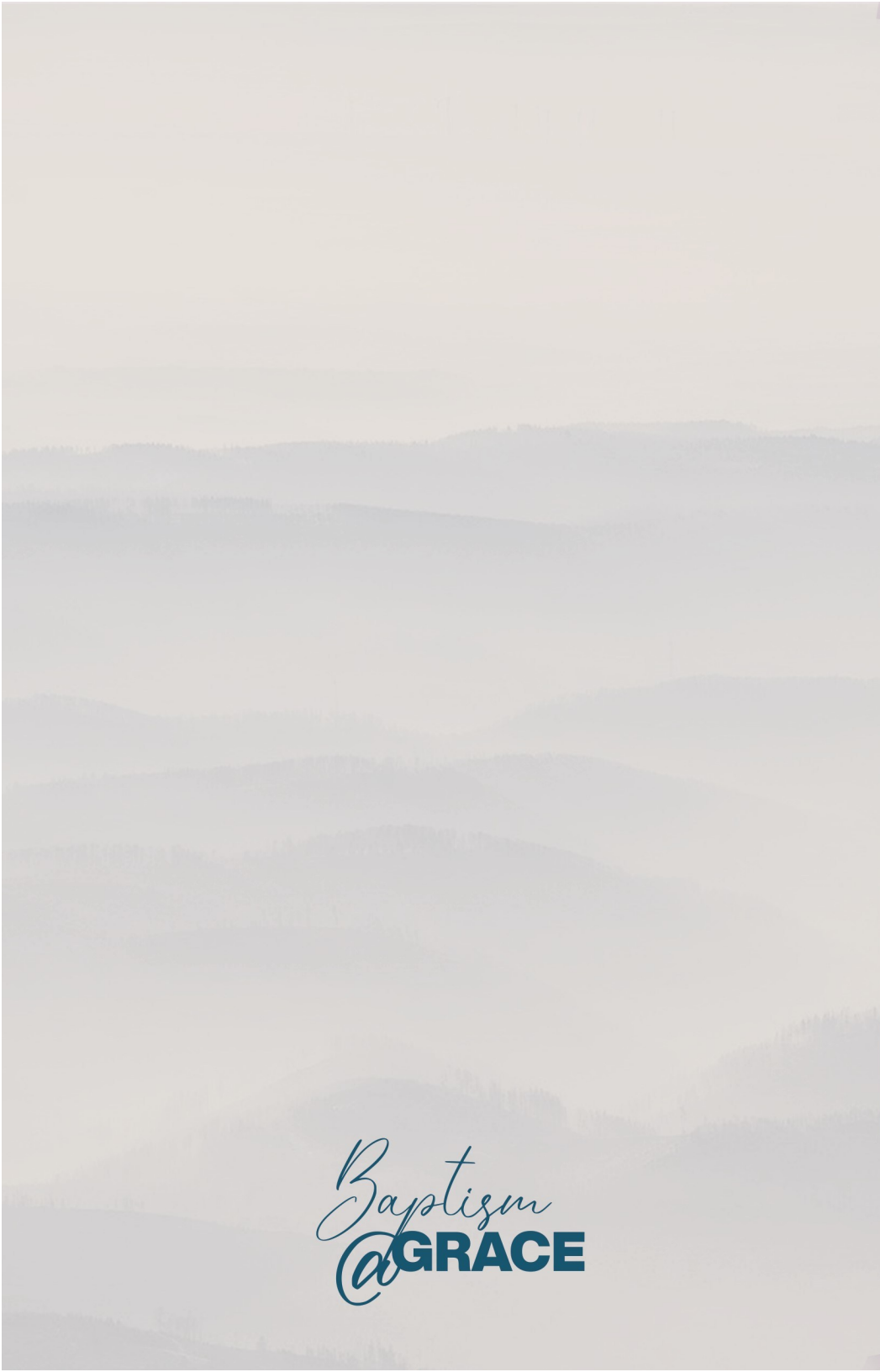




Baptism
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Understanding the Sacrament of Baptism

Baptism represents a very personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. In baptism, each person being baptized publicly declares, "I believe that Jesus died for my sins, was buried, and rose again for my salvation. I have decided to follow Him and want to become like Him."

Questions Frequently Asked About Baptism

Why should I be baptized?

Because Jesus was baptized. We know this is true because of what we read in Mark 1:9: "At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan." To follow Jesus means to follow His example.

Because Jesus commands it. Not only was Jesus our example, but He also told us that we should be baptized. "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, 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

Because baptism demonstrates that I am a believer. In Acts 18:8, we read about Crispus, his family, and many Corinthians who believed and were immediately baptized. In the New Testament, believing and baptism were always put together. In fact, 1 John 2:3 says, "We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands." In other words, if we really believe, we'll obey Him. And Christ's first command is to be baptized, as a symbol to the world that we really know Christ.

What is the meaning of baptism?

Baptism illustrates Christ's burial and resurrection. Jesus Christ died on the cross, was buried in a tomb, and then rose from the dead. Our baptism is an object lesson of what Christ has done for us. Just as He was buried in the ground for three days and stepped out of the tomb, we take a person, put them under the water, and bring them up again.

"For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism, you were also raised with Christ." Colossians 2:12

Does baptism make me a believer?

No. Baptism does not make you a believer. It has no saving function. Baptism cannot, will not, save you. Salvation comes only through faith in Jesus Christ.

Why immersion?

Many churches practice baptism by sprinkling water on a person's forehead. In our tradition, we baptize by putting a person wholly under the water. We do this because this is how Jesus was baptized. Matthew 3:16 says, *"As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water."* Not only was this true of Jesus, but every biblical example of baptism is by immersion. The literal meaning of the Greek word for baptize (baptizo) means "to immerse."

Who should be baptized?

Every person who has believed in Jesus. Acts 2:41 says, *"Those who believed and accepted His message were baptized."* Acts 8:12 says, *"But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news... and in the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."* Notice that in both cases, belief is before baptism.

This helps to explain why we baptize older children as opposed to infants. We wait until the children are old enough to believe and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them.

If I was baptized as an infant, should I be baptized again?

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

Peter points out that it isn't the removal of dirt (or the baptism itself) that saves you. Rather, you are saved by putting your faith in Jesus. If you were baptized as a child but didn't get saved, you got wet.

So ... Yes! If you committed your life to Him as an older child or adult, it makes sense to celebrate and announce your commitment as an older child or adult.

When should I be baptized?

As soon as you have believed. Acts 2:41 says, *"Those who believed... were baptized... that day!"* They didn't have to go through weeks of education and Bible study. They didn't have to clean up their act. They needed only to put their faith in Jesus Christ. So, if you're a believer, there's no reason to delay. You can and should be baptized as soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life.

Will I have to say anything?

No. Sometimes, we give you that opportunity, but here's what will happen this morning. First, the baptism candidates will be asked, as a group, if they've confessed their sins and surrendered their lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Then, we begin worshiping as a congregation. As we worship, we will help direct each candidate to the baptismal tank; after stepping in, they will be lowered under the water and brought back up. As they come up they will hear the church family celebrating with them.

For more information and to register:

gracecovenant.org/cornelius-baptisms/

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