

BAPTISM



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what is
baptism?



Baptism is one of the believer's first steps of public obedience to Christ.

Baptism is not required for salvation through Christ, but it is an **outward symbol of what God has done and is doing in your life, and your heart, and it naturally follows salvation by grace through faith.**

There is nothing special about the actual water itself, but something so powerful about the act of baptism. Baptism is an outward symbol of an inward change.

BAPTISM IS A SYMBOL OF



Christ's death and resurrection



The new life in which a disciple walks



Cleansing and washing away of sin

1. Baptism does not save.

We are more conformed to the image of Christ as we obey Him in the call to be baptized, but it does not save us.

2. Baptism is not necessary for salvation.

Without in any way diminishing the duty and delight of baptism for a believer, we must also warn against thinking which suggests that salvation is dependent upon baptism.

The Gospel is one of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone.

what
baptism
is not



why
should
we be
baptized?



1. Jesus was baptized.

Matthew 3:13-17

2. Baptism is an act of obedience to Christ's command.

Matthew 28:18-20

3. Baptism is a death to and cleansing from sin.

Romans 6:4



We practice what is called “believer’s” or “confessor’s” baptism, which means we only baptize those who believe and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Reading through the book of Acts in the Bible, we find baptism explicitly related to repentance, receiving the Word, believing and receiving the Holy Spirit.

*At Rolling Hills, baptism is a requirement for partnership.



who
should be
baptized?

how
should
we be
baptized?



At Rolling Hills, we baptize by immersion, as modeled for us in Scripture.

1. The Greek word *baptizo* literally means to plunge, submerge, or immerse.

2. The representation of union in Christ's death and resurrection is best expressed through immersion.

3. The surrounding context of baptisms in the Scriptures suggests baptism by immersion:

Matthew 3:16

Mark 1:5, 10

John 3:23

Acts 8:38-39



1. One of the most common reasons for delaying is **fear**.

There are many reasons we let fear get in the way of being baptized: fear of being in front of people, fear of what people will think, fear of going under water, fear of what to say, etc. **We believe that faith is stronger than fear** and getting baptized is an excellent way to start the process of obedience and becoming more like Jesus.

2. There will **never** be a time where a person will be **“good enough”** for baptism.

Our right to enter the baptismal waters is grounded upon Christ’s righteousness, not our own. If we have been united to Him, we should confidently draw near in obedience to His command and example.



why
people
delay
baptism

baptism at Rolling Hills



1. Jesus is worth it.

Baptism is not merely a responsibility, but also a privilege. We have the opportunity to proclaim our trust in and love for Jesus through our obedience in baptism.

We consider it a joy to follow Christ in the call to be baptized. While there are certain costs associated with baptism, the reward of obedience is always worth it.

2. Faithful obedience

The desire to be baptized should be motivated by a desire to glorify God in faithful obedience. Any other motivation (to join a particular local church, to please a friend or family member, etc.) should not be the ultimate reason for seeking to be baptized.



The Bible gives no prescription for the requirements to perform baptism.

Contrary to some traditions, there seems to be no biblical reason to restrict the duty to men who have been ordained to vocational ministry. Therefore, we allow any believer, male or female, who has faithfully obeyed and been baptized themselves, to baptize another person.



who can
baptize
me?





infant vs.
believer
baptism



As discussed in the section titled “Who Should Be Baptized?” Rolling Hills Community Church only baptizes those who profess to be believers in the person and work of Jesus Christ. However, not all denominations and traditions follow this practice.

Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Lutheranism, Anglicanism, and a number of other mainline Protestant Denominations practice infant baptism. While all practice the same form, the underlying theologies of each are quite distinct.

Without going into detail regarding each, we will look briefly at the two most common in the particular context of Rolling Hills Community Church: Roman Catholicism and Protestant Infant Baptism.

Roman Catholicism Infant Baptism

Roman Catholicism teaches that all infants should be baptized and by doing so, the child is regenerated or born again. In the case of infants, who are unable to exercise saving faith, the faith of the church is effective to remove original sin and bestow saving grace.

Our Response

The faith of another person will not substitute for a person's own response to the Gospel, and the baptismal waters hold no magical powers of regeneration.

The Roman Catholic understanding of baptism is based upon a system of works leading to righteousness, which stands in utter contrast to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Paul wrote in Galatians, a gospel of works is ultimately "another gospel" to be corrected or condemned.

Protestant Infant Baptism

Protestant infant baptism prescribes baptism of adults who convert to Christianity but differs in practice from those who perform believer's baptism by additionally prescribing infant baptism for children of believing parents. This view is founded upon three main arguments:

1. Infants were circumcised in the Old Covenant as a sign of being a part of the covenant community.
2. Baptism is the sign of the New Covenant as circumcision was the sign of the Old.
3. There is essential continuity between the Old and New Covenants.

Our Response

1. Covenant community was primarily entered into physically (*by birth*), whereas the New Covenant is entered into spiritually (*by rebirth – being “born again”*). Whereas Protestant infant baptism prescribes baptism for those in physical infancy, believer’s baptism insists upon the baptism of those in spiritual infancy, having been born again through the Holy Spirit.
2. The Old Covenant community was a mixed community composed of both believers and unbelievers (*Romans 2:29, 9:6*). The New Covenant community is technically a congregation of believers (*Jeremiah 31:34*).
3. Though there is a great degree of continuity between the covenants, there is also substantial discontinuity. The Old Covenant consisted of shadows which pointed to the substance fulfilled in Christ (*Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 10:1*). We need to be careful about directly applying elements of the Old Covenant without recognizing the essential distinctions.
4. Passages such as Acts 2:39 do not affirm the Protestant infant baptism position. The “promise” affirmed is the promise of the Holy Spirit (*see Acts 1:4 and 2:33*), and it is specifically applied to “everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” The fact that the promise is for “your children” should no more lead us to thinking that all children are covenant community members as the fact that it is for “all who are far off” should lead us to conclude that all people everywhere are. The passage teaches that the Holy Spirit will be given to all whom Christ calls to Himself, not that we should baptize children.

While the timing and mode of baptism are not absolutely essential to the Christian faith, they are nonetheless important theological convictions that we hold firmly.

We love and respect our Protestant brothers and sisters who disagree with believer's baptism, but we believe and subsequently teach it as the biblical form of baptism.

summary



baptism logistics





Following the completion of a baptism class, you will receive an email from a ministry leader which will provide instructions for scheduling your baptism.



Once your baptism is scheduled, you will receive information about when to arrive, what to wear, and what to bring.



Spread the word about your baptism!
Baptism is a cause for celebration;
make it a party!

Invite your Community Group, friends
and family! Invite both Christian and
unbelieving friends, and family to share
in the day!

