

Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

Sermon Single | Week 41 | Mark 1:9–11

Introduction	Notes
Little six-year-old Nick loved church, loved the Bible, and loved Jesus. One day, his mother was walking by his bedroom and saw her son reading the Bible to the cat. She thought to herself, "Isn't that sweet?" Well, about an hour later, she heard this terrible racket outside. She ran out the door and saw Nick trying to dunk the cat in a bucket of water. She asked, "Nick, what are you doing?!" He said, "I'm baptizing Muffin!" She said, "But cats don't like to be put under water." He replied matter-of-factly, "Well then, he shouldn't have joined my church."  While Nick's method was a little off, his instinct was biblical. Jesus' baptism is one of the few events that all four Gospel writers record. "At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan" (Mark 1:9, NIV). Then Jesus commands you to do the same. Now, baptism isn't necessary for salvation, but it is a big deal—important to God, important to Jesus, and important for you. I'd like to answer the three most common questions I get about baptism: What does "baptism" actually mean? Does it matter how you're baptized? And why should you be baptized? When you understand the answers to these questions, you'll discover how to publicly declare your faith, visually preach the Gospel, and take your first step of loving God through your obedience.	
Key Points	
Learn the Biblical Method of Baptism	
What does it actually mean to be "baptized" the way Jesus was? The Greek word "baptizo" means only one thing: to immerse or submerge completely. Ancient writers used this word to describe ships sinking in the sea or cloth being dyed. Scripture tells us John was "baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water" (John 3:23, NIV). You don't need plenty of water to sprinkle someone, but you do for immersion. Mark confirms this when he writes that Jesus came	



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"up out of the water" (Mark 1:10, NIV). In the New Testament, every single person baptized was baptized by immersion, without exception.	Notes	
Follow Jesus' exact example by being baptized through complete immersion, just as He was.		
2. See the Spiritual Meaning of Baptism		
Why does the method of baptism matter so much to God? You cannot separate the meaning from the method because the method is the message. Paul explains exactly what baptism represents: "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4, NIV). Baptism demonstrates three important events in Jesus' life that are mirrored in the life of the believer: death, burial, and resurrection. This is the Gospel in visible form. When you're baptized by immersion, you're preaching the Gospel without saying a word.  Being baptized in water is your first opportunity to proclaim the Gospel through your actions.		
3. Know the Personal Motive of Baptism		
Why should you be baptized if it's not required for salvation? Biblical baptism is always "believer's baptism"—faith comes first, then baptism follows. In the New Testament, belief and baptism always go together in that order, like love and marriage. Now, you should be baptized for three reasons: to publicly express your faith in Jesus, because Jesus commanded it, and because you love Him enough to obey. Jesus was baptized to identify with us; we should be baptized to identify with Him. If Jesus loved you enough to die on a cross for you, you should love Him enough to go under water for Him.		



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Demonstrate your love for Jesus through obedience by being baptized as soon as possible after you believe.	Notes
Key Takeaway	
Baptism isn't necessary for salvation, but it is absolutely necessary for obedience. When you follow Jesus' example through biblical baptism, you publicly declare your faith, visibly preach the Gospel, and take your first step of loving obedience to the	
One who gave everything for you.	



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#### **Reflection Questions**

1.	If you've been baptized, was it after you genuinely believed in Jesus? If not, what's stopping you from taking this step of obedience now?
2.	Belief and baptism always go together, like "love and marriage." What does this pattern reveal about the importance of following through on your faith decisions with public action?
3.	Jesus was baptized to identify with us. In what specific ways can you identify more closely with Jesus in your daily life?