

An underwater photograph showing sunlight rays filtering through the water from the surface, creating a bright, ethereal glow. The water is a deep teal color, and the sun is positioned in the upper center, with rays fanning out across the frame.

WASHED

SERMON SERIES
STUDY GUIDE

Baptism = Washed

In this four-week sermon series we are going to examine four aspects of Baptism:

1. Confession – facing our dirt. On April 12, Gonzo Santillan will call us to “Come to the ‘Waters’”; reminding us of the everlasting Hope that is available through Jesus.
2. Repentance – turning toward the water. On April 19, Pastor Mike Morgan will help us realize that “The Time Has Come” and that waiting to repent only expands the agony.
3. Being Welcomed in Baptism. On April 26, Pastor James Parks will tell us how we are “Claimed by Grace”; and how baptism is a welcoming into the community of faith.
4. Responding to the Living Water. On May 3, Pastor Helen Parks will introduce us to the Woman at the Well as she meets Jesus, receives Living Water, and runs to share the good news with others.

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, as we prayerfully consider these four aspects of Baptism, open our hearts and minds to the powerful blessings you prepare for us through our joyful and humble participation in our baptism and in the baptism of others into the community of faith.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

April 12, 2026

Session 1 | Come To The "Waters"



Before you begin this session, read the inside cover of your materials, and pray the prayer..

Background:

This will help to set the context of the session if this is read aloud.

Ahh... Spring is here or nearly here. (Remember this is Iowa.) The flowers are starting to come up. The birds are making nests, ready to have their little ones. New life is abundant everywhere.

So how do you get new life? If you want a new life in Christ, the first step is to realize that you are a sinner

Listen! All of you who are thirsty, come here for water to drink! You may have no money, but come here and buy food to eat! Come and buy wine and milk! You do not need to pay any money. It is free!

Isaiah 55:1

without any hope of eternal life. Confess your sins before God through prayer. Confession draws you nearer to God. Repent of your sins. Believe in Jesus as God's only Son who died for your sins. Believe in Jesus and His redemptive power on the cross and His resurrection.

So what's next? Baptism is an outward sign of an inward change. It represents a rebirth in Christ. Is it necessary for salvation? No. Today's Scripture from Isaiah talks about "*all who are thirsty...come to the waters.*"

You don't need to have money because drinking is free. Later in Isaiah, it says, "*Come to me*

and listen carefully. If you accept My teaching, you will have real life!"

A covenant between you and God just like David had.

The Scripture from 1 Peter lets us know that we may suffer because of what we believe, but because of how your life has been changed, people will ask you, "Why do you trust God?" Be prepared to answer them.

"The preacher had said there was nothing magic in the water. Yet as I descended into its depths and rose again, I knew something life-changing had happened. A cleansing inside out. No longer did there seem to be two uncertain contradictory Paul Harveys — just one immensely happy one. I felt a fulfilling surge of the Holy Spirit."

Paul Harvey

Scripture: Isaiah 55 and 1 Peter 3:13-22

Before engaging in the questions, read the Scripture passages aloud.

Sermon Reflection:

1. What stands out to you about today's sermon?

5. Isaiah 55:9 NIV reads, “*As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.*” What do you think God wants you to understand from this?

Questions for Application:

1. Reflect on a time when you experienced God's mercy and forgiveness. How did it transform your life? Please share with the class.
2. Baptism is not a cleansing of dirt from the body but a pledge of a clear conscience before God. How does this change how you view your spiritual commitment?
3. Read Isaiah 55:10-11. What does this passage mean to you? How would you explain this passage to someone seeking to know more about God's Word?
4. Why is it important to know that being baptized into the community of faith is not the same thing as having saving faith in Jesus? Why are both important?
5. Memorize and pray Psalm 139:23-24 (ASV) every day for a week and see what God reveals to you.

Dig Deeper: Consider starting one of these Bible reading plans to go deeper on this topic

Come Everyone That Is Thirsty-3-day devotional; <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/29937-come-everyone-that-is-thirsty>



Come Everyone

The Significance of Baptism; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xu6-7_sAiY4&t=328s



Significance of Baptism

Sacraments // Articles of Religion; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIr-vqH-EQ>



Sacraments

Questions for Discussion:

1. What are you reading in the Word this week?

2. How is your reading growing you in the Marks of Discipleship - prayers, presence, gifts, witness, service?

Growth Challenge:

This week, identify one sin, struggle, or secret you've been avoiding. Confess it honestly to God, don't minimize, justify, or disguise it.

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April 19, 2026
Session 2 | The Time Has Come



Before you begin this session, read the inside cover of your materials and pray the prayer.

Background:

This will help to set the context of the session if this is read aloud.

Mark 1:4 (NIV) states, “*And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*” Jesus was without sin, yet He insisted on being baptized by John before starting His ministry on Earth. For this reason, baptism is a common sacrament across mainline Christian denominations.

I said, “I will confess my transgressions
to the Lord.”
And you forgave the guilt of my sin.
Psalm 32:5b NIV

While there may be agreement on baptism as a sacrament blessed by God, the timing of baptism in the life of a believer has historically been a source of theological debate between denominations. Maybe, just maybe we’ve been focused on the wrong question. Maybe the question is not “When is the right time to baptize?”, but is instead, “When is the right time to repent?”

In Mark 1:15 (NIV) Jesus states, “*The time has come, ... The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!*” Jesus brought the “*The kingdom of God*” to Earth through His presence among us. When Jesus ascended back to Heaven, He promised His disciples that they would receive “*the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about.*” (Acts 1:4b) The presence of the Holy Spirit brings the kingdom of God to us, here and now. This means that the words of Mark 1:15 are as true today as they were when Jesus said them.

The purpose and power of confession and repentance are made clear in the words of both the Old and New Testaments:

- “*I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.’ And you forgave the guilt of my sin.*” (Psalm 32:5b NIV)
- “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*” (1 John 1:9 NIV)

If we confess our sins, He is
faithful and just and will forgive
us our sins and purify us from all
unrighteousness.
1 John 1:9 NIV

The urgency of the words of Jesus in Mark 1:15 is there for us to hear, just as it was for those who first heard Him speak them. There is nothing to gain by putting off confession and repentance.

The time to repent is now!

Scripture: Mark 1:1-5, 14-15 and Psalm 32:1-5

Before engaging in the questions, read the Scripture passages aloud.

Sermon Reflection:

1. What stands out to you about today’s sermon?

7

2. What did you learn about God? About people?
3. Any life-lessons to apply? How do you plan to apply them?
4. How can we pray for one another?

Questions from the Bible:

1. Read Psalm 32:1-5. What lesson did King David learn about the blessing of forgiveness?
2. Psalm 32:3 tells us that when we keep silent about our sin, it causes problems for us. How does hiding sin from God give the enemy a foothold in your life that leads to destructive behaviors?
3. In Psalm 32:5, what are the two stated actions that preceded forgiveness?
4. In Mark 1:15, what was Jesus telling us when He stated, "*The kingdom of God has come near.*"?
5. What was John the Baptist's main task?

Questions for Application:

1. A.C.T.S. is an acronym for Adoration / Confession / Thanksgiving / Supplication, a pattern for prayer. How do you incorporate confession in your prayer life?

2. How are confession and repentance tightly related? How are they uniquely different?

3. For believers, our sins have been forgiven because of Christ's atoning death on the cross. How then, is our relationship with God impacted by ongoing or unrepentant sin?

4. Pray Psalm 51:10-13 every day for a week and contemplate its meaning for your life.

5. Are you focused on living the "good life" or on fulfilling God's calling for your life?

Dig Deeper: *Consider starting one of these Bible reading plans to go deeper on this topic*

Repentance: An Invitation to Rest – 7 day reading plan: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/20366-repentance-an-invitation-to-rest>



Repentance

Psalms: Songs of Repentance – 5 day devotional: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/51901-psalms-songs-of-repentance>



Psalms

Questions for Discussion:

1. What are you reading in the Word this week?
2. How is your reading growing you in the Marks of Discipleship – prayers, presence, gifts, witness, service?

Growth Challenge:

Do you need to repent of things that you have done or left undone? If you do, pray Psalm 32 and confess your sins to God, knowing that He is gracious and forgiving.

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April 26, 2026

Session 3 | Claimed by Grace



***Before you begin** this session, read the inside cover of your materials and pray the prayer.*

Background:

This will help to set the context of the session if this is read aloud.

When it was time for Jesus to begin His ministry, He traveled the eighty miles “*from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.*” (Matthew 3:13) We know this pleased God, because as soon as Jesus was baptized, the Spirit of God descended on Him like a dove and a voice from heaven said, “*This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.*” (Matthew 3:17)

Before the creation of the world, God chose us.

It is God’s grace that brings us to baptism. “*For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ in accordance with His pleasure and will.*” (Ephesians 1:4-5) Before the creation of the world, God chose us. Through the sacrament of baptism, we acknowledge that God, in His grace, has initiated a relationship with us. With our baptismal vows, we publicly choose God.

Baptism is a public declaration of our connection to Jesus, and it acknowledges that we belong in the family of God. For this reason, baptism in the Global Methodist Church—by sprinkling, pouring or immersion—is done in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is an act of the Body of Christ, and involves the congregation in the vows as individuals are welcomed into the local and universal church.

Jesus began His public ministry with baptism by John the Baptist, and, in His final act before ascending to heaven, Jesus commanded His disciples to, “*go 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 NIV)

“Baptism is the initial step of the faithful heart.”
Max Lucado

Baptism is a sacrament that well pleases God.

Scripture: Matthew 16:13-23 and Philippians 3:15-21

Before engaging in the questions, read the Scripture passages aloud.

Worship Reflection:

1. What stands out to you about today’s sermon?
2. What did you learn about God? About people?

Questions for Application:

1. Read Ephesians 1:4-6. Were you aware that you had been chosen by God before the creation of the world? How does this knowledge impact you? How does it impact your relationship with God?
2. In Matthew 3:13-17, we see the Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—in one place at the same time. How does the knowledge that the Father's love, the Son's redemption, and the Spirit's presence are actively engaged in your life and transformation help you to experience God more personally?
3. When you witness the baptism of another, do you perceive the presence and power of the Holy Spirit? If so, in what ways?
4. In verses 9-10 of today's Ephesians passage, it tells us that it is God's plan to unite all things in Christ. Where in your personal life do you see disunity, and how can you help bring Christ's unity to that situation?
5. Why is it important to you to be a part of the Marion Methodist community of faith?

May 3, 2026

Session 4 | From Well to Witness



Before you begin this session, read the inside cover of your materials and pray the prayer.

Background:

This will help to set the context of the session if this is read aloud.

Right after talking to Nicodemus about being born again spiritually, Jesus for the first time, reveals that He is the Messiah to, of all people, a Samaritan woman! Jesus came to seek and save the lost and she is a pretty good example of that, as are we all! Jesus gives us a model for evangelism in talking to the woman: Start where the person is and establish common ground. Introduce the spiritual component, then allow for freedom to continue or close the discussion. Pursue the spiritual need, and then introduce the Savior.

“But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

John 4:23-24 NAS

Jesus talks to the woman about worshipping God in spirit and in truth. When we are born again, we are justified and we receive the Holy Spirit within us (John 14:15-17). We don't need the Law or sacrifices or a temple to approach God anymore because the Holy Spirit dwells in us. Believing in Jesus as God's sacrificial lamb that takes away the sin of the world gives us Christ's righteousness, so we can see and know God fully in spirit. As we come to know God more fully, we can be truthful with Him about our struggles with sin. Since God knows our every thought, we can ask Him

to help us take every thought captive to Christ.

Crossing the line of faith starts us on a spiritual journey of sanctification where we endeavor to become more like Jesus. The Holy Spirit leads us on this journey and assures us that we are children of God (Rom. 8:16). Through His Holy Spirit, God pours out His love like living water into our hearts which satisfies our spiritual thirst forever. This assurance that we have been saved and entered into a right relationship with God brings about a joy and peace in our lives that cannot be shaken by circumstances. “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*” (Matthew 5:6 NIV) This filling is both a present experience through the Holy Spirit and a future reality in the fullness of God's kingdom. This is what Jesus was promising to the Samaritan woman and to us as well. Like her, we can leave the things of this world behind because we have found something better. We can join with the Samaritan woman and run with freedom to let others know of the amazing things He's done for us.

Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

John 4:13-14 NAS

Scripture: John 4:5-30 and John 7:37-38

Before engaging in the questions, read the Scripture passages aloud.

Sermon Reflection:

1. What stands out to you about today's sermon?

5. Colossians 1:27 NIV reads, “*To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*” Is this a new Bible truth for you? How do you think Jesus wants us to respond to this truth?

Questions for Application:

1. Why is it important to be truthful with God about all aspects of your life?
2. What are some ways that you worship God in spirit?
3. Jesus said, “*True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.*” (v.23) What do you think it means to worship God this way? How can you apply this to your own worship?
4. In the John 4 Scripture passage, the Samaritan woman has an eye-opening encounter with Jesus and rushes off to tell others of her experience. Have you had a similar experience with Jesus that you could not wait to share with others? Explain.
5. How does the Living Water that you have received from Jesus flow through your words and actions into the world?

Dig Deeper: Consider starting one of these Bible reading plans to go deeper on this topic

What can we learn from the woman at the well? <https://www.gotquestions.org/woman-at-the-well.html>



What can we learn?

The Woman at the Well: Its Significance and What We Can Learn <https://www.theologyfortherestofus.com/the-woman-at-the-well-its-significance-and-what-we-can-learn/>



The Woman at the Well

Feast of Tabernacles: Water Ceremony <https://tmurphywrites.com/feast-of-tabernacles-water-ceremony/>



Feast of Tabernacles

Questions for Discussion:

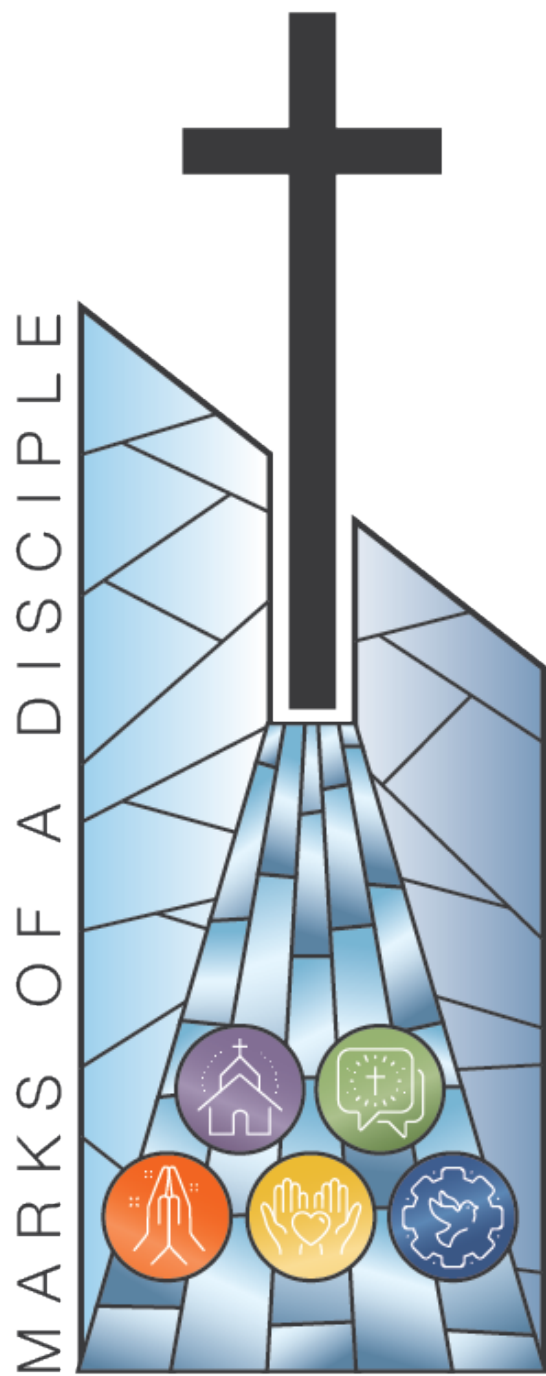
1. What are you reading in the Word this week?

2. How is your reading growing you in the Marks of Discipleship – prayers, presence, gifts, witness, service?

Growth Challenge:

The Samaritan woman left her water pots and ran to tell others, “*Come and see!*” (NLT) because she found something better to quench her spiritual thirst. Use the model for evangelism illustrated by Jesus to start up a spiritual conversation this week. Invite someone to “*Come and see!*”

NOTES



M A R K S O F A D I S C I P L E



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