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BASIC BELIEFS CHURCH
OF THE



GRACE CHURCH

BIBLICAL BELIEFS OF THE CHURCH



What separates the beliefs of the church from the myriad of philosophical or religious systems so prevalent in our day? What is a follower of Jesus really to believe and, for that matter, which beliefs are central and non-negotiable? *Basic Beliefs of the Church* is a Study that examines ten (10) core teachings in Christianity that will help answer these questions, looking to what God has revealed to us in the Bible for clarity, guidance and motivation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our History and our Center	page 4
The Evangelical Core:	
1 The One True God	page 6
2 The Lord Jesus Christ	page 7
3 The Holy Spirit	page 8
4 The Bible	page 9
5 Humanity	page 10
6 Salvation	page 11
7 Church	page 12
8 Christian Life	page 13
9 Angels, Satan, Demons	page 14
10 Future Life	page 16
Our Charis Identity	page 17
Appendix 1: Baptism	page 20
Appendix 2: Communion	page 26
Footnotes	page 30



OUR HISTORY

The Charis Movement, comprised of leaders and churches commonly known as Grace Brethren, traces its family roots back to Germany, where in 1708 a small group of sincere Christ-followers committed to form a church that would be faithful to the teachings of the New Testament. Yet we recognize that our spiritual foundations are built upon the broader work of godly men and women throughout history who have faithfully labored to interpret and apply God’s truth. While different expressions of our beliefs have been drafted throughout our history, we have consistently affirmed our unwavering loyalty to Jesus Christ, the Living Word, and to Holy Scripture, the Written Word, as our final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

Throughout the centuries, our movement has known glorious times of progress and sad times of distraction over secondary issues. By the grace of God, today we are a global family of churches that shares a common commitment to understanding the Word of God (Biblical truth), to living as the People of God (Biblical relationships), and, to fulfilling the Purposes of God (Biblical mission). This threefold commitment is shared throughout the geographically and culturally diverse congregations that identify with us.

The Charis Commitment to Common Identity is a summary of our biblical convictions, mutual commitments, and common practices. It is not intended to be a complete expression of what we believe and practice, nor is it intended to be the final expression of those beliefs and practices. Rather, it is a current expression of our ongoing quest to apply the unchanging truth of God’s Word to the constantly changing realities and needs of our world. It is formatted around three “clusters” as follows:

- The Center affirms our eternal loyalty to Jesus Christ, through whom we live and move and have our being.

THE CENTER



- The Evangelical Core outlines the convictions we share with those in the stream of historic orthodoxy and global evangelical communities that possess a high view of God and the Scriptures.
- The Charis Identity summarizes the perspectives and practices shared among Grace Brethren churches and leaders around the world.

THE CENTER

We declare that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God as revealed in the Bible, the written Word of God, is the only Savior and Lord. He is the center of our shared experience of true biblical unity.



THE EVANGELICAL CORE

We affirm our commitment to the following core truths of the Bible which we share with other genuine believers in Jesus Christ:

1 The One True God – There is one, and only one, true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the Creator and Lord of all, existing eternally in three persons, never less and never more - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. *(footnotes 4-7)*



Read and Make Observations about God:

Genesis 1:1-3	John 1:1-3
Deuteronomy 6:4	John 8:58
Isaiah 43:10	1 Corinthians 8:4-6
Psalms 146:6	2 Corinthians 3:17-18
Matthew 3:13-17	2 Corinthians 13:14
Matthew 22:32	Colossians 1:15-17
Matthew 28:19	1 Timothy 2:5

EXAMINE

What is the Trinity? How do the persons of the Trinity interact with each other and why might that be significant to our understanding of the Trinity's relationship with us?

How does the complexity of God change your view of God? How does it also affect the way you view yourself as a person made in God's image?

How might the concept of the Trinity help you explain salvation to a friend or family member?

WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THIS PROMPT?



PRAY: Allow God to see the amazing power and example of love that is evident in the truth about the Trinity as you pray. Think about and praise him for the different roles of the Godhead as they interact with your own life. Ask God to give you an opportunity to share the reality his "three-in-oneness" with another person in a clear and helpful way.



2 The Lord Jesus Christ – Jesus Christ is fully God, existing eternally. Everything was created by Him and for Him. His incarnation took place in the womb of a virgin. He became man, but never sinned. He died a substitutionary death to atone for sin, resurrected bodily, and ascended into heaven where He remains fully God and fully man, and is presently ministering until He comes again. (*footnotes 8-17*)



Read and Make Observations about Jesus:

John 1:1-5
John 14:5-14
Philippians 2:5-11
1 Timothy 2:5-6
1 Corinthians 15:12-28
Hebrews 1:1-3

EXAMINE

How does Jesus' teaching reinforce his own divinity? Why do you think it is so critical that Christians' belief what they do about Jesus Christ being God? What aspects of our faith deteriorate if we reject that claim?

How does Jesus' life and sacrifice both define and demonstrate love in all its fullness? What might that kind of love look like in our contemporary experience as we interact with others on a day-to-day basis?

"All the credibility of our doctrine hinges on Jesus' resurrection from the dead." Why do you think this is the case? What is it about the resurrection that might be so pivotal for our relationship to Jesus?

WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THIS PROMPT?



PRAY: Ask God to give you a clear portrait of His character by allowing His Spirit to strengthen your relationship with Jesus Christ. Pray that the very character of Christ would begin to be formed in you, under-going the process of transformation that occurs in discipleship to Him. Ask God for a passion to pursue getting to know Jesus through the Bible.



3 The Holy Spirit – The Holy Spirit is fully God, existing eternally. He is a person, and was involved in Creation and the inspiration of Scripture. His works of convicting and regenerating are essential to the believer’s salvation.

Believers are entitled to the benefit and joy of being filled and walking in the Spirit for empowerment in Christian life, service, and mission. (*Footnotes 18-26*)



Read and Make Observations about the Holy Spirit:

- John 16:13-14
- Acts 5:1-11
- Romans 8:14-16
- 1 Corinthians 2:6-16
- 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

EXAMINE

How would you explain to someone that the Holy Spirit is fully God?

How does the fact that the Holy Spirit is a person and not simply a force help you relate in a personal way to God? With this in mind, what changes in our lives when we have the Holy Spirit living inside of us?

Anyone who is a follower of Jesus is indwelt with the Holy Spirit. How does this truth change the way you interact with those around you?

WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THIS PROMPT?



PRAY : The Apostle Paul says that a follower of Jesus is able to understand the thoughts, mind and will of God because the Holy Spirit indwells them. As you pray, begin to thank God for the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit and the new life and power given by him to those who follow Jesus. Pray for a deeper relationship with and understanding of the Holy Spirit in your own life, so that you might confidently know the will of God as you look more like Jesus daily.

4 The Bible – The sixty-six books, and only these, known as the Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God. God’s inspiration and superintendence of the writing of every word of the Bible guarantees that what was written is His Word and therefore authoritative, true, and without error in the original manuscripts. God preserves His Word, which is powerful and effective to accomplish His purpose of salvation among all nations. God’s Spirit illumines the minds of believers in every culture to understand and apply the unchanging truth of Scripture in fresh and relevant ways for the benefit of the whole Body of Christ. *(Footnotes 27-32)*



Read and Make Observations about the Bible:

Psalm 119:9-16	2 Peter 1:20-21
Matthew 4:1-11	2 Peter 3:15-16
Matthew 5:17	Hebrews 1:1-3
Luke 24:27	Hebrews 4:12
Ephesians 2:19-20	1 Corinthians 14:37
2 Timothy 3:16-17	

EXAMINE

How did the Bible come about? What is its origin?

What does God’s inspiration of the Bible for us tell us about His character?

What is the purpose of the Bible?

What are some ways for you to evaluate whether the Word of God is merely informing or constantly transforming you? How have you heard from God in his Word? How has he transformed you through his Word?

What tools/resources do you need to continue developing as a student of God’s Word?

WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THIS PROMPT?



Pray: Reflect on God’s love shown by having given us the Scriptures and how He uses it within us today through the Holy Spirit. Ask Him for a brighter passion and desire for His word so that you may come to know Him more.



5 Humanity – God created man and woman in His image. As a result, all people are bearers of that image. However, Adam’s subsequent sin resulted in a condition of spiritual death which all people since Adam have experienced, marring the beauty of God’s image in them in every facet of life. This condition of spiritual death has rendered all people unable to save themselves, and leads to physical death. Therefore, new birth is necessary for salvation. *(Footnotes 33-40)*



Read and Make Observations about Humanity:

Genesis 1:26-28

Romans 6:23

Genesis 3:1-24

Romans 8:6-8

Ecclesiastes 7:24

Ephesians 2:1-3

John 3:5-6

1 Corinthians 15:47-49

Romans 5:12, 19

James 3:9

EXAMINE

How does understanding that everyone was made in the image of God change the way that you view and act toward people who are different than you physically, mentally, and even spiritually?

Why is sin such a big deal?

What have you seen in the world or in your own life that points the fact of a fallen world?

Why was the death of Jesus significant in regards to our sin?

WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THIS PROMPT?



PRAY: Read through Hebrews 2:5-17. This gives us a picture of Jesus sharing our humanity. Reflect on and thank God for the comfort that comes from knowing He has shared in our struggles with temptation. Not only that, but He defeated death and allowed us a way for spiritual life and new birth.

6 Salvation – The salvation brought by God is a complete and eternal salvation by His grace alone, received as the free gift of God through personal faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work, as He declares believers righteous in Him. (*Footnote 41*)



Read and Make Observations about Salvation:

John 3:16-18

1Peter 1:18-21

Romans 5:1

Hebrews 9:12

Ephesians 2:1-10

Hebrews 10:14

Titus 3:5-7

EXAMINE

Why is it important to embrace that Jesus came to save the world, not condemn it? What implications does this have for us, His followers?

Could God still love and not take sin seriously? Why or why not?

What does the cross communicate about the holiness of God? What does the cross communicate about the love of God? Why are the two inseparable?

Why is understanding my sin and flesh (sinful nature) an essential component of the gospel message?

How does the truth that God brought salvation freely affect the way we view our lives before we accepted it?

How does this change the way you view someone who's never heard about this (or an unbeliever)?

WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THIS PROMPT?



PRAY: The gospel is God's plan to rescue humanity while religion is man's attempt to confuse God's plan with his own.

The gospel says I need rescued while religion says I need improved.

The gospel says I am powerless to rescue myself while religion thinks one can become better.

The gospel spells done while religion spells do.

The gospel plan is Jesus plus nothing while religion is Jesus plus or

minus something. Thank God for the good news of the gospel!



7 Church – There exists one true Church, which is called the Household of God, the Body of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. It is comprised of all true disciples of Jesus Christ and is created by the action of the Holy Spirit.

Tangible expressions of this true Church are found in local churches.
(Footnotes 42-46)



Read and Make Observations about the Church:

Acts 2:42-47
Romans 12:4-5
Ephesians 4:11-6
Ephesians 5:29-30
1 Corinthians 12:12-12

EXAMINE

In your own words, describe what you think is happening in the early church?

What is the purpose of the church?

How necessary is participating in community with the church?

What makes being in community hard? What is required of me to experience community?

How do you see yourself serving the body of Christ?

Why do you think God wants us to remember spiritual truths through physical activities such as the ordinances? What do they represent?

WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THIS PROMPT?



PRAY: Thank the Lord for our church. Pray that we would fulfill our purpose: to ignite a gospel-centered movement by knowing it, living it and giving it away. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ. We believe that this movement was ignited in the book of Acts and our focus should be on making disciples who make disciples. A disciple is someone who follows Jesus by knowing it, living it and giving it away! Disciplemaking is intentional, relational and exponential. Pray that we would be a church who makes disciples who makes disciples!

8 Christian Life – The believer is saved by faith alone. The faith that saves is expected to produce obedience and good works, which are the products of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The dimensions of biblical ethics are both individual and social, and extend to every facet of life. God faithfully continues to finish the work of sanctification, which He initiated in the life of each believer with the goal of Christlikeness. *(Footnotes 47-53)*



Read and Make Observations about the Christian Life:

Matthew 22:37-40

Ephesians 4:22-24

Romans 8:1-17

Colossians 3:17

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Philippians 1:6, 27-28

Galatians 5:22-23

Philippians 2:12-13

Ephesians 2:8-10

2 Corinthians 7:10-11

EXAMINE

What a privilege it is to have a God that wants His Spirit to dwell in us.

We can be comforted that He will always be with us. How might we face life in a different way knowing that God's Spirit dwells in you?

How does it change the way you identify yourself to know that you are the temple of the Holy Spirit?

What does the Spirit want to do in our lives if He is free to work on our behalf?

What does it look like to set your mind on things of the flesh? What dominates your mind when you have an earthly mind-set?

Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to convict you of sin? What should this process look like?

Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to guide you into truth and becoming more like Jesus? What should this process look like?

WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THIS PROMPT?



PRAY: The life governed by the flesh sees no higher principle than self. It is self-seeking, self-pleasing and self-dependent. The life governed by the Spirit loves God and loves others with the overflow of love they have experienced first from God. Thank Him for His love that motivates us to extend that with others. It is also his kindness that leads to repentance and motivates us to become more like Him.



9 Angels, Satan, Demons – God created a multitude of spiritual beings called “angels”. Righteous angels continue to serve God and work both in the heavenly sphere and on earth. By his disobedience, Satan, a fallen angel, became the adversary of God and God’s people, carrying with him a procession of demons. Jesus Christ has overcome Satan so that the final judgment and doom of Satan and his demons are certain.

(Footnotes 54-59)



Read and Make Observations about Angels, Satan and Demons:

Luke 10:17-19

John 8:31-59

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Ephesians 6:1-20

1 Peter 5:8-9

1 Timothy 4:1

James 4:7

Hebrews 1:14

1 John 2:15-17

Revelation 12:9-11

EXAMINE

What names, pictures and images best depict the overall view of Satan according to the biblical portrayal of this mysterious and crafty character?

What might your previous answer say about your understanding of Satan and his work?

How do we properly acknowledge Satan’s influence without minimizing the power of the Holy Spirit?

How does understanding that Angels, Satan, and Demons are real change your perspective on spiritual life?

What lies has Satan tried to have you personally believe?

How do you wage war against those thoughts and lies? What does a biblical view of Angels, Satan and Demons do to change the interactions we have with those around us?

WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THIS PROMPT?



PRAY: Throughout Scripture we are told not to be afraid of Satan, paralyzed by him, but that we need to wake up to the reality that we have an enemy and he is bent on our destruction! Our enemy Satan, the devil, is prowling around looking to destroy. It is important and essential that we understand his techniques, his methods. Satan is a deceiver and Father of lies. He will masquerade as an angel of light and try to deceive and trick us to consume us. Pray that you would learn to recognize that he is in the weeds looking for an opportunity, but that we have been given the power to resist him by standing firm in the faith.



10 Future Life – The dead will have a conscious existence in eternity and their bodies will be resurrected. Unbelievers, already under condemnation, will be sentenced to suffer eternal separation from God. Believers, already having been granted eternal life, will be judged. *(Footnotes 60-61)*



Read and Make Observations about the Future Life:

Matthew 25:46

Luke 16:19-31

John 5:28-29

1Corinthians 3:10-15

2Corinthians 5:10

Philippians 1:21-23

1Thessalonians 4:17

Revelation 20:15

Revelation 21:3-5

EXAMINE

Think about what “the end” will be like. Do you think about it enough?

What are you most excited about when you think of Jesus coming back? Is there anything that brings you fear? Why?

How do you think you’ll feel about the life you lived at that point, when you see Jesus face to face?

How has/will God use your trials, pain, sorrow and suffering to achieve an eternal glory?

What are ways for you to live now with the end in mind? How will your life change? What are some practices you want to instill? What are some current practices you want to stop?

In what aspects of your life are you currently exercising faith? Do you believe He will reward those who earnestly seek Him?

WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THIS PROMPT?



PRAY:

OUR CHARIS IDENTITY



The Shared Commitments of our Global Movement

A Summary of Additional Commitments to Biblical Truth

- 1 We seek to understand the intent of each biblical writer by using grammatical, historical, and contextual principles of interpretation,⁶⁶ focused on Christ, led by the Holy Spirit,⁶⁷ and oriented by grace. We accept the absolute authority of the Bible rather than that of creeds, traditions, or leaders.⁶⁸
- 2 We commit to an ongoing study, understanding and application of God's unchanging truth in our constantly changing world, whether personal, social or cultural.⁶⁹
- 3 We affirm that true believers put their trust in Jesus Christ and are kept forever in the saving grace of God through His promises and His power.⁷⁰ Every believer has been eternally justified,⁷¹ blessed with all spiritual blessings,⁷² and set free from all condemnation.⁷³
- 4 We affirm that the Holy Spirit's works of baptizing,⁷⁴ sealing⁷⁵ and indwelling⁷⁶ occur simultaneously with regeneration and are the possession of every true believer. The Holy Spirit gives each believer a unique combination of spiritual gifts for the purpose of serving God and people.⁷⁷
- 5 We affirm that Jesus Christ gave ordinances to the church:
 - Baptism testifies to the reality of our salvation and identifies us as disciples of the Triune God. We therefore encourage the practice of triune immersion.⁷⁸
 - Communion testifies to our justification, sanctification and glorification, which are accomplished through Jesus Christ. We therefore encourage the practice of these symbols: the bread and cup, the washing of feet and the sharing of a meal.⁷⁹
 - We encourage the practice of additional biblical symbolic actions, such as anointing with oil and prayer for the sick,⁸⁰ laying on of hands for ministry,⁸¹ etc.
- 6 We affirm that the Church began on a particular day of Pentecost when our ascended Lord sent His Spirit to the waiting disciples.⁸² The present Church age will come to an end when our Lord comes in the air to remove His Church from the earth⁸³ and fulfill His promises to Israel.⁸⁴ The second coming of Christ is the personal,



physical, and visible return from heaven of Christ to earth⁸⁵ with His Church,⁸⁶ to establish His thousand-year reign⁸⁷ before instituting His eternal kingdom.⁸⁸

A Summary of our Commitments to Biblical Relationships

- 1 We affirm that the Triune God serves as the perfect and ultimate model for human relationships.⁸⁹ As a result, each person has equal value yet different roles, which are expressed in loving unity.⁹⁰
- 2 We affirm that differences in gifts and ministries are a manifestation of the multifaceted grace of God.⁹¹ As a result, we encourage all believers to use their gifts in ways that promote the unity, growth and ministry of the local church.⁹²
- 3 We affirm our obligation to love and respect one another, and to practice the 'one another' exhortations. As a result, we commit to work together and to resolve our differences, for the good of individuals, churches and communities.⁹³
- 4 We affirm the responsibility of local churches to govern their own affairs⁹⁴ while urging those churches to live and serve in community and interdependency with other churches.⁹⁵
- 5 We affirm that the mandate and urgency to fulfill the Great Commission leads us to seek ways to cooperate with one another, and with likeminded Christians on the local, regional and global levels.⁹⁶

A Summary of our Commitments to Biblical Mission

- 1 We affirm that God's plan for this age is best summarized in Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations.⁹⁷ This includes the evangelistic call to reconciliation with God by means of the completed work of Christ and the lifelong pursuit of obedience to God by means of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁸



- 2 We affirm that God's plan for this age includes the recognition, training and releasing of spiritually qualified and appropriately trained leaders.⁹⁹ While the specific gifts, abilities and responsibilities of leaders may vary, all leaders must serve as servants of God,¹⁰⁰ shepherds of God's people¹⁰¹ and stewards of God's resources.¹⁰²
- 3 We affirm that God's plan for this age is most fully expressed through establishing healthy churches. Although practices may vary between cultures, healthy local churches are comprised of believers in Christ who assume a mutual commitment to worship, learning, service, prayer and witness.¹⁰³
- 4 We affirm that God's plan for this age includes our responsibility to express the compassion of Christ through proclaiming the Gospel in words while loving in deeds.¹⁰⁴ We are committed to finding creative and practical ways to address the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of a fallen humanity.¹⁰⁵



APPENDIX 1 - BAPTISM

Preliminary Definitions

“Baptism is a ceremonial immersion in water, or application of water, as an initiatory rite or sacrament of the Christian church.” – *Dictionary.com*

“Baptism is the ritual act, with the use of water, by which one is admitted as a full member of the Christian Church and, in view of some, as a member of the particular Church in which the baptism is administered.” - *Wikipedia*

“Baptism is my outward expression of being in Christ.” - *Anonymous*

“In the New Testament, baptism is the immediate public expression of one’s conversion to Christ and is spoken of as the point at which one becomes united to Christ.” - *Robert Mohrlang*

What Baptism Isn’t

Baptism Isn’t Necessary for Salvation

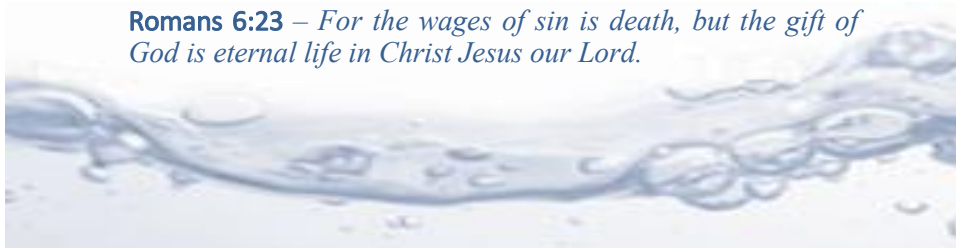
- ◇ The Bible teaches that there is no work that a man or woman can perform to be saved.

Ephesians 2:8-9 – *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Disclaimer: Many churches hold strong differences of viewpoint regarding this subject. However, it is the position of Grace Church that differences in view of baptism may not be “major” doctrinal issues that should divide the Church.

- ◇ The Bible teaches that eternal life is “the free gift of God.”

Romans 6:23 – *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*



BAPTISM



What Baptism Is

1. An Act of Expression

- ◇ Throughout the New Testament—Galatians, Colossians, Ephesians, Romans, 1 Peter, 1 Corinthians, Acts, and all the Gospels—there is an emphasis on and a revelation of the pattern of baptism as a response to salvation.
- ◇ Baptism is an “outward expression of inward truth.” Just as Christ was crucified and buried in death, so we are immersed in the water. Likewise, as Christ was raised from the dead, so we are brought out of the water.

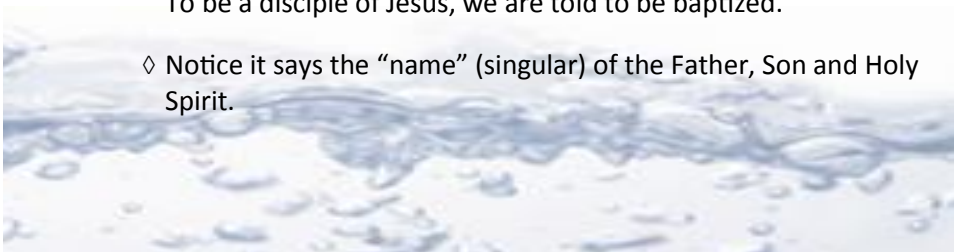
Romans 6:1-4 – What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism 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.
- ◇ In many ways, baptism is like a wedding ring: an outward symbol of an inward commitment.



2. An Act of Obedience

Matthew 28:18-20 –*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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."*

- ◇ With authority, Jesus commands us to make disciples and baptize. To be a disciple of Jesus, we are told to be baptized.
- ◇ Notice it says the “name” (singular) of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.





BAPTISM

. An Act of Identification

- ◇ "Baptism is not in the O.T. It shows up in the N.T. The reason we don't know much is because baptism started in the 'silent period' between Malachi and Matthew." -Randy Smith

"Christian baptism, then, signifies both the death of our old life in sin and the experience of new life in Christ that replaces it."

-Robert Mohrlang

- ◇ Baptism in Jesus' time was a way of identifying oneself with something or someone:

1 Cor. 1:13-15 – *What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized into my name.*

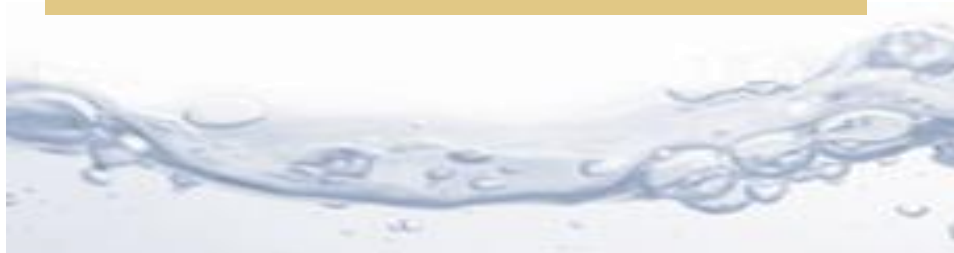
- ◇ Baptism, then, is a way to identify oneself with God and His community. It is like a membership card.



There is only one thing required of you to be baptized: You must make a personal decision to believe and accept the salvation of God through Jesus Christ.

Those who received his word were baptized –Acts 2:41

When they believed... they were baptized. –Acts 8:12



BAPTISM



Commonly Asked Questions

1. Does it matter how many times someone is dunked?

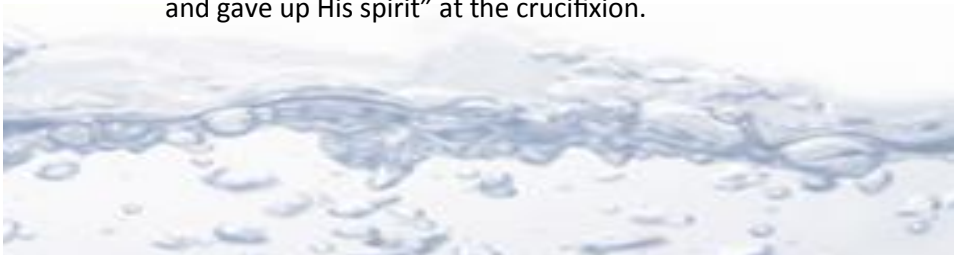
- ◇ The Bible does not give much insight into the procedure of baptism. Some churches baptize by single immersion (one dunk). Grace Church practices triune immersion (three dunks).
- ◇ Ultimately, the Bible isn't clear how many times a person should be dunked. Therefore, the important thing is not how many times a person is immersed, but that they are being immersed in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit in obedience to Matt. 28:19-20.

2. Does it matter if you get dunked forward or backward?

Why does Grace Church practice triune immersion? During the Byzantine period (330-1453 AD), some Christians rejected the doctrine of the Trinity (the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Because of this, they would be baptized in the name of Jesus, but not the Holy Spirit.

The reaction of the Church was to have people immersed three times: once in the name of the Father, once in the name of the Son, and once in the name of the Holy Spirit, thus symbolizing agreement with the doctrine of the Trinity.

- ◇ Those who baptize "backward" do so to represent the posture of a dead person, or buried facing upward.
- ◇ Those who baptize forward do so because Romans 6 mentions being baptized into the likeness of Christ. This is coupled with John 19:30, which indicates that Jesus, "bowed his head (*forward*) and gave up His spirit" at the crucifixion.





BAPTISM

3. What about infant baptism (Paedobaptism)?

- ◇ Biblically, baptism follows our faith in Christ and repentance of sin and thus is always an informed and conscious decision. It is because of this that Grace Church does not perform infant baptism. However, we do perform baby dedication services as a way for parents to commit to raise their children in a God-honoring way.

4. If I have been baptized in the past, how do I know if my baptism is genuine?

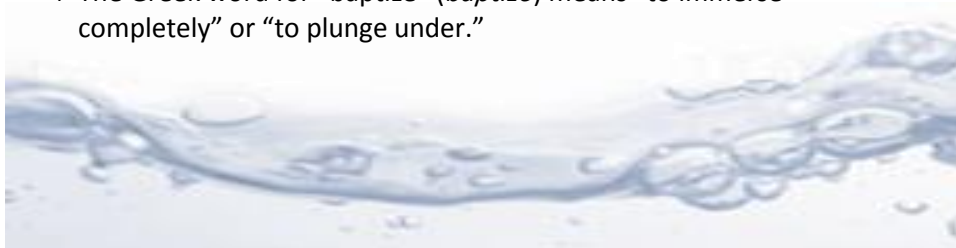
- ◇ Your baptism is genuine if you did it as a conscious choice as a sincere believer and follower of Jesus.

5. If I've been baptized in the past, should I be baptized again at Grace Church?

- ◇ At Grace Church, we practice triune immersion as a requirement of membership for those who have not yet been baptized. However, our bylaws indicate that if a person has already been baptized via single immersion (one dunk) into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Grace Church will consider that baptism as valid in terms of consideration for membership.

6. Does it matter if you sprinkle or immerse?

- ◇ Biblically, baptism is always done by way of immersion.
- ◇ The Greek word for "baptize" (*baptizo*) means "to immerse completely" or "to plunge under."



BAPTISM



7. Who can baptize me?

- ◇ The Bible does not say that a pastor or leader must baptize you. The pattern of the New Testament is that the person who leads another to Christ does the baptizing.
- ◇ At Grace, it is common for children to be baptized by believing fathers who have already been baptized. Life Group Leaders baptize people in their groups as well.

8. What should I expect during a baptism service?

- ◇ We ask that you bring a towel, shorts, and a dark colored t-shirt.
- ◇ The Pastor leading the service will call you to the baptism pool. The person baptizing you will ask that you to briefly share what God has done and is doing in your life and why you want to be baptized.
- ◇ After you share, the person baptizing you will dunk you three times forward, pausing in between each dunk.
- ◇ Finally, the person baptizing you will pray for you at the end.

Many people are afraid to be baptized because it requires them to be in front of a group of people. In the early church, people were baptized naked! If you are feeling anxiety about baptism, be comforted.

9. Should I invite friends and family to my baptism?

- ◇ Absolutely! Baptism is an outward expression to the world that you want to be identified with Christ.





APPENDIX 2 - COMMUNION

What is Communion?

Communion is a word meaning “fellowship, sharing, or holding something in common.” For Christians, it's a special time of worship where we remember Jesus' great love. Anyone who shares our faith in Christ is welcome to attend. We also welcome people who would like to observe the symbolism without participating.

Communion is a symbolic practice Christians do to remember and celebrate key aspects of the Christian Faith. Communion consists of symbols that point beyond themselves to something deeper.

Communion was instituted by Jesus to help us remember to love he has for us. The meaning behind communion is deeper than simple elements (washing feet, eating the meal, and breaking the bread and drinking the cup)—it symbolizes Jesus saying, "I love you," to His bride, the church.

It's meant to cause us to worship and to love Him more in return. It reminds us of the price He paid so we could have eternal life, His continual, daily cleansing in our lives, and the celebration awaiting us in heaven.

At Grace Church, we observe communion through three elements: Foot washing, the love feast, and the bread and the cup.

Washing Feet

Explanation

This first part of communion is foot washing, which is intended to remind us of **our need for daily cleansing from sin**. It's a time of introspection and self-examination to remember that even though believers have been forgiven of all sin (past, present, and future), we must still appropriate His cleansing power and forgiveness on a daily basis.

COMMUNION



Theologians call it "present, progressive sanctification." Present: it's happening now; progressive: it will continue throughout our lives on earth; sanctification: it is the process by which Christ sets us apart for the special treatment of being transformed into His likeness (Romans 8:29).

Washing feet as a symbol of this isn't something thought of by the Church or the Apostles. It's something Jesus asked us to do:

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet" John 13:14

When Jesus washed His disciples' feet, He gave an example. It was an example to be followed in practice, not merely known (John 13:12-17).

There's more to foot washing than at first appears:

- ◇ **It is more than an ancient custom.** Jesus said, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand" (John 13:7). The custom they did understand; the new meaning they did not.
- ◇ **It is more than an example of humility.** In John 13, Peter refused to have Jesus wash his feet. In turn, Jesus gave a curious answer: *"Unless I wash you, you have no part with me... a person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet, his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you"* John 13:8, 10. So we see there are two cleansings: there is a cleansing of feet and there is a bath. The disciples had the bath, but needed their feet washed. "Saved" they were, to use our terminology, but not clean from the contamination of daily sin.
- ◇ **It is more than an outward cleansing.** Scripture presents water and cleansing as word pictures of true cleansing by the Word of God (Ephesians 5:26). Foot washing is a symbol—a symbol of love. It's a statement a church makes together, as they have communion, that Jesus is the one who does the real cleansing on the inside. He does this constantly, as we appropriate His forgiveness. At a church communion service, we picture this in a very meaningful, Christ-like way.



COMMUNION

The Bread and Cup

Explanation

The second element of the communion service is the bread and the cup. Sometimes called the *eucharist*, which is the Greek word for "thanks," the bread and cup isn't complete without remembering the price Jesus paid to secure eternal life for us.

The bread and cup are important because they symbolize Jesus' broken body and shed blood, through which God the Father declares us 'righteous.' Theologians use the word *justification* to describe this declaration of God.

The broken body. The shed blood. The grotesque death they represent was endured by God's perfect Son. Because of that, when people become Christians a great exchange takes place: God considers our sins paid for by Jesus' death; and considers the righteousness of Jesus to be ours (2 Corinthians 5:21). It's a nice gift, but very costly.

The bread and cup, symbols of His broken body and shed blood, also picture a unique way of relating to God. No more animal sacrifices. No more priests to intercede. Instead, direct communication with the Creator because of the body and blood of His Son (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

He asks us to keep on observing this symbol of love until He returns (1 Corinthians 11:25-26). It's so we won't forget the price He paid.

The symbols of communion are solemn and holy, yet joyful and peaceful. So serious are they that we are warned to examine our own lives and thoughts before participating in communion, making sure we are in fellowship with God and properly remembering these symbols (1 Corinthians 11:27-30).

"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." 1 Corinthians 11:26

Other key passages:

1 Corinthians 11:23-32. (cf. 10:16-17) Luke 22:14-20
Matthew 26:26-29 Mark 14:22-25

COMMUNION

The Love Feast



Explanation

The Love Feast, the third part of communion, reminds us that Jesus will welcome us to His celebration in heaven without sin, and that we are now, as a group of His believers, His loved ones—His future bride.

Theologians call this "glorification," referring to seeing and sharing the glory of Christ at his return (1 John 3:2). This aspect of communion focuses on the future (Romans 8:29-30).

It's appropriate that a meal, shared in Christian community, be one of the symbols Jesus commits to His believers. Scripture promises a special future occasion, the ultimate Love Feast, which Jesus Himself will host:

"Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: 'Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.' (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, 'Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' " And he added, "These are the true words of God." Revelation 19:6-9

We practice the Love Feast because Jesus included it in the "communion service" He had with His disciples (John 13) and because the early church perpetuated its inclusion (1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Jude 12). The meal is a fellowship time characterized by His love. Eating together reminds us of our special bond to Christ, but also to each other.

We do this looking forward to the amazing day when we get to see Jesus face to face and celebrate His victory over Satan, sin and death. This is also a time where the community of God celebrates its unity in salvation and the hope of heaven that waits us.

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." Revelation 21:5



FOOTNOTES

- 1 John 1:1-14
- 2 Matthew 5:17-18
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- 2 Peter 1:20-21
- Psalm 19:7-11
- 3 John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Romans 10:9; Philippians 2:9-11
- 4 Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5
- 5 Matthew 22:32; Acts 3:13
- 6 Genesis 1:1; Psalm 146:6; John 1:3 Colossians 1:16-17
- 7 Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:22 2 Corinthians 13.14
- 8 John 1:1-3; John 8:58; Titus 2:13
- 9 Romans 11:36; Colossians 1:16
- 10 John 1:14; Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:29-35
- 11 Luke 2:52; John 19:28 Philippians 2:6-8
- 12 Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22
- 13 Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24.25
- 14 Luke 24:36-43; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8
- 15 Acts 1:9; Hebrews 4:14
- 16 Ephesians 1:19-23 Hebrews 4:15-16
- 17 Acts 1:11
- 18 Acts 5:3-4
- 19 John 16:7-15
- 20 Genesis 1:2
- 21 2 Peter 1:21
- 22 John 16:8-11
- 23 Titus 3:5
- 24 Ephesians 5:18
- 25 Galatians 5:16
- 26 Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 3:16-21; Acts 1:8
- 27 Luke 24:25-27; 1 Peter 1:23-25
- 28 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21
- 29 Psalm 19:7-11
- 30 Psalm 119:89; Psalm 119:160
- 31 Romans 1:16; Romans 10:8-17; Romans 16:25-27



- 32 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; Ephesians 1:17-23
33 Genesis 1:26-28
34 James 3:9
35 Genesis 3:1-24
36 Romans 5:12-19
37 Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3
38 Romans 8:6-8
39 Genesis 2:17; Romans 5:12
40 John 1:12; John 3:3-5
41 Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:4-9; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:18-21
Hebrews 9:12; Hebrews 10:14
42 1 Peter 4:17; Ephesians 2:19-20; 1 Timothy 3:14-15
43 1 Corinthians 12:27 Ephesians 1:22-23
44 1 Corinthians 3:16 Ephesians 1:21-22
45 1 Corinthians 12:13
46 Hebrews 10:25; Galatians 1:2; Romans 16:4-5; Revelation
2:1,8,12,18; Revelation 3:1,7,14
47 Romans 4:5
48 Romans 1:5
49 James 2:14-17; Titus 3:8
50 Galatians 5:22-23
51 Matthew 22:37-40; Colossians 3:17
52 Philippians 1:6 Philippians 2:12-13
53 Romans 8:29 2 Corinthians 3:18
54 Daniel 7:10; Hebrews 12:22
55 Hebrews 1:14; Ephesians 1:21; 3:10
56 1 Peter 5:8-9; Revelation 12:1-10
57 Ephesians 6:12
58 1 John 3:8
59 John 12:31; Romans 16:20 Revelation 2:10
60 Philippians 1:21-23; Luke 16:19-31
61 John 5:28-29
62 Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:15
63 John 3:16; John 6:47
64 Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10



FOOTNOTES

- 65 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 21:3-5; Psalm 16:11
66 Matthew 5:18; Luke 24:25-27
67 1 Corinthians 2:14
68 1 Corinthians 4:6
69 Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Chronicles 12:32
70 John 10:28-29; 1 Peter 1:3-5
71 Romans 3:24; Romans 4:25
72 Ephesians 1:3
73 Romans 8:1
74 1 Corinthians 12:13
75 Ephesians 1:13
76 Romans 8:11
77 Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11
78 Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:36-38; Acts 10:47
79 1 Corinthians 11:20,23-26; Luke 22:14-20; John 13:14; Jude 12
80 James 5:13-16
81 1 Timothy 4:14
82 Acts 2:1; Acts 2:37-47
83 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 John 14:3
84 Zechariah 12; Romans 11:26-29
85 Acts 1:11; Zechariah 14:4
86 Revelation 19:11-16 Colossians 3:4
87 Revelation 20:4
88 1 Corinthians 15:24-25
89 John 17:20-21
90 Ephesians 4:1-6
91 1 Peter 4:10
92 Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27
93 The New Testament has over twenty 'one another' references.
 Compare James 5:16; Galatians 5:13 et al.
94 1 Cor 5:12-13
95 1 Corinthians 11:16
96 Compare Acts 18:24-28 Romans 15:24-29
97 Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 1:5

FOOTNOTES



98 Romans 10:13-17; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 2 Corinthians
5:18-20 Galatians 5:16

99 Acts 13:2-3

100 1 Timothy 4:6

101 Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2

102 1 Corinthians 4:1

103 Acts 2:41-47; Acts 14:21-28

104 1 John 3:16-18

105 Acts 10:38; Titus 3:8, James 2:1-9



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