



PROCLAIM IT

by David Lemming

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Ready Already?

If you are ready to be baptized, you can jump ahead to pg. 10 to learn the process of baptism at Lewis Memorial.

It was a typical Sunday morning at a small church on the edge of town. The final worship song came to a close, and the pastor stepped up to preach. As he looked out across the congregation, he noticed a man sitting alone in the very back row. His shoulders were slumped, his head hung low, and it was clear he carried a very heavy burden. That man's name was James.

James had been invited by a coworker and almost didn't come. He told the pastor later that he sat in his car for ten minutes before deciding to walk through the doors. His life was in shambles. Addiction, failed relationships, and years of regret had left him feeling hollow and without hope. He admitted, *"I only came to church because I had nothing left."*

That morning, the pastor preached a message about the grace of God. He reminded the people that no mistake is too big, no past is too damaged, and no soul is too lost for the love of Jesus. He told the story of the thief on the cross, who found forgiveness in his final moments. When the invitation to receive Christ was given, James slowly stood. He walked forward with tears streaming down his face and quietly said, *"I need Jesus to forgive me. I have wasted my life, but I do not want to waste the rest of it."*

That day, James placed his faith in Christ as his Savior.

The following Sunday, James stood in the baptismal pool with a mixture of wonder and joy. Before the pastor baptized him, James said to the congregation, *"Today I leave my past behind. I am burying the old me. And when I rise from this water, I am walking with Jesus."* As he came up from the water, the room erupted in applause. Not because baptism saved him, but because it boldly declared that Jesus already had.

Baptism was the moment James stood before the world and proclaimed, *"I belong to Christ."* Baptism is not just a symbol, nor should it simply be a tradition—it is a purposeful and sacred act of obedience, the first step every believer should take.

*“Why should **you** be baptized?”*

I believe the Bible gives us four compelling reasons for baptism that answer this question with resounding clarity:



1. To Follow Christ's Example



MATTHEW 3:13-17

The first reason is perhaps the most fundamental: baptism says we have chosen to follow Christ's example.

In Matthew 3:13-17, we read about the pivotal moment when Jesus Himself comes to John the Baptist to be baptized. John is initially hesitant, recognizing Jesus' holiness, and says, *“I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”* But Jesus responds, *“Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”*

Think about that for a moment. Jesus, the sinless Son of God, did not need to repent, yet chose to be baptized. Why? *“To fulfill all righteousness.”* He was identifying with humanity, stepping into our shoes, and modeling for us the path of obedience.

Imagine children watching their parents. If a parent consistently demonstrates kindness, integrity, diligence, and other good traits, their children begin to emulate those traits. They see, they learn, and they follow.

In the same way, Jesus, our perfect example, stepped into the waters of baptism not because He needed cleansing, but because He was demonstrating the pathway of identification and obedience for every believer who would come after Him. He wasn't just telling us what to do; He was showing us.

When we follow Jesus in baptism, we are saying, *“Jesus, I want to be like You. I want to walk in Your footsteps. If You, my Lord and Savior, deemed this important, then I, Your humble follower, desire to do the same.”* It's an act of loving imitation.

In a quiet region of Kenya, a young man came to faith through the witness of a local missionary. He had grown up in a culture rich with spiritual traditions, yet the story of Jesus had never truly reached his heart. One day, while learning about the life of Christ, this young man heard something that caught him completely off guard. The pastor explained that Jesus, though perfect and sinless, had chosen to be baptized.

This puzzled the young man, and he asked, *“Why would Jesus do that if He had no sin?”* The pastor explained that Jesus stepped into those waters not because He needed cleansing, but to identify with the very people He came to save. His baptism was a public declaration that He was stepping into our world and standing in our place.

The young man nodded slowly and said, *“Then I want to be baptized too. I want to follow Jesus, and I want everyone to know I belong to Him.”*

On the day of his baptism, he walked down into the river with quiet courage. As the pastor prepared to lower him into the water, this Kenyan man whispered, *“I am with Jesus.”*

At that moment, he wasn't just following a ritual. He was stepping into the very example Jesus gave us: a vivid act of identification, obedience, and belonging. His baptism became a clear message to his community.



2. To Submit to Christ's Command

 **MATTHEW 28:19-20**

Secondly, baptism says we have chosen to submit to Christ's command.

Matthew 28:19-20 is called the Great Commission, and is the marching orders given by our risen Lord to His disciples, and by extension, to us. Jesus says, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* Amen.

Baptism is not an optional suggestion. It is not merely a polite request. It is a divine command from the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Making disciples involves two key actions: baptizing them and teaching them. Baptism is an integral part of becoming a follower of Jesus.

Consider a soldier receiving orders from a commanding officer. The soldier does not debate the order, question its validity, or try to find a loophole. A good soldier obeys the command, understanding that it comes from a position of authority and for a greater purpose. In the same way, as spiritual soldiers in Christ's army, we are called to obey His commands, and the command to be baptized is clear and unequivocal. It is an act of humble submission to His authority in our lives.

Every baptism recorded in the book of Acts took place after a

person was saved and happened as soon as possible, as a clear step of obedience to Christ. There was no delay, no hesitation, and no confusion about its purpose. Baptism was never presented as optional or as something to consider later.

As we see in the following scriptures, baptism is not just a tradition; it is a testimony of obedience and surrender to Jesus Christ.

- The baptism of the 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41-47)
- The baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:36-38)
- The baptism of Paul (Acts 9:18)
- The baptism of Cornelius (Acts 10:47-48)
- The baptism of Lydia (Acts 16:15)
- The baptism of the Philippian Jailor (Acts 16:33)
- The baptism of the Twelve at Ephesus (Acts 19:5)

When we are baptized, we are declaring, *"Lord, you are my Master. Your word is my Guide. I choose to obey You, not out of compulsion, but out of a loving heart that desires to honor Your every instruction."*



3. To Identify with Christ's Church

 **ACTS 2:41-47**

The third reason for baptism is to identify with Christ's church.

Acts 2:41 is about the immediate aftermath of Peter's powerful sermon on the Day of Pentecost. *"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."*

Notice the progression here:

...they heard the Word (Peter preaching on Pentecost)

...they believed (“received his word”)
...they were “baptized”
...then they were “added” to the church

Baptism was the public gateway into the community of believers. It was the visible sign of joining the family of God.

Think about a sports team. When a new player joins, they put on the team’s jersey. This jersey is not just a piece of clothing; it is a symbol. It identifies them as part of that team, sharing in its victories and its struggles. They are no longer just an individual; they are now part of something larger.

In a similar way, baptism is our spiritual jersey. It publicly identifies us with the body of Christ, the church. We are no longer isolated believers; we are now visibly part of the church family. We are saying, *“I belong here. I am part of this body, united with Christ and with my brothers and sisters in faith.”*

It is a beautiful picture of unity and belonging. When we are baptized, we proclaim our solidarity with believers across time, within the local church, and around the world, all united under the banner of Christ and living for His glory.



4. To Testify of Christ’s Salvation

 **ROMANS 6:4**

Perhaps most profoundly, we are baptized to testify of Christ’s salvation.

In Romans 6:4, Paul writes, *“Therefore we were buried with Him*

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

This verse reveals the powerful symbolism of baptism. It is a living parable.

When we go down into the water, it symbolizes our death to our old self, our burial with Christ. The sinful life we once lived is now put to death, and when we are raised up out of the water, it symbolizes our resurrection with Christ into a new life, a life empowered by the Holy Spirit, a life to be lived for God.

One man recounts his conversion to Christ and his baptism.

“I grew up in a Christian home where faith was part of our everyday life. We prayed before meals, went to church regularly, and shared Bible stories together. I knew how to say all the right things and could quote verses, but I did not truly grasp the deeper reason behind it all. I could not understand why Jesus had to die or how His sacrifice connected to me. It felt like something I was around all of the time, but had not personally entered into.”

“Then came the youth camp. I expected games, songs, and laughter, but one night changed everything. The speaker talked about sin as something that was not just a word in the Bible. It was a real barrier between us and God. He explained how Jesus did not come just to show us how to live—He came to take our place, to bridge that gap through His death and resurrection. For the first time, it felt personal. It was more than just a story in Scripture, it was a message with my name written on it.”

“I sat quietly after the message, letting those words sink deep. I felt a weight and an awareness of my need for Jesus. And in that moment, I responded. I gave my life to Him. It was not loud or dramatic, but something shifted within me. I knew that I had placed my faith in Christ and that He had received me as His own.”

“A few weeks later, I chose to be baptized. The idea of stepping up in front of others made me nervous. Yet, beneath those nerves, I felt a rising sense of excitement. I was ready to make a statement, ready to declare that I belonged to Jesus. As I came up from the water, I was overwhelmed with joy. It was not just a fleeting emotion. It felt like something deep and lasting, like I had stepped into the identity God had always intended for me. I was His, and that truth settled in my heart.”

“It was not just a ritual. It was a defining moment. And more than anything else, it felt like coming home.”

Baptism is a powerful public testimony. It is not about earning salvation! Salvation is a free gift received by grace through faith. It is a way to proclaim your salvation. It is saying to the world, *“I have died with Christ, and I have been raised with Christ! My sins are forgiven, and I am a new creation!”* It is a visible sermon where you PROCLAIM IT, the miracle that God has wrought in your life.

Conclusion:

“For more than sixty years I sat in church. I heard the truth, believed in Christ, and rested in the assurance that comes from grace. My salvation was never in doubt. I knew Jesus had secured it the moment I placed my faith in Him. But I had never been baptized as a believer. My baptism as an infant was sincere, yet it was not my decision. And Scripture teaches that baptism follows personal belief.”

“One Sunday, the message on obedience struck a tender chord. The pastor explained that obedience is not a way to earn favor with God. It is a response to the grace we already possess. As I listened, the Lord quietly spoke to my heart. It is not too late. The words were not heavy or condemning. They were kind and full of invitation.”

“At 77, I stepped into the waters of baptism. Not to get saved. But to follow Jesus and declare what He had already done. I hesitated at first, wondering what others might think. Yet, when I rose from the

water, I felt a peace that settled deep into my soul. A peace not of accomplishment, but of connection.”

“Obedience did not bring salvation. It brought fellowship. Salvation is the gift. Obedience is the glad and grateful response.”

“So if the Lord is speaking to your heart today, I simply want to say what He whispered to me. It is not too late. Grace has secured your place. Obedience is waiting to welcome you into a deeper walk.”



Ready to proclaim it?

Perhaps you have accepted Christ as your personal Savior and are now considering believer's baptism. You may have questions about the meaning and process of baptism here at LMBC. We hope to answer those questions below:

What are the requirements for baptism?

Do you believe in Christ alone to be your Savior? When Philip preached the gospel to the Samaritans, he only baptized those who believed. Luke said, “But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized” (Acts 8:12). Baptism is reserved for those who believe the gospel (Acts 8:36-37; Acts 16:30-33; Acts 18:8). Therefore, the only biblical requirement for baptism is to believe in Jesus as your Savior. If you would like to talk to a pastor about baptism, simply call the church at 304-736-7676. We would love to walk you through the process.

Does LMBC baptize by immersion or sprinkling?

The Greek word for baptism means, “to immerse or to submerge.” For instance, John baptized Jesus by immersion. Matthew 3:16 says, “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water ...” Acts 8:36-38 explains that the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized by immersion; both Philip and the man “went down into the water.” Certainly, this is a reference to immersion. In Romans 6:3-5, Paul explained, “we were buried with Him through baptism into death,” and we are raised out of the water to “walk in newness of life.” The expression, “buried,” conveys the idea of being buried in a cemetery. When you bury someone, you don’t sprinkle dirt on them, instead, you put them underground. Furthermore, while some denominations practice infant baptism or sprinkling, such methods are never mentioned in the Bible.

When can I get baptized?

You can be baptized any time our church is gathered. However, it is best to schedule your baptism with the church office so that we are fully prepared. We encourage you to invite your family and friends to celebrate this special occasion.

What should I wear?

We provide a dark “Raised to Life” t-shirt you can wear for the baptism but we ask that you come prepared wearing a dark t-shirt and shorts. Make sure to bring an extra set of clothes to change into afterwards.

Where do I go on the day of my baptism?

Prior to the service, simply come up the stairs to the left of the platform and enter the office door. Someone will meet you and guide you through the entire process. If you are the parent and your child is being baptized, you are welcomed to stay with your child

the entire time. By doing so, you will be able to take photos/videos of your child’s baptism.

If you would like a tour of where it all takes place call or stop by our office Monday - Friday and a staff member will be happy to show you the baptistry area and answer any questions you or your child may have.

What happens during the baptism?

The pastor will help you into the water. If you’re an adult, you will be seated on a bench. The pastor performing the baptism will introduce you and welcome those who have come to see you get baptized. The pastor will instruct you on how to place your arms and, with a clean handkerchief over your face, he will gently guide you back into the water until you are immersed, and raise you back up immediately. After you have been baptized, someone will guide you back to the dressing room where you can dry off with one of the provided towels, change, and rejoin your family and friends in the auditorium.

What next?

Following the baptism, you will receive a membership booklet in the mail along with a baptism certificate to commemorate the special event. The booklet will include information about what membership is all about at LMBC.

How do I schedule my baptism?

You can schedule your baptism through any of the following:

- Call our office at **304-736-7676**
- email Jeremy Shaffer at **j.shaffer@lmbc.org**
- fill out the form at **lmbc.org/baptism**



Lewis Memorial Baptist Church

1358 West Pea Ridge Road

Huntington, WV 25705

304-736-7676

lmbc.org