



## Sacraments - Baptism

### **Introduction:**

As the preaching of the Word makes the Gospel audible, so the sacraments make it visible and experiential, and God stirs up faith by both means. Communion is a repeated act of remembrance and centering while baptism is meant to be done once.

### **Position on Baptism:**

We participate in a believer's baptism to publicly identify ourselves with Jesus in his sacrificial death and life-giving resurrection. This is a sacred and beautiful opportunity to declare, "I believe the best possible way to live is the way of Jesus, and I am committed to following Christ - daily dying to myself (i.e., my agenda, my kingdom) asking the resurrected Christ to live in and through me." Baptism is not a means of salvation; rather it is a beautiful picture of our union with Christ and of our declaration that we have joined the mission of God's Kingdom as a follower of Jesus.

All Christians see baptism as a sign of sins being washed away and of being united with Christ's death and resurrection. All Christians see baptism as a seal of God's grace for sinners, not of our own goodness. All Christians see baptism as a mark by which God claims a person and requires faith, love, and obedience. All Christians believe that an unbaptized person who has grown up outside a Christian setting, without faith in Christ, must turn to Jesus in repentance and personal faith before being baptized.

Not all Christians agree on whether babies born to believing parents should be baptized, but Christians do agree that it's a huge privilege and responsibility when a child is born into a Christian family. Even many who don't support infant baptism still have ceremonies of dedication in which they celebrate God's goodness and promise to lead their little one in God's ways. Also, not all Christians agree on whether a personal, public commitment to Christ is necessary before a child from a Christian family is baptized, but Christians do agree that such a personal, public commitment is necessary at some point. Even those who support infant baptism still insist that those who are baptized as babies must later respond with a public profession of personal faith in Christ as Lord and Savior, and must live for him.

Although we are sensitive to the covenantal aspects of infant baptism (within Protestant denominations), we subscribe to adult or believer's baptism. We believe that water baptism is a sign of a person's professing faith, and, as a result, we feel it is confusing to perform water baptism on infants. Instead, we practice baby dedications (or, as we like to call them, "blessings") and when a child makes the choice to follow Jesus, they have the opportunity to declare their commitment to Jesus through baptism.

### **For Further Reflection:**

Please consider the following passages: Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:38-41; Romans 6:1-7

We also have additional teachings on the matter(s):

- [Sacraments at Grace Church](#)

**About Grace Church Position Papers:**

The purpose of these papers are not to provide a comprehensive study on the particular topic, rather they are succinct statements on particular issues which represent our church's belief, mission + vision, and DNA. There are many Scriptural, historical, ecclesiological, and experiential reasons behind them. Have questions? Please feel free to inquire. We welcome the dialogue.

*To be wise is to be eternally curious.* ~ Frederick Buechner