

A man in a blue t-shirt is seen from behind, looking down a narrow, sunlit street in a European town. The street is lined with tall, multi-story buildings with arched windows and balconies. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning. The man is standing on a stone ledge or wall, looking towards the end of the street.

SESSION FOUR

YOUR BEST LIFE

= *in God* =

BAPTISM IS WHERE WE IDENTIFY WITH JESUS DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION. IT'S THE NEXT STEP IN A LIFE LONG JOURNEY TO FOLLOW HIM AND TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD.

BAPTISM

BAPTISED WITH WATER

We need to be baptized in water. Baptism is where we identify with Jesus death, burial and resurrection. We publicly declare we want to follow Jesus with our lives and repent (turn away from our old way of life).

*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. 39The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."
Acts 2:38-39*

Being immersed represents our old self - the sinful nature or the body of sin we had before we accepted Jesus - dying and being buried. Coming up from the water represents being united with Christ and identifying with His resurrection from death. We come out with the new life of Jesus empowering us to the new life God has made available to us. In God's sight we have been joined with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection.

IDENTIFYING WITH GOD'S FAMILY

In Rick Warren's book *The Purpose Driven Life*, he has this to say about baptism:

Healthy families have family pride; members are not ashamed to be recognized as a part of the family. Sadly, I have met many believers who have never publicly identified themselves with their spiritual family as Jesus commanded-by being baptized.

Baptism is not an optional ritual, to be delayed or postponed. It signifies your inclusion in God's family. It publicly announces to the world, "I am not ashamed to be a part of God's family." Have you been baptized? Jesus commanded this beautiful act for all in his family. He told us to 'Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.'

For years I wondered why Jesus' Great Commission gives the same prominence to baptism as it does to the great tasks of evangelism and edification. Why is baptism so important? Then I realized it is because it symbolizes God's second purpose for your life: participating in the fellowship of God's eternal family.

Baptism is pregnant with meaning. Your baptism declares your faith, shares Christ's burial and resurrection, symbolizes your death to your old life, and announces your new life in Christ. It is also a celebration of your inclusion in God's family.

Your baptism is a physical picture of a spiritual truth. It represents what happened the moment God brought you into his family: “Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into Christ’s body by one Spirit, and we have all received the same Spirit.”

Baptism doesn’t make you a member of God’s family; only faith in Christ does that. Baptism shows you are part of God’s family.

Like a wedding ring, it is a visible reminder of an inward commitment made in your heart. It is an act of initiation, not something you put off until you are spiritually mature. The only biblical condition is that you believe.

In the New Testament, people were baptized as soon as they believed. At Pentecost, 3,000 were baptized the same day they accepted Christ. Elsewhere, an Ethiopian leader was baptized on the spot when he was converted, and Paul and Silas baptized a Philippian jailer and his family at midnight. There are no delayed baptisms in the New Testament. If you haven’t been baptized as an expression of your faith in Christ, do so as soon as possible, as Jesus commanded.

Would you like to be Baptised?

You’re invited to do so at our next baptism service.

BAPTISED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

To effectively do all that God wants us to do both in church and amongst the people we meet, we need to be baptised with the Holy Spirit.

When you received Jesus you also received the Holy Spirit to help you live life as God wants you to. We believe there is a separate event we call Baptism in the Holy Spirit which is available to give you power for serving God, to help you live a powerful Christian life and gives you boldness in telling other people about God and what He has done for you.

*“You will receive power when
the Holy Spirit comes on you...”
Acts 1:8*

To receive this all we have to do is ask God to fill us with His Holy Spirit and He promises that He will. The most common way for this to occur is by someone who has already been “baptised in the Spirit” laying their hands on you and agreeing with you in prayer that you will receive it also. Be patient, for this is a gift from God that he will give to you in His good time.

Most people find themselves speaking in an unknown language after the baptism and this is referred to as 'speaking in tongues'. The Bible describes it as our spirit talking with God's Spirit. The gift of tongues is a fantastic gift to unlock a powerful prayer life. Sometimes we just don't know what to pray and the Spirit helps us.

If you have not had anyone lay hands on you to receive this gift we would really love to do that right now.

Further reading in Acts 2

TELL OTHERS ABOUT GOD

As we mentioned in the last section, being baptised in the Spirit is about being filled with power to be bold about our faith.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8

It is important to speak about what has happened to you. Don't keep it to yourself but tell anyone who asks about the journey that you are on and although you don't know all the answers yet you are learning more about God. Just tell them from your own experience what you are finding out. Here are some scriptures to encourage you:-

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect”

1 Peter 3:15

“FOR GOD DID NOT GIVE US A
SPIRIT OF FEAR, BUT A SPIRIT
OF POWER, OF LOVE AND OF
SELF-DISCIPLINE”
1 TIMOTHY 1:7

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Over the past four sessions we have discussed the foundations of being a Christ follower. We hope that you have found some answers and began your journey with Jesus as you've been reading His word and praying.

So what now? In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus gave us the Great Commission. This is what he wants us to do for him on earth

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

NEXT STEPS

- CREATE A DAILY ROUTINE OF PRAYER AND READING YOUR BIBLE.

- ASK A LEADER WHERE YOU CAN SERVE AT CHURCH OR YOUTH.

- GET BAPTISED.

- TELL YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT JESUS.

Welcome to your best life!

“I HAVE COME THAT YOU
MIGHT HAVE LIFE, AND HAVE
IT TO THE FULL.”
JOHN 10:10