BAPTISM

BAPTISM IS A CELEBRATION! IT IS ALSO A POWERFUL THING TO DO.
Here's some information about baptism – what it represents and why we do it.

Baptism has been around for a long time. The Jewish people from early times would have a type of baptism (or ceremonial purification) of Priests, clothing, utensils, and articles of furniture.

Leviticus 8:6 *And Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water.*

Mark 7:3-4 *3 (For the Pharisees, like all other Jews, will not eat without first performing a ritual of pouring water over their cupped hands to keep the tradition of the elders. 4 Similarly, when returning from the marketplace, they ceremonially wash themselves before eating. They also observed many other traditions, such as ceremonially washing cups, pitchers, and kettles.)*

What God asked of Moses to instigate with the cleansing by water of items and the Priests and the people is similar to baptism. It was a symbolic cleansing of the person (or item) ready for the use of and service to God.

Jesus' cousin John was known as John the Baptist. He was called by God to prepare the way for Jesus. John went about preaching the arrival of the Saviour. He did this through a message of the confession of sin and repentance from sin. **TO SIGNIFY AN AGREEMENT, AND AS A RESPONSE TO HIS MESSAGE, PEOPLE WOULD BE BAPTISED**. This would be full immersion (submersion) of the person in the river Jordan to symbolise the washing away of the confessed sin.

Mark 1:1-5 *1 This is the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 It began just as God had said in the book written by Isaiah the prophet, "I am sending my messenger to get the way ready for you. 3 In the desert someone is shouting, 'Get the road ready for the Lord! Make a straight path for him.'" 4 So John the Baptist showed up in the desert and told everyone, "Turn back to God and be baptised! Then your sins will be forgiven." 5 From all Judea and Jerusalem crowds of people went to John. They told how sorry they were for their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River.*

When Jesus came to earth, he was born a Jew and lived as a Jew. He took the message of Gods' new agreement to the Jewish people first. Then this message was offered to all other people (including you and I)!

Some of what we have today in our Christian life is based in the traditions and ceremonies of the Jewish world. Most of what was done was representative or symbolic. **WASHING**

SOMEONE WITH WATER DID NOT REMOVE SIN, BUT IT REPRESENTED WHAT GOD WAS ABLE TO DO. It is God alone who has the power to clean us from sins, but the ceremony was a powerful way to symbolise that process.

BAPTISM IS A SYMBOLIC ACT.

TO THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY BAPTISM REPRESENTS THE DEATH, BURIAL AND THE RESURRECTION OF A PERSON WHO HAS ACCEPTED JESUS AS THEIR LORD AND SAVIOUR, AND IT REMINDS US OF WHAT JESUS DID FOR US.

- As we enter the water, we are agreeing that we enter death with Jesus.
- As we go under the water it represents our death and burial. We no longer exist as a selfish person.
- As we come up out of the water this is a representation of our raising again to a new life with God as our Lord, our Boss. (The best thing about this is that God is our creator, and He knows what is best for us and wants the best for us!)
- As we come out of the water, we symbolise our exit from the grave and our desire to walk into our new life alive with God.
- The Bible tells us we become one with Jesus. If we die here on earth, we will be raised again by God's power like Jesus was and will be with Him forever.

Colossians 2:12 *For when you were baptised, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ through your faith in the active power of God, who raised him from death.*

Romans 8:11 *But if the Spirit of the One who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the One who raised up Christ from the dead shall also make your mortal bodies alive by His Spirit who dwells in you.*

BAPTISM REMINDS US THAT WE ARE NOW DEAD TO OUR OLD WAY OF LIVING. Even if we have not taken the step of being baptised, if we are a Christian, pleasing ourselves and living separate from God is now a thing of the past. We have died to that sort of thing. We now belong to God and we are part of His family.

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the NEW has come.*

Romans 6:4 *By our baptism, then, we were buried with him and shared his death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might live a NEW LIFE.*

The amazing thing about this new life with God is that it really is that. A new life with God. We are no longer at the beck and call of our old life. Past, hurts, wounds, failings do not have to rule us any longer. The writer here says that we might live in the newness of life. There is the ability for us to walk in this new life because of what God has done, but the outworking, or the stepping into that is our decision.

Some tips on how we can action what God has done for us:

Romans 6:11-13 *11 In the same way you are to think of yourselves as dead, so far as sin is concerned, but living in fellowship with God through Christ Jesus. 12 Sin must no longer rule in your mortal bodies, so that you obey the desires of your natural self. 13 Nor must you surrender any part of yourselves to sin to be used for wicked purposes. Instead, give yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life, and surrender your whole being to him to be used for righteous purposes.*

BAPTISM IS A PUBLIC DECLARATION AND SHOWS OTHER PEOPLE THAT WE HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW GOD. It is a witness to others that we love God. It declares that we belong to Him. Our faith should be personal, but not private. Baptism is about going public with your faith!

BEING BAPTISED IS FOLLOWING JESUS' EXAMPLE. Jesus Himself was baptised by His cousin John. He did this to set the pattern for us to follow. Jesus did not need to repent, for He was sinless, but He did want to show us that baptism is an important and powerful event in our walk with God. If it is good enough for Jesus to do, then it is a good thing for us to do too!

Matthew 3:13 + 16 *Jesus then appeared, arriving at the Jordan River from Galilee. He wanted John to baptise Him. 16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water. Then heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and lighting on him.*

We, in turn are also encouraged to spread the good news of Jesus and baptise others!

Matthew 28:19 *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*

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If you'd like to be baptised, or if you would like more information, please contact us by emailing: info@c3coast.org.nz