



UNDERSTANDING BAPTISM

It is our desire to see everyone at The Well Community Church baptized as a believer by immersion. We are so glad that you are considering baptism. We believe that this is the only expression found in God's Word.

TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS:

1) Do you have a relationship w/ Jesus?

Salvation defined:

Deliverance by God from God and His wrath (Rom 5:9-10)

How is Salvation Possible?

By Grace Alone, Through Faith Alone, In Jesus Christ Alone.

When is Salvation?

Salvation is a Specific Point and a Continuing Process.

(Those IN CHRIST...Have Been, Are Being, and Will Be Completely Saved)

What is the Process of Salvation?

Pre Creation & Post Death

- *Predestination (God's knowledge of all things)*
- *Glorification (receiving a resurrection body)*

Becoming A Christian:

What is the Gospel?

In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Paul provides the most succinct summary of the gospel: the man Jesus is also God, or Christ, and died on a cross in our place, paying the penalty for our sins; three days later He rose to conquer sin and death and gave the gift of salvation to all who believe in Him alone for eternal life.

The Point

- *The Gospel Call (proclaiming the message of the Gospel)*
- *Regeneration (being born again)*
- *Conversion (faith and repentance)*
- *Justification (right legal standing)*
- *Adoption (membership in God's family)*

The Process

- *Sanctification (right conduct of life)*
- *Perseverance (remaining a Christian)*

2) If yes, would you like to follow Jesus through believer's baptism?

If yes, please email The Well's staff @ info@thewellsa.org to receive more info about salvation and our next baptism celebration.

WHAT is "baptism"?

- An outward testimony of inward faith in Jesus Christ.
- A PICTURE & PROCLAMATION of being dead to our sin and through Christ walking in new life. (Galatians 3:27)
- Baptism is a symbol of LIFE-CHANGE. (I Corinthians 5:17)

WHO should be baptized?

- Believers in Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:41, Col 2:11-12)
- Water baptism is not salvation alone, it is a testimony of salvation. (Eph 2:8-9)

WHEN should we be baptized?

- After our spiritual birth. Not before. (Acts 9:18, 10:43-48)
- Most commonly found in God's Word, right after conversion. (Acts 2:41, 8:35-38)

WHERE should we be baptized?

- In the presence of believers. No specific location. (Acts 2:41)

HOW should we be baptized?

- Totally immersed by water. (Matthew 3, Acts 8:38-39)
- The word "baptize" means "to immerse or to dip under water."

WHY should we be baptized?

- To follow the example set by Christ. (Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:9)
- Because Christ commanded it. (Matthew 28:18-20)
- Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion. (Acts 8:38-39)
- It is a testimony to the world (Matthew 10:32)

Founders of major denominations agree:

- **Martin Luther (founder of the Lutheran Denomination):** "I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies."
- **John Calvin (founder of the Presbyterian Denomination):** "The word 'baptize' signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church".
- **John Wesley (founder of Methodist and Wesleyan Denomination):** "Buried with Him" alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church."

What about INFANT BAPTISM?

In the Bible we find parents bringing children to Jesus. He held them and prayed for them and told us to welcome them. But, he did not baptize them, and he did not tell anyone else to baptize them. So it seems more biblical to wait until after a personal decision of the child to trust Christ as Savior and Lord. For if baptism signifies salvation (as the Bible teaches), only people who have received salvation should be baptized.

If you have not experienced believer's baptism, even though you have experienced baptism as an infant, the full meaning and significance of baptism has yet to take place in your life. We strongly encourage you to be baptized as an adult believer in Christ.

We believe that there are people who have a relationship with Christ who haven't been baptized as a believer by immersion. These people are part of the family of God and therefore we have a difficult time excluding them completely from our church family.

Here is where we most believers stand who were baptized as infants:

- 1) Those who can articulate a theological conviction for why they don't think they should be baptized again.*
- 2) Those who just don't want to get baptized because of embarrassment, family tradition, etc.*

We would consider the first group of people to become partial members after meeting with the individual, while we would challenge the second to obey the Lord in baptism prior to becoming family at The Well.

Biggest question to ask yourself:

When standing before Jesus, are you satisfied that you have obeyed him on this command to be baptized?

Remember we want to be on a journey with you on this. We would consider it a great honor to baptize you. We would love to journey with you if you have more questions.

What about CHILDREN?

The arguments for immediate participation in baptism and communion for believing children who are also recognized as church members with limited responsibilities are as follows:

- 1) Children, just like adults, are sinful, and they are in need of Jesus' saving work (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12-21).*
- 2) Children can be saved. Christ invites children to come to him (1 Samuel 1-3; Psalm 22:9-10; 1 Kings 18:12; 2 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 34-35; Jeremiah 1:5-8; Luke 1:15; Luke 18:16), and he uses children as examples of the humility necessary for those who wish to enter Jesus' kingdom (Matthew 11:25; 18:2-*

19:13-14; Mark 10:15-16; Luke 10:21; 18:14-16).

- 3) Believing children should be welcomed into the church through baptism. The NT authors addressed these children as members within the church (Ephesians 6:1 “in the Lord;” Colossians 3:20), and we should as well.*
- 4) The New Testament knows nothing of un-baptized followers of Christ. If a child is a believer, he or she is a disciple. If a child is a disciple, then Christ commands that this child participate in baptism and communion (Matthew 28:8-10).*
- 5) Baptism and communion are intended for every member of Christ’s church. They are ways of experiencing and remembering God’s goodness and the gracious gifts that he has lavished on his people. None of Jesus’ gracious gifts—worship, teaching, preaching, community, pastoral care, communion, or even church discipline— should be withheld from young followers of Christ.*

The social pressure on the church’s leadership may lead them to confirm the salvation of children at a very young age. Teachers and parents may pressure Lord’s Table in an unworthy manner. Jesus instructs his followers to test the attitude of their own hearts and actions and their awareness of the significance of the supper. Each person should examine the genuineness of his faith and life so as to avoid taking upon himself the Lord’s judgment.

In light of these two concerns, the pastoral leadership at The Well advises parents not to allow their children to participate in the Lord’s Supper until after they have been baptized. If for the above reasons one is inclined to encourage his child to wait, take note of the following:

- Make waiting positive. Instead of only focusing on why your child shouldn’t partake, focus on your eager anticipation that they will partake. If you can do so truthfully, let your child know how you have seen the Lord’s work in their lives, and how you look for them to grow. Encourage them to continue trusting Christ. Children in whom the Spirit is at work will be aware of their sins. Do not encourage children to be introspective and worried about their faults. Point them to Christ and assure them of your confidence that since he has begun a good work in them, he will finish it (Philippians 1:6).*
- While you wait, prepare. If your children are with you during the communion service, allow them to hold your hand as you hold the elements. Allow them to quietly observe you as you take each element. Share with them how much the Lord loved us to give His life for us. Pray with them thanking the Lord for His death and life.*
- Set an example of worthy partaking. If bitterness or anger or any sin troubles you, do not partake. This will show your child that you are serious about Paul’s admonition that we should not partake of the Table in an unworthy way.*

What if my child has not been baptized, but has already been partaking of the Lord's Supper?

- *As stated above, our counsel is that you not continue allowing your child to take communion until after he or she has finished the childhood baptism process. We recognize that this may be discouraging to a child that has already been taking the Lord's Supper, and he or she may view*

“One simple believing site of Christ will produce more light and peace and joy than a lifetime of looking within ourselves for evidences and signs of grace.”

-Octavius Winslow, Soul-Depths and Soul-Heights

The church teaches parents that salvation is a work of God and not merely a decision by the believer. Children, like adults, show understanding and evidence of believing faith before the church accepts them for baptism. Christ's goodness, love, and gracious mercy are taught to children. The church receives believing children into its membership and corporate worship gatherings with confidence and glad hearts—knowing that their faith is made strong by Christ. The children, encouraged to obey their parents, read their Bibles, and talk to God in prayer, grow in wisdom and grace even as they grow in stature.

Please email info@TheWellSA.org with any further questions about baptism.

