



Sermon Study Guide | Sermon: Baptism
Scripture: Joshua 3-4 | Date: May 17, 2026

[Alpha](#) is a 6 week faith exploration experience hosted by Menlo Church at the Devil's Canyon Brewing Co. in San Carlos. It's the perfect place to invite a friend who is questioning belief while examining the core concepts of Christianity.

[Register here](#) to jump in for Week 5!

CONNECT - "A Personal Reflection"

This section is designed to help you relate personally to the theme of the sermon. It encourages you to reflect on your own life experiences and how they connect to the message.

Think about a place in your life where you have been living in "almost." Maybe you are almost ready to forgive, almost ready to trust God, almost ready to take a step of obedience, or almost ready to let go of something that has kept you on the bank for too long. What does "almost" feel like for you right now, and what might God be inviting you to do with it? **Share with your group**

ENGAGE - “Exploring the Scripture”

This section invites you to dive into the biblical passage, discuss its meaning, and apply it to your life through thoughtful questions.

Read **Joshua 3–4** as a group and discuss:

- In Joshua 3, Israel stands at the edge of the Jordan after generations of waiting. What do you imagine that moment felt like for them? Where do you relate to the tension between promise and fear?
- Joshua tells the people, “*Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you*” (Joshua 3:5). What would change in your life if you entered this week actually expecting God to move?
- The priests had to step into the water before the river parted. Why do you think God often asks for obedience before clarity?
- Consider this phrase, “*Faith is not what you feel on the bank. Faith is what you believe enough to get your feet wet with.*” What is the difference between believing something privately and acting on it publicly?
- In Joshua 4, God tells the people to stack stones so future generations would ask, “What do these stones mean?” Why do you think God cares so much about helping His people remember?
- Baptism was described as a “stone,” not the thing that saves us, but a public marker of the salvation Jesus has already given. How does that distinction help you understand baptism more clearly?
- Joshua led Israel through the water into the promised land, but Jesus leads us through death into eternal life. How does seeing Jesus as the greater Joshua deepen the meaning of this story?

APPLY - “Putting the Scriptures into Action”

This section challenges us to take what we've learned and implement it in practical ways in our daily lives.

- Identify one area where you have been standing on the bank. What is one concrete step of obedience you sense God inviting you to take this week?
- Take a few minutes to write down three “stones” in your life: moments when God brought you through, met you, rescued you, or reminded you that He was near. Share one with the group if you are comfortable.
- If you have been baptized, consider telling someone your baptism story this week. Keep it simple: what God did, why you chose to go public, and what that marker means to you now.
- If you have not been baptized, what is honestly holding you back? Pray. Talk with a friend about it, and consider reaching out to a Pastor.
- Choose one way to practice remembering this week: write a prayer, place a reminder somewhere visible, tell a story at dinner, or thank God out loud for a specific place He brought you through.
- Embrace the heart of Jesus for someone else in the “almost” and [invite a friend to attend Alpha with you.](#)

PRAY - “Seeking God’s Guidance”

This section offers a short prayer to help us center our hearts and invite God to work in our lives through his scripture.

God, thank you for meeting us at the river, not with shame, but with invitation.

Thank you that Jesus has already crossed what we could never cross on our own, and that through His life, death, and resurrection, we are offered forgiveness, freedom, and new life.

Help us not to stay stuck in the “almost” when you are inviting us into obedience. Give us courage to get our feet wet, faith to trust you before we can see the whole path, and gratitude to remember the places where you have brought us through.

For those considering baptism, give clarity, courage, and a deep sense of your love. For

*those who have already crossed, help their lives become living stones that point others to you. **Amen.***

If you have feedback on this guide or ideas that would help your group engage more deeply, we'd love to hear from you.

Your insight helps us continue growing as a church that wrestles honestly and walks faithfully together. Contact msummers@menlo.church