

Who We Are: Baptism

I. Opening Prayer

- Ask the Holy Spirit to help your group hear what He wants to teach and encourage.
- Ask God to show each person what it looks like to continue gathering, serving, and growing.

II. Weekly Sermon Discussion (20–40 minutes)

- Read the scriptures, and discuss what stood out to you.
- Engage with one another by reflecting and sharing what our Church is learning together.
- Example insights and questions are provided to help generate discussion if needed.
- Focus your conversation on the scripture and how it applies to you. Be careful of straying off topic, and if you do, encourage one another to ask, **“How does this scripture apply to this?”**

A Total Transformation

Read: Romans 6:4, Ephesians 2:8, Mark 16:16

In the New Testament, the word used for baptism is *baptizō*—which means to fully immerse, resulting in an everlasting change (like a cucumber becoming a pickle, rather than just taking a quick dip!). Baptism is not a prerequisite to earn salvation, because salvation comes through faith in Jesus alone by grace. Instead, baptism is how we publicly identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It signifies that who you were is not who you are—you have been transformed to walk in newness of life.

- What stood out to you about the distinction between a quick dip (*baptō*) and full immersion (*baptizō*)?
- Why is it important to understand that salvation comes by faith alone, and that baptism is an act of identification rather than a requirement to earn God's grace?
- How does remembering your own baptism (or seeing others get baptized) remind you that "who you were is not who you are"?
- What does walking in "newness of life" look like in your day-to-day routine, work, or relationships?

- How does understanding baptism as a reflection of Jesus' death and resurrection change the way you view its importance in a believer's walk?

Go Public With Your Faith

Read: Acts 8:36–38, Matthew 28:19

Baptism isn't just a moment; it's a message. Just like a wedding ring publicly announces to the world that you belong to someone, baptism is a public declaration that you belong to Jesus. In Acts 8, after hearing the Gospel, the Ethiopian eunuch immediately asked, *"What prevents me from being baptized?"* Jesus commanded us in the Great Commission to make disciples and baptize them. We are called not to hide our faith, but to boldly go public with it.

- In what ways is baptism similar to wearing a wedding ring?
- Why do you think Jesus chose baptism—a public act—as a foundational step of obedience for His followers?
- The Ethiopian eunuch asked, *"What prevents me from being baptized?"* What are some common things (fear, pride, comfort, past misunderstandings) that prevent people from taking this step?
- How can hiding our faith keep us from fully experiencing the life God has for us?
- What is one practical way you can go public with your faith in Jesus this week among friends, family, or coworkers?

III. Share & Prayer (20–40 minutes)

Time to 'take off the mask'! Jesus doesn't want us to be hypocrites who wear masks.

- A personal life update, your current spiritual condition. Use emotional language to be real!
- Challenges or victories that you are experiencing.
- What's really going on in your life? How are you doing? How can your group pray for you?
- Are there applications from the Discussion that you need prayer support for? (e.g., *taking the step to be baptized, overcoming fear of sharing your faith, or stepping into the "newness of life"*)

- How can your Group support you this week?

When sharing prayer requests, include your personal prayer needs. Example – rather than simply sharing *“Please pray for my friend’s cancer journey”*, include personal prayer: *“Please pray as I’m struggling with my friend’s cancer journey, and I need guidance on how to encourage her in this season.”*

Have someone, or everyone, close your time out in prayer for one another.