

1 • Baptism is a Funeral

What is baptism? We hear so much about baptism in sermons, classes, and Bible reading, but what is it?

There are lots of ways to answer that question. The word *baptism* means "to **dip**, **immerse**, **submerge**, or

plunge." We have many examples in the Bible of people being baptized (**Mark 1:9-10**; **Acts 8:36-39**), but what is God doing when a person is baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of" their sins (**Acts 2:38**)? One very real and true way of thinking about it?

Baptism is a funeral. Listen closely to **Colossians 2:8-14**:

See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Colossians 3:1-3 continues to reason with us. If we've been raised with Christ, we should seek the things that are above, where Christ is. We should set our minds on things above, not on things that are on earth. **Why?**

For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (**3:3**)



The apostle Paul goes on to help us understand what sort of things need to be "crucified" (**Gal 2:20**) and left behind:

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices... (**Col 3:5-9**)

What is baptism? There are many ways to answer. For one, **baptism is a funeral.**



For Class & Family Discussion:

- Let's open our Bibles back to **Colossians 2** and think carefully together through what the Holy Spirit has communicated to us through the apostle Paul. Why do you think he provided the warning that he did in **2:8**?
- Why would Paul describe us as “dead” in our “trespasses” (**2:13**)? Are trespasses really that big of a deal?
- In everyday terms, how can we “put to death” what is “earthly” in us (**3:5**)? Is that a one-time sort of thing?
- According to **2:12**, what do we do with the things we have “put to death”? How should that word picture powerfully shape the way we think about baptism?
- What does “faith in the powerful working of God” (**2:12**) have to do with all of this?
- Let's open our Bibles back to **Romans 6** and read **6:1-14** together. How does this relate to our discussion? What can we learn?
- In your own words, what did Paul mean in **Galatians 2:20**? What is it going to look like (and sound like) if we think the same way and do the same thing?
- What does it really mean to “seek the things that are above, where Christ is” (**Col 3:1**)?
- According to **Colossians 3:3**, if I have “died with Christ,” where is my “life” now? What does that mean?
- Take a final look at **Colossians 3:11**. What does Paul mean by “here”?