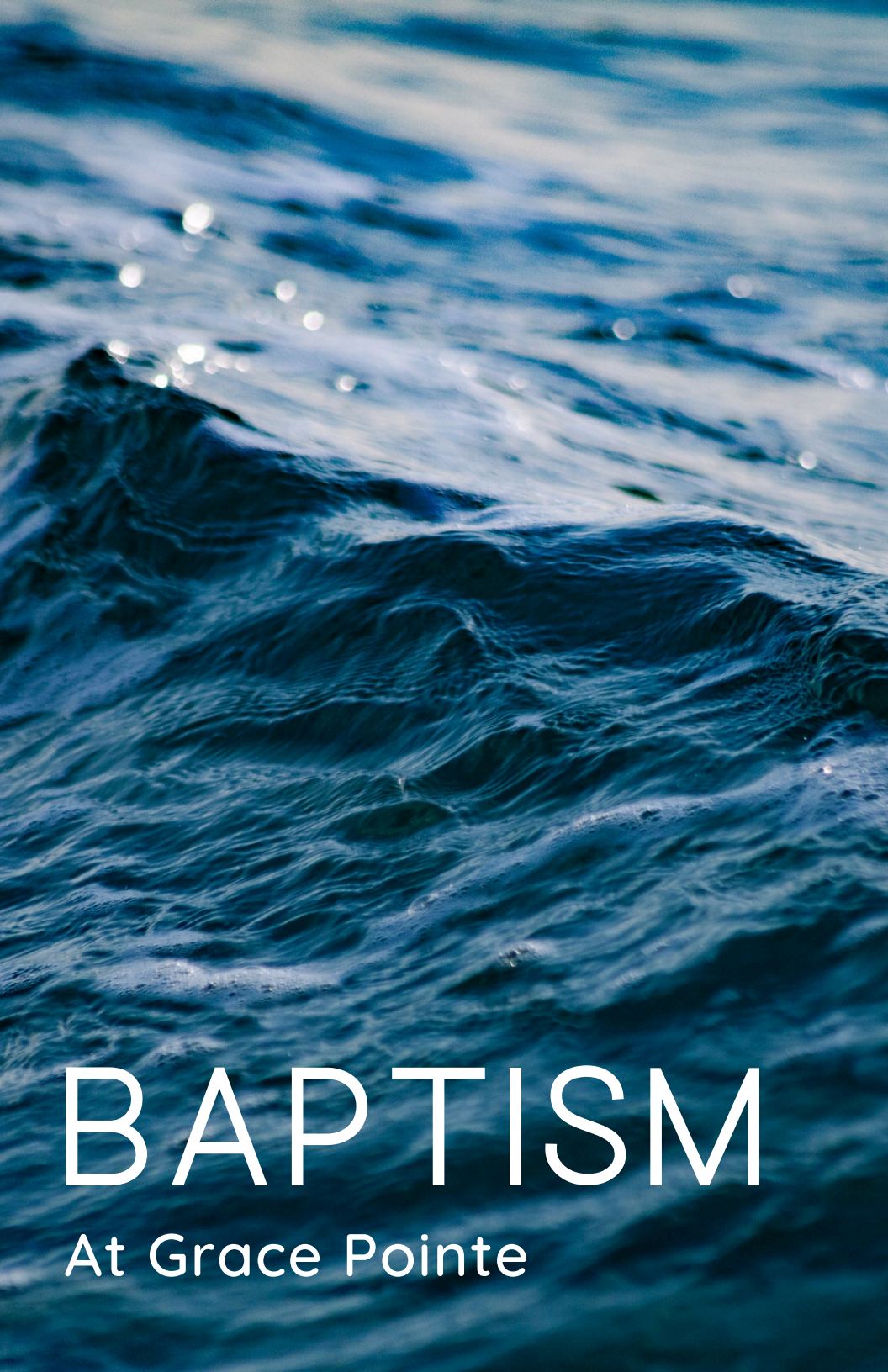




BAPTISM

At Grace Pointe

WELCOME TO THE JOURNEY!

We are so excited about your interest in baptism!

Before Jesus ascended back to heaven after the resurrection, He gave us clear instructions about what we as Christians are to be doing as we wait for His return. In Matthew 28 he says:

"And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The church is to be focused on making disciples— people who are devoted to Jesus, His Church, and His mission and baptism plays a key part in that process! In fact, if you read through the book of Acts you will see it closely connected to trusting in Jesus as Savior and Lord. For example, when the Philippians jailer asked what he needed to do to be saved, he was told to believe (Acts 16:31), and we are told he was baptized at once (16:33).

The simple point is this: **baptism is a key part of following Jesus.** It is to be practiced by all of those who, by faith, trust in Jesus alone for salvation. But what is baptism? Who should be baptized? What is the relationship of baptism to salvation? Why should we be baptized? Keep reading this booklet to find out!

Grace and peace in Jesus,

Dan Painter

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WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

The consistent witness of the New Testament is that someone first believes in Jesus and then is baptized. This is called **believers' baptism**. Never in scripture do we witness the reverse order where someone, such as an infant, is baptized and then later believes in Jesus. If you have trusted in Jesus as Savior and Lord, this is the next step you take in following Him!

We see six lines of support for this position in the New Testament.

1. In the precursor to Christian baptism, John the Baptist required that people repent of sin before being baptized. (Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3)
2. Every baptism in the New Testament is preceded by repentance of sin and faith in Jesus. (Acts 2:38–41; 8:12; 9:18–19; 10:44–48; 16:14–15, 29–36; 18:8; 19:1–7; 22:16)
3. Baptism is reserved solely for those people who have put on Christ. (Gal. 3:27)
4. Baptism shows personal identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. This can only happen when someone has trusted in Christ for salvation. (Rom. 6:1–10; Col. 2:12)

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

5. The Bible does record occurrences where entire households were baptized. (Acts 10:33, 44–48; 11:14; 16:15; 1 Cor. 1:16) In these cases, the Bible also records that each member of these households believed in Jesus and was saved.

(John 4:53; Acts 18:8; 1 Cor. 16:15)

6. Both Jesus and his apostles gave the command for disciples to be baptized as an expression of that discipleship.

(Matt. 28:19, Acts 2:38)

So, the first question to ask is: **Have I believed in Jesus as my Savior and Lord?** If you are not sure what this means, please let us know! We would love to talk more about this with you!



WHAT DOES BAPTISM MEAN?

The word for baptize in Greek is baptizo, which means "to dip, plunge, submerge, or immerse." When someone is baptized at Grace Pointe, they are immersed underwater in a baptismal (a large tub of water). But what does it mean?

First, baptism is a **visible declaration of the gospel of Jesus Christ**— a testament to salvation only by faith in the finished work of Jesus who died, was buried, and rose again.

Second, it is a **public declaration of faith in Jesus**. When someone is baptized, they are confessing that Jesus is their Lord! It is an outward witness of an inward faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

Third, baptism is a **visible, physical illustration of the union of the believer with Jesus that happened the moment they believed**. Paul writes about this in Romans 6:

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in the newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.



WHAT DOES BAPTISM MEAN?

The believer being baptized is immersed beneath the waters in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which expresses the believer's death to sin and the burial of their old life as they were united with Jesus in His death. Then they are brought out of the water, which expresses the believers' resurrection to a new kingdom life in Christ Jesus, having been united with Jesus in His resurrection.

Fourth, it is a declaration of the believer's choice to follow **after Jesus**. They are not proclaiming perfection, but the goal of being faithful as a follower of Jesus surrendered to Him as Lord.

Fifth, baptism identifies a Christian with Jesus, the universal church, and the local church. We understand baptism to be the sign and seal of membership in the covenant community. Having been baptized into Jesus, we are also baptized into community together. Baptism is for all persons as they join the community of the church.

DO YOU HAVE TO BE BAPTIZED TO BE SAVED?

Salvation is solely a gift given to people whose faith rests in the grace of God to forgive their sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus. For example, when the Philippian jailer asked what was required of him to be saved, Paul did not mention baptism but simply said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus.” Likewise, the thief who died on the cross next to Jesus was promised by our Lord that “today you will be with me in Paradise,” though he had not been baptized. Someone can be unbaptized and yet be a Christian who is destined for heaven.

Nonetheless, even though one can be a Christian without being baptized, **a Christian should be baptized.** If nothing else, Jesus commanded baptism to show in outward sign the inward covenant relationship we have with him.

Baptism is the biblical way in which we show that by the power of the Spirit, we die to our old way of life through the death of Jesus, and live a new life through the resurrection of Jesus, cleansed from our sin in the same way that water cleanses us from filth. Therefore, being baptized does not make someone a Christian. Not being baptized does not cause someone to stop being a Christian, but a Christian should be baptized.

WHY BE BAPTIZED?

1. To be obedient

If Jesus called for all believers to be baptized, then why wouldn't we want to be baptized? When we believe in Jesus for salvation we are acknowledging Him as Savior. But when we take the step of being baptized, we are acknowledging that He is more than Savior, He is also Lord, more specifically that He is your Lord, and that your life is now submitted to Him.

2. Because of the joy you have in Christ!

Baptism is a celebration! It isn't just something we have to do; it is something we get to do. It is deep and powerful, beyond just a physical declaration, it is a spiritual act of worship in submitting your life to God as a believer. It is not easy to describe, but there is something beautiful and spiritual about it as you celebrate your identity as an adopted son/daughter of God.

3. To identify with Jesus who identified Himself with you.

At the beginning of His earthly ministry, Jesus went to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. But Jesus had nothing to repent of. So why was Jesus baptized?

WHY BE BAPTIZED?

Jesus says it is to fulfill righteousness. “By submitting to baptism, Jesus acknowledged God’s claim on him as on others for total consecration of life and holiness of character.” (Green, The Message of Matthew) He was not identifying Himself as a repentant sinner, He was identifying Himself with sinners as He would on the cross. This was pointing forward to the cross where he would die, that he would be buried, but rise again conquering sin and death so we might be saved. In our baptism, we are identifying ourselves with Jesus, having been united with Him by grace through faith.

4. To be like Jesus.

The goal of the Christian life is to conform to the image of Jesus (Romans 8:28-29). This ultimately is about living a life of complete surrender and obedience to God. If Jesus were to be baptized as an adult identifying with us, we should want to do the same thing in the desire to be obedient and fulfill all righteousness.

WHY BE BAPTIZED?

5. To proclaim the gospel

We are all called to make disciples of all nations. We do this by being witnesses for God, telling people of what He has done in our lives. Baptism is one way we can do that!

6. To encourage other believers

There is no greater joy for a Christian than to see others come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior, and publicly seek to walk in obedience. Baptism is a declaration of that truth. Does this mean that there needs to be a huge crowd to be baptized? No. But no one can baptize themselves! So, there must always be at least one other person. When you celebrate with the whole community, you are helping to spur others on to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24-25).

If you have any questions, please
reach out to one of our pastors:

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