

# Released Time Lesson - Jesus Gets Baptized

## Lesson - What does the Bible say?

We know that Jesus came to earth to save us by dying on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. He also came to earth to be an example for us of how to live.

Let's open our Bibles to the book of Matthew to read about an event in Jesus's life that serves as an example for us in our lives.

### [Read Matthew 3:13-17](#)

Recap the pertinent points of the passage you just read:

- Jesus went to the Jordan River to be baptized by his cousin, John the Baptist
- Jesus told John that He needed to be baptized because it is what God wants
- John baptized Jesus by submerging him under the water
- When Jesus came up out of the water God spoke from heaven and declared that Jesus was His Son and that Jesus brought Him great joy

## Further Discussion

Getting baptized was so important to Jesus that He sought out his cousin John, and insisted that John baptize Him.

Ask: If baptism was important to Jesus, do you think it should be important to us?

Answer: Yes!

That's right! Baptism should be as important to us as it is to Jesus.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of people who are confused about what baptism is. I want to make sure none of us are confused in that same way, so before we talk about what baptism *is*, let's talk about what baptism *is not*.

### What Baptism is NOT

Baptism is not any of the below:

- the way to get forgiveness for our sins
- the way to get salvation
- the way we get to heaven

Ask: If baptism is not the way to get our sins forgiven, to gain salvation, or to get to heaven, then how do we get those things?

Answer: We only get forgiveness, salvation, and entrance to heaven by putting our faith in Jesus and His death on the cross which paid the penalty for our sins.

[Teachers, please stress to students that the *only* way we get to heaven is by putting our faith in Jesus and His work on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. There is nothing else we have to do to be saved. Nothing, nothing, nothing! Jesus did it all for us!]

### Why Do We Get Baptized?

The *first* step in your walk as a Christian is to realize that you are a sinner who needs a Savior; you realize

that Jesus is the Savior that came to pay the price for your sins; and you put your faith in Him and what He did on the cross to know that your sins are forgiven. Once you put your faith in Jesus to have your sins forgiven, you are a Christian. The thing is, you can take that *first* step in your Christian walk and no one would even know. It's a decision you made in your heart and it's between you and God.

But, guess what? Just like they explained in the video we just watched, baptism is an important *next* step in the life of a Christian. Baptism is the way for a Christian to no longer keep it to themselves, but to tell everyone that they have joined Team Jesus. Why is it such an important next step? It's important because God wants us to tell everyone about the decision that we've made!

### [Read Matthew 10:32](#)

Jesus makes it very clear in this verse that He wants His followers (that means us!) to *publicly* acknowledge Him. That's what baptism is all about!

When we get baptized, we are telling everyone that we have decided to follow Jesus and that we are committed to living our life for God.

You might be wondering why the public declaration of our faith has to be through baptism. Couldn't we just send everyone we know a text message or an email? Or couldn't we hire one of those airplanes to write a message in the sky? We could yell it from the mountaintops and rooftops or even knock on all of our neighbors' doors to tell them the decision we have made.

We have so many options to make a public declaration, so why do we get dunked in the water? What's that all about?

### **How Do We Get Baptized?**

Like we saw in the video of the young girl at the beach, when we get baptized we are dunked under the water and brought back up again. That water can be the ocean, a river, a pool, a hot tub, or a baptismal at a church. Any body of water works.

There are three main reasons for water baptism:

- 1) The word "baptize" literally means to immerse or submerge in water. So when Jesus tells John to baptize Him and when He tells us to be baptized, He literally means to be dunked under water.
- 2) Jesus, our example, was baptized in the River Jordan by being fully submerged under the water and then coming back up again.
- 3) When we are baptized by being submerged under water, it is a symbol and a picture of two things:
  - Water baptism is a symbol of Jesus's death and resurrection. When we go under the water, it is a picture of us identifying with Jesus's death. And when we are pulled back up from the water, it is a picture of us identifying with Jesus's resurrection.
  - Water baptism is also a symbol of our commitment to put to death our old self (the one where we didn't know Jesus) and raise up to life our new self (the one where we are committed to following Jesus). Our old self is symbolically washed away in the water.

### [Read 2 Corinthians 5:17](#)

This verse reminds us that when we become a Christian we are a new person! Our old life is gone and a new life begins!

This reminds me of something else that experiences a transformation from one thing to another.

Using the below images, explain the process of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly:

Picture 1



Picture 1: Ask: Can anyone tell me what this insect is? Answer: A caterpillar

Picture 2



Picture 2: Here we see the process of the caterpillar going into its cocoon

Picture 3



Picture 3: Here we see the butterfly emerging from the cocoon

Picture 4



*Picture 4: We see a new creation when it comes out as a beautiful butterfly! It went from a creepy crawler to a beautiful soaring butterfly.*

Go back and look at Picture 3 again. On the far right you see the remnants of the cocoon still sticking to the butterfly's leg. That cocoon is like our old self before we knew Jesus. Imagine that butterfly trying to fly with that thing stuck to its leg. It won't fly to its fullest potential. When we get baptized, we are symbolically putting to death that old self; we are shaking that dead cocoon carcass off our leg so we can soar as high as we can!

### **Who Should Get Baptized?**

Christians should be baptized.

Remember that baptism is an important next step *after* becoming a Christian. You can only become a Christian once you understand what Jesus did for you on the cross and make the decision to make Jesus your Lord and Savior and to follow Him for the rest of your life. Once you have made that decision nothing should stop you from being baptized.

[Teacher: Optional to read Acts 8:12-13 and Acts 18:7-8 to show the pattern of people getting saved and then getting baptized soon thereafter.]

## **Object Lesson - Wedding Ring**

We've mentioned a couple times today that baptism is a symbol. It is a symbol of our decision to identify with Jesus and his death and resurrection and it is a symbol of us leaving behind our old life and walking in our new life.

Show students a wedding ring. If you (or one of the other adult volunteers) are married, show them your wedding ring. If no adult volunteer is wearing a wedding ring, then bring a picture of one.

Just like baptism is a symbol that you are a Christian and you are saved, a wedding ring is a symbol that shows the world you are married.

Ask: Does the wedding ring make me married?

Answer: No!

No, I had to have a ceremony where my spouse and I made promises to each other and to God and there was some official paperwork that had to be signed and filed to make me officially married.



Ask: If I lose the wedding ring, am I still married?

Answer: Yes!

Ask: So, if my wedding ring doesn't make me married and I don't need to wear it to be married, then why do people wear wedding rings?

Answer: The wedding ring is a symbol that shows everyone else that you are married.

That's what baptism is like. Getting baptized is not the same as making the decision to become a Christian and follow Jesus. Getting baptized doesn't make us a Christian just like wearing a wedding ring doesn't make us married. Baptism is the way we tell everyone about the decision we've made.

I have another question.

Ask: If I am not married, but I find a wedding ring laying on the ground and I put it on my wedding finger does that mean I am married?

Answer: No! I didn't have a ceremony with someone where we made promises to each other and to God. I didn't file the official paperwork at the courthouse to make me legally married to a spouse. Putting on the ring did not make me a married person.

The same is true for baptism. Getting baptized doesn't make you a Christian. If you did not make the decision to become a Christian and put your faith in Jesus, and if you did not make the commitment in your heart to put away your old life (without Jesus) and walk in a new life (with Jesus), then getting dunked under the water is not really a baptism. It's just you getting wet!

[Teachers, don't shy away from conversation that might come up related to infant baptisms. Some students on the bus may have been baptized as infants. Lovingly explain that when they were a baby that couldn't have made the decision to be a Christian yet. But the good news is, once they personally make the decision to follow Jesus, they can tell everyone about the decision they've made by getting baptized again!]

## Closing Thoughts

Getting baptized is an important part of our Christian life. If you have made the decision to follow Jesus there should be nothing stopping you from getting baptized.

Once you think you are ready to be baptized, talk to your parents. Hopefully they can get you scheduled to be part of your church's next baptism. You can also talk to us; we would love to help you any way we can!

## Memory Verse

2 Corinthians 5:17 - "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"