CLC

# Baptism

BOOKLET

# WHAT IS BAPTISM?

**Baptism and Communion (The Lord's Supper) are the two ordinances prescribed by our Lord Jesus Christ as visible symbols of an invisible grace. They are discernible and tangible representations of both the invisible realities of the gospel and the Spirit's application of this gospel to our lives. With both ordinances, believers have an opportunity to "remember" God's goodness and grace, especially as revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ.**

**In baptism, as we enter into the waters or watch another do so, we are reminded that Christ was crucified and raised from the dead and through faith in Him, we too have died to the old self in order to live for Christ. City Life Church's Statement of Faith describes baptism as a visual and symbolic demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. As an outward symbol, baptism signifies that a person's former way of life has been put to death and depicts a release from the mastery of sin.**

**As a symbol, baptism illustrates a number of significant realities:**

- **Christ's death and resurrection**
- **The disciple's union with Christ in His death and resurrection**
- **The cleansing and washing away of sin**
- **The new life in which a disciple walks**

# WHAT IS BAPTISM NOT?

## *Baptism is not "necessary for salvation."*

Though grace is mysteriously mediated through baptism, it is not saving grace, but rather sanctifying grace. We are more conformed to the image of Christ as we obey Him in the call to be baptized.[3] Without in any way diminishing the duty and delight of baptism for a believer, we warn against any thinking that suggests that salvation is dependent upon baptism. The gospel is one of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.[4]



# WHY SHOULD ONE BE BAPTIZED?

## MATTHEW 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and
on earth has been given to me. 19 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, 20 teaching them to observe all that I
have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the
end of the age."

## ACTS 2:37-41

37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said
to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"
38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one for
you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and
you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for
you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone
whom the Lord our God calls to himself." 40 And with many other
words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying,
"Save yourselves from this crooked generation." 41 So those who
received his word were baptized, and there were added that day
about three thousand souls.

## ACTS 22:16

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away
your sins, calling on his name.

## *Based on Scripture, we are baptized to:*

- **Obey the commands of Christ**
- **Demonstrate that we are disciples of Christ**
- **Follow the example of Christ**

Baptism is not merely a responsibility, but also a privilege. We have the opportunity to demonstrate our trust in and love for our King through obedience in this ordinance. If we think of baptism as a mere burden, we have not properly understood the joy of following Christ in the call to be baptized. We should have a similar response as the Ethiopian eunuch who, when he believed the gospel, proclaimed, "What prevents me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:26-40). It should be our joy and we should eagerly anticipate our participation in the ordinance.

The desire to be baptized should be motivated by a desire to glorify God in faithful obedience. Any other motivation (to join in a particular local church, to please a friend or family member, etc.) should not be the ultimate reason for seeking to be baptized.

# WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

**ACTS 2:41**

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

**ACTS 8:12**

But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

City Life Church Statement of Faith states,

*"(Water) baptism is only intended for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become His disciple."*

This means we practice what is called "believer's" or "confessor's" baptism, meaning we only baptize those who believe and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Reading through Acts, we find baptism explicitly related to repentance, receiving the Word, believing and receiving the Holy Spirit. There is no explicit evidence to suggest that nonbelievers were baptized.

# SHOULD A PERSON BE REBAPTIZED?

For those who were baptized at an earlier age, it's important to understand that we only need to be baptized once. If you trusted in Christ at that time, then your baptism was valid. If, however, you experienced sprinkling with or immersion in water before trusting fully in Christ, your experience was not baptism and you do need to be baptized. The question is, "Was I truly trusting in Christ when I was baptized?" Or another way to ask it is, "Have I been baptized since I made a decision to surrender my life to Christ and follow him only?"



As a believer, there will always be seasons of hardship, joy, growth and maturity in your life, yet you do not need to be rebaptized each time you experience these seasons. However, if you believe that your original experience was prior to truly trusting in Christ as your Lord and Savior, you should pursue obedience in this area by being baptized now.

# WHEN SHOULD A PERSON BE BAPTIZED?

**ACTS 22:16**

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.

As soon as a person trusts in Christ, he or she should be baptized. The Scriptures do not speak of a delayed baptism in which a believer refrains from getting baptized. In all the accounts in the Scriptures, baptism is rather immediate. We follow this pattern of somewhat immediate baptism unless there are convincing reasons to delay.

At City Life Church, we ask believers who wish to be baptized to temporarily delay for a brief season in order to go through baptismal preparation and await a scheduled baptismal celebration. We do this for several reasons. First, this allows us to discuss the gospel and the meaning of baptism with those interested in being baptized. Second, it allows our church family the opportunity to celebrate together as a congregation, sharing in the joy of a person's obedience and agreeing to walk with him or her in the fellowship of believers. Finally, it allows the person being baptized to invite family and friends who will have an opportunity to celebrate and hear the proclamation of the gospel.

# WHERE SHOULD A PERSON BE BAPTIZED?

Although there are no prescriptions in the Scriptures to location, we prefer to practice the ordinance within the context of the local church in order to allow the congregation to celebrate together in a person's act of obedience and submission (by context, we do not simply mean a church building, but through the ministry of a local church)

That said, we do not want to prescribe what the Scriptures do not and thus we do allow for baptism to occur outside the weekly gathering. Our preferences in such cases is that video and/or pictures be taken to record the event so that the church family can share in the joy.



# HOW SHOULD A PERSON BE BAPTIZED?

Though other denominations and theological traditions baptize by pouring or sprinkling, City Life Church practices baptism by immersion. We do so in light of the following considerations.

## 1. THE GREEK WORD βαπτίζω (BAPTIZO) LITERALLY MEANS TO PLUNGE, SUBMERGE OR IMMERSE

Our English word baptism is a transliteration of the Greek baptizo. Baptizo was used in Greek literature to describe the act of immersing something in water or another liquid, and later became a technical term that referred specifically to the Christian ordinace of baptism.

## 2. THE REPRESENTATION OF UNION IN CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION IS BEST EXPRESSED THROUGH IMMERSION

Whether buried below or above ground, the symbolism of burial is still that of being placed under something. Likewise, resurrection is accomplished by coming out of something (whether grave or tomb). Immersion best symbolizes this by actually placing the believer under the water and bringing them out.

## 3. THE SURROUNDING CONTEXT OF BAPTISMS IN THE SCRIPTURES SUGGEST BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

**REFERENCES:**

**Col 2:12, Rom 6:3-4, Matt 3:16, Mk 1:5-10, Acts 8:38-39**

# BAPTISM AT CITY LIFE CHURCH

## *Prior to the Baptism:*

1. We ask those wishing to be baptized to participate in a bapsitm meeting in which we explain the gospel, core Christian beliefs (articulated in our Statement of Faith) and our theology of baptism.

2. In the meeting, we ask participants to share their testimony with us, to share the transformation of their life by the gospel.

## *Baptism Services:*

1. We have regularly scheduled baptism opportunities in which the church celebrates baptisms together. We encourage those wishing to be baptized to do so within the context of these gatherings.

2. The person performing the baptism will ask, "Who is Jesus Christ?" to which the baptizee will respond, "My Lord and Savior."

3. The person performing the baptism will then ask, "Why do you want to be baptized today?" To which the baptizee will share a brief testimony.

4. The baptizer will then say, "I baptize you, my (brother or sister) in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" and then immerse and raise the baptizee out of the water.



## *Helpful Hints:*

- Please check your email and text messages the week prior to your baptism to know where to go and for more details about your baptism.

- Wear dark, loose fitting shorts. We will give you a t-shirt to wear if you'd like, or we suggest a dark, loose fitting t-shirt to maintain modest.

- Bring a change of clothes, towel, and bag to hold your wet clothes after you change.

- IN SERVICE: Seats will be reserved for everyone being baptized and their families.

- AT THE BEACH: A specific location will be provided.



*Notes:*

*Notes:*

CLC CITY LIFE CHURCH

citylifecharleston.com