

# The Grove's Baptism Statement

Baptism is an amazing and life-changing event in the life of a Jesus-follower. Depending on whom you ask you will hear many different traditions, teachings and opinions about the subject of baptism, which has led to a great deal of confusion about the subject. We have found that with baptism and other issues that the best way to clear up that confusion is to go back to Scripture. Interestingly when we look at the Bible we see that the teaching about baptism is quite clear.

At The Grove we desire to teach and practice everything the Bible teaches about baptism. We are not interested in making baptism more important than Scripture does. On the other hand, we are not willing to make baptism any less important, either.

## Who should be baptized?

All believers are candidates for baptism. Christ said, *“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.”* - Mark 16:16

Anyone desiring to be Jesus' disciple, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore 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 28:18,19*

Anyone who is willing to repent of their sins and who is wanting to get in on God's promise of forgiveness, Peter replied, *“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.”* - Acts 2:38,39

## How should we be baptized?

To understand how we should be baptized is best determined by looking at the meaning of the word. The Greeks had, and still have, a word for immerse, one for sprinkle, and one for pour.

Baptizo means dip or immerse, rantizo means to sprinkle, and cheo means to pour. This is now the meaning of these words in Greek, and was also the meaning when Christ was on earth. The Scripture consistently uses the word baptizo, which means “immerse.”

The Apostle Paul states that baptism represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. We are buried with Christ by baptism (Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12). At The Grove we baptize people by immersing them in water. This act symbolizes, according to the teaching of scripture, the burial of the old self and the resurrection of a new life with Christ.

The picture immersion portrays is compelling: just as a person lowers you into the water, Christ lowers you into the pool of His grace until every inch of your soul is clean. Buried in a watery grave, covered from head to foot with God's love, you are washed clean by the blood of Jesus.

Consider the statements from the founders of three denominations and other church historians and scholars:

**Martin Luther (Lutheran):** *“On this account I could wish that such as are baptized should be completely immersed into water according to the meaning of the word and the signification of the ordinance . . . as also without doubt it was instituted by Christ”* (Works, Vol. II. p. 75, ed. 1551).

**John Calvin (Presbyterian):** *“The very word baptize signifies to immerse, and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the primitive church”* (Institutes, Vol. XI., ch. 15, sec, 49).

**John Wesley (Methodist):** *“We are buried with him, alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion”* (Notes on N.T., Romans 6:3). *“Baptized according to the custom of the first church and the rule of the Church of England, by immersion”* (Journal, Vol. 1. p. 20

### **Brief History of 'Sprinkling'**

The first case of effusion (pouring liquid on), so far as history records, was in **AD 251**, when Novation desired to be baptized while on a sick bed. Being unable to be taken to water, they poured water around him until his body was covered. (Note that was in the 3rd century).

The first law of sprinkling was obtained in **AD 753**, from pope Stephen II, who permitted sprinkling and pouring in cases of necessity.

In **AD 1311**, The Legislature, in the Council of Ravenna, declared immersion or sprinkling indifferent.

At the Council of Constans, about **AD 1356**, a decree was made legalizing all such cases of clinic sickly baptism already past or that might come in the future.

The Anglican church, which sprang from the Roman Catholic began in AD 1534; the Presbyterian, an offshoot of the Anglican began in 1541; and the Congregational soon after. It is a historic fact that for hundreds of years these churches practiced immersion. The Westminster Assembly was called together by Parliament of England in **AD 1643** and 'voted' to substitute sprinkling for immersion. It was a tie vote, which left DR Lightfoot, the president of the Assembly, to cast the deciding vote which favored the substitution.

In 1664, the Parliament of England repealed that part of the old law, which enforced immersion, and passed a new law, enforcing sprinkling in its stead.

- (P.H. Welshimer - *Concerning The Disciples, 1935*)

Note - all of these changes were made by men who had to cast votes and make laws that would totally disregard what the bible says. In every passage where the bible talks about Christian baptism it is the Greek word for immerse.

The first 19 years of my life - I grew up in a church that sprinkled, but when I was told and shown the truth - I gladly was immersed in Dec of 1979 – Pastor Steve

## **When should we be baptized?**

A person should be baptized at the time he or she trusts in Christ. The Bible teaches we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8), moreover in the New Testament church, a person's baptism was always the first expression of faith, not separate from it. We see this in the book of Acts.

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number *that day*. – Acts 2:41

They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then *immediately* he and all his household were baptized. – Acts 16:32,33

At The Grove we ask a person to be baptized at the point that he or she is ready to make a commitment and surrender to Christ.

## **Why should we be baptized?**

### **Because Christ commands it**

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." - Matthew 28:19,20

That Jesus commanded baptism should settle the matter for anyone desiring to be a follower of His. The call to baptism is primary in our acceptance of Christ and His teachings. To know that Christ has called us to be baptized into *“the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit”* and not obey is unthinkable for followers of Christ.

### **Because you want to follow Christ’s example**

*“At that time, Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river.”*

- Mark 1:9

Jesus believed that baptism was necessary for even Him to do in order to *“fulfill all righteousness”* (Matthew 3:15). Jesus, the Son of God, gave us a powerful example of humble submission to the will of God. He would not allow anything or anyone to deter Him from following God’s will in this matter (Matthew 3:14). And because Jesus Himself was baptized no one who wishes to be a follower of His should avoid submission to this call of God.

### **Because it is the appeal we make to God for a clean conscience and salvation**

*And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also – not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. – 1 Peter 3:21*

Peter compares the waters of the flood (which saved Noah and his family by washing away an evil world) to baptism that now saves us. Peter says the power of baptism is in the resurrection and in our appeal to God for a ‘clear conscience.’

### **Because it unites you with Christ in a very special way**

*“You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”*

- Galatians 6:26-27

Baptism is that time when we move ‘into’ Christ (and being ‘in’ Christ is a great place to be, Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17) and it is when we become clothed with Him. Being ‘clothed with Christ’ is a powerful picture and an even greater reality – now when God looks at me instead of seeing my sin He sees Christ righteousness.

## **Because you desire to be forgiven and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit**

Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" - Acts 2:38

And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.' - Acts 22:16

In both of these verse baptism is clearly connected to our sins being forgiven and in Acts 2:38 to the receiving of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

## **Because we desire to live a new life**

All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.  
- Romans 6:3,4

We are saved by the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and Paul says in Romans 6 that in our baptism we are baptized into His death. But not only His death, but also His resurrection.

In our baptism we act out in a physical way the very thing that saves us. In baptism we are buried with Christ our sins are washed away by His blood and we are raised up to live a new life.

## **If I Decide To Be Baptized Make How Is It Done At The Grove?**

We have a baptistery in our auditorium. It is heated during Sunday services and be heated at any other time upon several hours notice. At The Grove we feel that baptism should be done as soon as you're ready to commit to Christ whether that be on Sunday or some other time during the week. The church has changing rooms, baptismal robes and towels. A swimsuit is suggested for modesty.

At the conclusion of our services we extend an "invitation" to all who would like to make a personal decision to give their life to Christ. We would encourage you to invite your friends. What a tremendous witness to them your baptism would be!

We also have baptized many people at various times throughout the week.

## **Who Can Baptize Me?**

Any Christian can baptize. There is no biblical direction or distinction between "clergy" and "laity." If you have lead a person to Christ one of the greatest privileges you could have would be to baptize that person. Parents of children can baptize their child. Of course the staff and leadership at The Grove are always available to perform baptisms.