

BAPTISM: THREE INSIGHTS

Acts 2:37-41.

Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. July 19, 2026.

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IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN

Our annual summer Baptism Celebration is on August 2.

- So, it's time for my annual Baptism sermon.
- This teaching will be spiritually uplifting for everyone at any stage of the faith journey.

THE BACKGROUND TO ACTS 2:37-41

Fifty days after the Last Supper, the risen, ascended, and exalted Lord Jesus poured out his Spirit on the 120 disciples in Jerusalem.

- It was the beginning of the new age of the Spirit.

Acts 2:16-17 (CSB) ... this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 17 "And it will be in the last days, says God, that I will pour out my Spirit on all people..."

As the Spirit-filled disciples praised God, a crowd gathered...

- So Peter preached the first Christian sermon, proclaiming God's plan of salvation and Jesus Christ as the Savior. He concluded with:

Acts 2:36 (CSB) "Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

ACTS 2:37-41

Acts 2:37-41 (CSB) When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what should we do? "

38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

40 With many other words, he testified and strongly urged them, saying, “Be saved from this corrupt generation! ” 41 So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.

That account of an amazing spiritual awakening contains three insights we can apply today.

1. BAPTISM IS A COMMAND - verse 38

Peter responded to their question by commanding them to be baptized.

- Baptism was a common practice in Judaism.
- It was a sign of repentance and cleansing, new Gentile converts to Judaism were baptized, and John the Baptist immersed people in preparation for the coming of the Lord (Matthew 3:1-6).

In the context, baptism was the visible sign that they had repented of their sins and turned to trust in Jesus.

- And that remains the case today.
- Jesus commanded baptism (Matthew 28:18-20), and Peter followed up.
- Baptism is a command, not an optional extra.

2. BAPTISM IS A CONSEQUENCE - verse 38

Many in the crowd were deeply convicted - “pierced to the heart.”

- They felt the weight of their sin and sought relief: “What should we do?”

- Peter urged them to, “Repent and be baptized each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins” (verse 38).
- This shows that baptism is the consequence of four prior events, not the cause: conviction of sin, repentance, faith in Jesus, and forgiveness of sins.
- “In the name of Jesus Christ” is a declaration of faith, identifying with him.
- “FOR the forgiveness of sins” is best understood as BECAUSE OF ...

3. BAPTISM IS COMFORTING - verse 38

Baptism is the visible sign that joins our decision to God’s gifts.

- When we repent and trust in Jesus, God forgives us and gives us his Spirit. We receive salvation:

“Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Acts 2:21, CSB). “... and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:40, CSB).

Baptism is the tangible, visible sign of all that.

- So, on our worst day, we can look back on our baptism and remember that we did call on the name of the Lord and he did save us and fill us.
- That gives us comfort and confidence.

THIS IS URGENT FOR EVERYONE - verses 39-40

Peter urged the crowd to respond to his preaching, and we should follow their example:

Acts 2:40 (CSB) With many other words, he testified and strongly urged them, saying, “Be saved from this corrupt generation! ”

*Acts 2:41 (CSB) So those who **accepted** his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.*

PERSPECTIVES ON BAPTISM

Baptism begins with a command. Jesus told His disciples: "*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*" (Matthew 28:19). Baptism is not optional. Throughout Acts, the pattern is consistent: people hear the gospel, believe, and are baptized — repentance and faith come first, and baptism follows as the public response (Acts 2:38–41).

Baptism does not save us. Salvation is a gift of God's grace alone received through faith alone in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). Baptism is God's confirmation of inward realities: our cleansing from sin, union with Christ, and new life, all by God's saving grace already received through faith. It is also a public sign of our repentance, faith, and obedience to Jesus Christ, which is why we practice believer's baptism.

Baptism in water is deeply significant. Paul writes that we are "*buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead...we too might walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:4). Going under the water pictures the death of the old self; coming up pictures resurrection. It is the gospel story enacted on the body of the believer.

Baptism is also a public declaration — our "I do" before God and His people. It is in the name of Jesus, the moment we say to the watching world: I belong to Jesus.

Questions about baptism? Please reach out to Pastor Peter — he'd love to walk through this with you.

Written with AI assistance.