefore, we would encourage you to be baptized at a point *after* your profession of faith. While baptism is not required for salvation, it is an important step of obedience for believers to take.

WHAT ABOUT CHILDREN UNDER 12 WHO WANT TO GET BAPTIZED?

We believe children can be genuinely converted to Christ (Mark 10:14-15). We work closely with the parents of children to determine their readiness for baptism. We do, however, approach a child's profession of faith and desire to be baptized differently from an adult's for a few reasons:

- Children may feel pressure to make a profession of faith and demonstrate it through baptism to receive added favor from parents, pastors, and sometimes peers.
- Children may be exposed to oversimplified Gospel presentations that encourage them, for example, to "ask Jesus into their heart," without sufficiently explaining the Biblical concepts of sin, repentance, faith, obedience, and the cost of following Jesus.
- Children may fail to understand the cost of following Christ because they have not had to deal with a variety of trials and temptations that adults face.
- God uses the memory of one's baptism as an assurance of faith to look back on, which is not possible if someone is too young to remember it well or at all.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD UNDER 12 WANTS TO GET BAPTIZED?

A pastor or elder would love to meet with you to help you discern your child's spiritual state and the best steps forward in discipling them. We approach each situation on a case-by-case basis and want to base our advice on actual conversation and observation not assumption.

Generally speaking, we encourage you to practice "proactive waiting" with children who profess faith in Christ. This consists of you watching and affirming your child's faith by looking for consistency in two primary areas: heartfelt sorrow over sin and regular pursuit of the things of God.

(See back for next steps) —————>

I AM READY, WHAT SHOULD I DO NEXT?

You may complete our baptism application, available at redeemerrockford.church/baptism, and a pastor or staff member will respond with next steps. If you are the parent of a child or have questions, you may contact Keziah Rynne, and she will direct your inquiry to a pastor.

Keziah@redeemerrockford.church

