



WATER
BAPTISM
AT ALLISON PARK CHURCH

WHY WATER BAPTISM?

Middle school can be one of the most challenging and yet formative times in our life experience. It also is the moment when, historically speaking, a young man or woman comes of age. You become a man or woman. You take your stand. You chart your course in life. You own who you are and where you are going.



I got water baptized during that season of my life. It was so important for me, because I had been raised in a pastor's home. For me, I was making the decision to follow Jesus my own choice and not just a family thing that I was expected to do.

Pastor Jeff Luke

Jesus got baptized in water later in life. He was 30 years old. For him, it was the transition from living in anonymity to leading and pursuing the Father's purpose for his life. His cousin, John the baptist, was the one who dunked him under the water. And when Jesus came up out of the water there were several powerful things that occurred.



AFFIRMATION

The Father spoke over him, "This is my son. I am so pleased with him."

EMPOWERMENT

The Holy Spirit came over him and settled on him like the landing of a dove.

LAUNCH

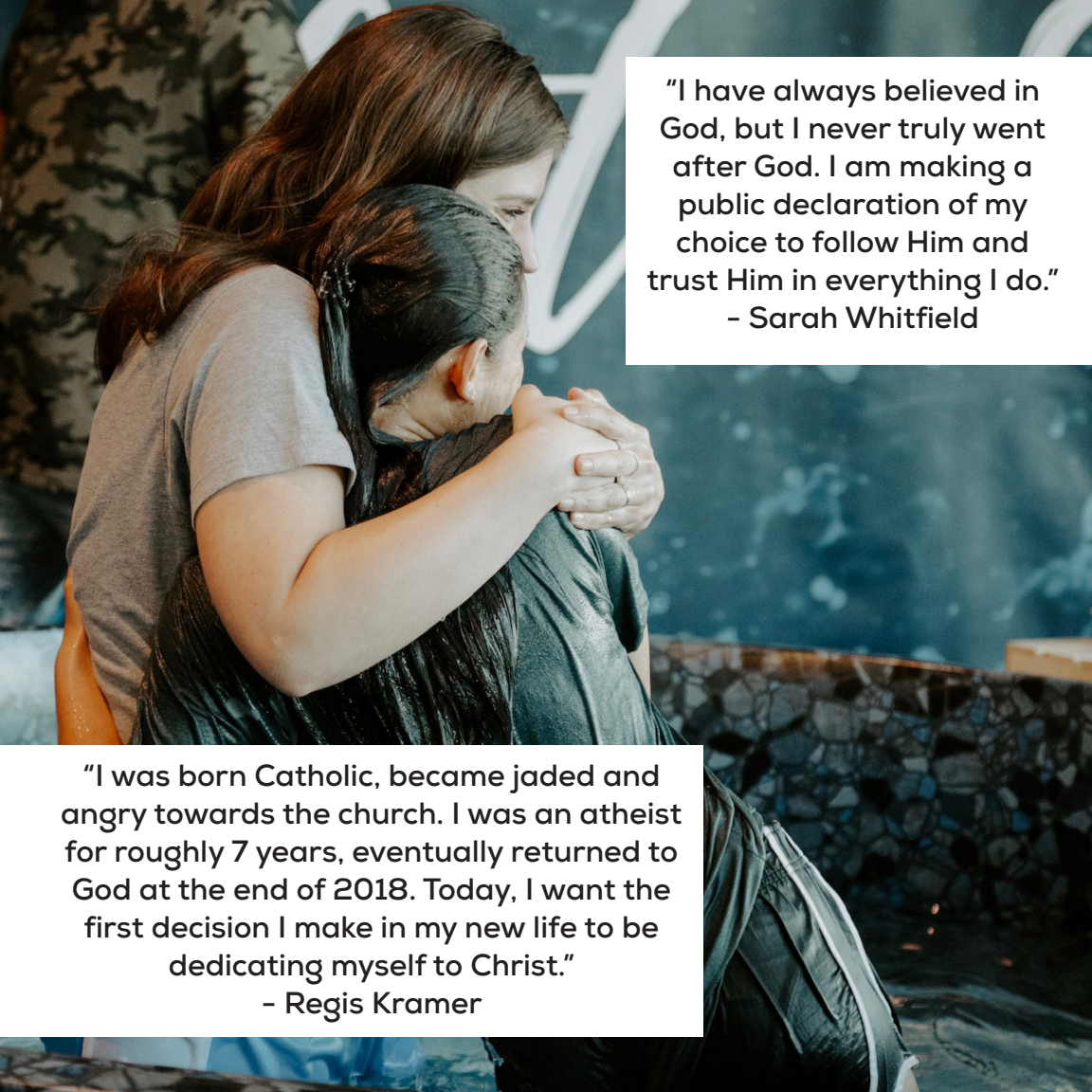
Jesus was "compelled by the Spirit" to go out and get started with his future.

WHAT IS IT?

Water baptism is an outward symbol of an inward decision. Baptism cannot save anyone. Paul taught the Ephesian church this concept, 'We are saved by grace through FAITH not by WORKS so that no one can take credit for it.' (Ephesians 2:8)

When a person puts faith in Jesus, grace is released to us that brings salvation to our soul. What Jesus did when he died on the cross and rose from the dead is more than enough to bring complete forgiveness for your sin, and impart into your soul eternal, indestructible life.

Baptism itself reveals the symbolism. The word means 'to dip under' – just like the word capsized means to 'tip over'. It's a picture of death, burial, and resurrection. Jesus died, was buried and rose from the dead. We too are buried with Christ. (Romans 6:4) Our old life is forgiven and never to be remembered again. We die to our old selfish ways. Through Jesus we are raised to live a brand new life.



"I have always believed in God, but I never truly went after God. I am making a public declaration of my choice to follow Him and trust Him in everything I do."

- Sarah Whitfield

"I was born Catholic, became jaded and angry towards the church. I was an atheist for roughly 7 years, eventually returned to God at the end of 2018. Today, I want the first decision I make in my new life to be dedicating myself to Christ."

- Regis Kramer

WHAT IF I HAVE ALREADY BEEN BAPTIZED AS A BABY?

No matter what religious tradition in which you grew up, there was most likely a ceremony performed for you as an infant. Jesus was circumcised at the Temple on the eighth day of his life. Many are sprinkled with water in a process of infant baptism.



At Allison Park Church, we practice something called child dedication. In all of these rituals, several things happen:

- Parents dedicate their child to God.
- We thank God for giving us this child as a gift.
- We ask for God's special blessing on his or her life.
- We do it in the presence of other believers and ask for them to agree with us in prayer.

It's a beautiful thing. There is one thing missing in each ceremony moment for an infant. That is your personal decision. You are too young at that point, to decide anything, or even know what is going on all around you.

This is why Jesus was baptized when he was an adult. In fact, every baptism we see recorded in New Testament history was for those who were old enough to choose for themselves. Your choice to get baptized as an adult does not invalidate your parents' decision to dedicate or baptize you as an infant. It actually completes it. In a major way, you are saying, I agree with my parents' choice. I affirm it. I choose to follow Jesus.

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

IT'S PUBLIC

Following Jesus is not something that is private. It is deeply personal, but was never intended to be something that you hide. Jesus taught us that no one lights a candle and then hides it. (Matthew 5) So Jesus lit your life on fire and he wants your life to reveal the amazing grace that has impacted your soul.

IT'S A PATTERN

Jesus did it because it was the right thing to do. He did it as an example for you to follow. And he actually commanded it.

THEN JESUS LEFT GALILEE TO COME TO THE JORDAN TO BE BAPTIZED BY JOHN. BUT WHEN HE WADED INTO THE WATER, JOHN RESISTED HIM, SAYING, "WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? I'M THE ONE WHO NEEDS TO BE BAPTIZED BY YOU, AND YET YOU COME TO BE BAPTIZED BY ME?" JESUS REPLIED, "IT IS ONLY RIGHT TO DO ALL THAT GOD REQUIRES."

MATTHEW 3:13-15 (TPT)

IT'S PERSONAL


There is something about taking initiative that helps us grow. If you want your faith to take root in your life, you need to own it.

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord" and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

ROMANS 10:9-10 (NIV)

Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you? If any of you is embarrassed with me and the way I am leading you, know that the Son of Man will be far more embarrassed with you when He arrives in all His splendor in company with the Father and the holy angels.

LUKE 9:25-26 (THE MESSAGE)

A person wearing a white shirt is being baptized in a pool of water. The water is dark blue and turbulent, creating a sense of movement and immersion. The person's head is partially submerged, and their arms are visible, one holding the person's hand. The background is a soft, out-of-focus view of the water and the person's shirt.

"I have found comfort in Allison Park Church and being baptized here will help me on my journey to being the best version of me."

- Heather Painter

"In my heart, I've felt for the past few years that baptism was something I needed to do, but I was afraid. After several recent medical issues, I feel now is the time, and I'm no longer afraid."

- Nicole Nagle

"The Lord is doing a new thing in my life and delivering me from my past. I feel like I've truly been saved, like I'm brand new again."

- Becky Slais

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Anyone who has made a decision to give their life to Christ is eligible to be water baptized. Baptism does not save you. Jesus does that. You experience it, at the moment that you put your trust in Christ. Baptism is a public declaration and symbolic expression of what has already happened within your own life.

There is no age limit in the New Testament for baptism. But we recommend using the Jewish pattern of 'coming of age' at twelve or thirteen. It was at that time that a young man or woman was considered an adult. This way we know that they are making the decision based on their own desire to follow Jesus and not just to please their parents or pastors.

HOW DOES THE PROCESS WORK?

After the worship experience, we will have you go to the changing area to put on some dark clothes (shorts and a t-shirt). We will provide a t-shirt for you to wear as a gift as well as a card to write your personal thoughts about the moment.

When it is your turn, you'll get in the water and a pastor will pray over you and declare some of the things you wrote on your card. They'll say your name, followed by:

***WE BAPTIZE YOU IN THE NAME OF
THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.***

Use one hand to hold your nose and the other to hold your wrist. The pastor will lower you backwards into the water until you are fully immersed and then bring you up out of the water to the sound of cheers celebrating this amazing step you have taken in faith.

DON'T FORGET TO INVITE YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO WITNESS YOUR BIG MOMENT!



WHEN IS IT HAPPENING AGAIN?

Water Baptism is typically scheduled for the final weekend of every month at each location.



WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH SACRAMENTS & SYMBOLS?

Depending on your religious upbringing, you may have been taught a 'sacramental' view of your faith. What is that?

SACRAMENTS

Sacraments are ceremonies through which we receive God's grace. They can include rituals like infant baptism, communion, confirmation, etc.

The concept is that the church is the dispenser of God's grace. The rituals are the mechanisms through which we receive God's grace. So every time we participate in a religious ritual in the proper church, we accumulate more and more of God's saving grace.

The New Testament teaches something different from that. It says in Ephesians 2:8-9, 'We are saved by grace THROUGH FAITH and that not of (religious) works so that no one can boast (take credit for their own salvation by their own effort).

SAVED BY FAITH

Only what Jesus did on the cross can save you. He is the dispenser of grace from God. We receive that grace through faith, at the moment that we believe.

SYMBOLS

Every ritual or religious ceremony is a celebration of grace that is already received by faith in Christ. baptism, communion, child dedication are all moments of passionate celebration and thanksgiving for what Jesus has already done for us on the cross.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.

EPHESIANS 2:8-9 (NIV)



