

PREPARING FOR BAPTISM



**Grace
Church**
Stirchley

1. Jesus' Baptism

Let's be clear – baptism doesn't make anyone a Christian. It's only by placing faith in Jesus that anyone can be saved. So why bother with baptism? Well, a good place to start is to look at Jesus' own baptism.

Read Matthew 3

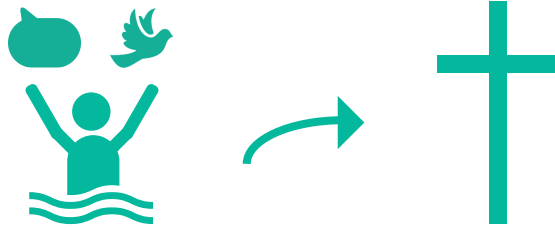
- *Who does John baptise? What do they have in common? (v.5-6)*
- *Why does John rebuke the religious leaders? Where are they placing their confidence? (v.7-9)*
- *What difference does John say there is between him and Jesus? (v.11-12)*

John baptised all those who confessed their sins. He washed people in the water as a mark of their personal repentance and trust in God. Whilst John's baptism was symbolic, he says that Jesus will be able to baptise people spiritually – he will be able to wash people's sin away for good.

- *Why does John protest when he sees Jesus? (v.13-14)*
- *Why does Jesus say he must be baptised? What do you think this means?*
- *What happens when Jesus gets baptised? What is revealed about Jesus' identity?*

Jesus is the sinless Son of God, so why does he get baptised? In stepping into the water, he is associating himself with his people – it is as if he is having their sins wash on to him. In this way,

Jesus' baptism points forward to the cross.



Read Matthew 20:17-28

- *What does Jesus say will happen to him? (v.17-19)*
- *Why does he say it will happen? What do you think this means? (v.28)*

Read 1 Peter 2:23-25 & Romans 5:8-9

- *What does Jesus experience on the cross?*
- *Why is this good news for you and me?*

At the cross, Jesus steps into the place of sinners. The wrath that is meant for you and me is instead poured out on him. Yet, he is raised to life, offering new life to all who would trust in him. Those who trust in Jesus are made eternally clean before God.

Read Matthew 28:16-20

- *What does Jesus tell the disciples to do?*
- *Why is this something we're also to do? (v.20)*

Jesus tells us to tell others about the good news of his death and resurrection. In doing so, he tells all believers to be baptised in the name of Father, Son, and Spirit. Baptism might not save us, but it is a demonstration that we are disciples. At Grace Church we believe that Baptism is 'an outward physical sign of an inward spiritual transformation'.

Pray: Thank Jesus for taking our place.

2. Believers' Baptism

Why be baptised? Because it's what Christians have always done.

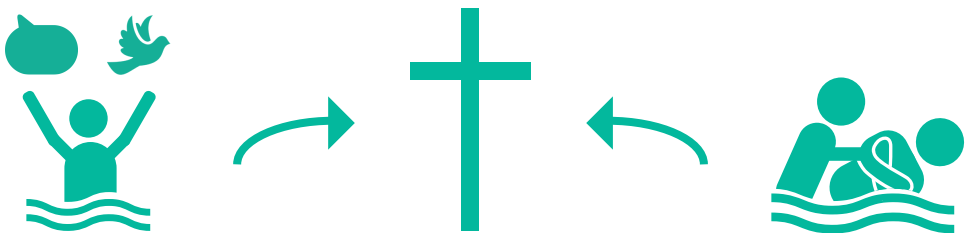
Read Acts 2:37-41; 8:12, 34-38;
10:44-48, 16:28-34

- *What do each of these accounts have in common?*
- *What conclusions can we draw about baptism?*

From the church's earliest days, Christians have always believed baptism to be important. Belief and baptism have always been bound together. Why? Because **believers' baptism points back to the cross.**

Read Romans 6:1-4

- *How does Paul link Jesus' death and resurrection with baptism? In what ways is baptism like dying and rising again?*
- *What do you think it means to die with Christ?*
- *What's the good news of being united with Christ? (cf. v.5-14)*



Going down into the water and being raised back up again is a visual reminder (or sign) of what has happened to all Christians. Our old self and our sinful desires have been put down, and our new identity as those alive to Christ has been raised up. As a result, his Father is now our Father and his Spirit lives in us too.

It's important to note that Paul's discussion in Romans comes in the context of how we are to live as Christians. As those saved by the grace of God, we are to flee sin. Having been raised to life, we now live for Jesus.

Read Acts 2:37-41

- *What do the people do immediately after being baptised?*

Belief in Jesus is always followed by change in behaviour. Often, we get into trouble when we mistake this as the other way round, thinking that our behaviour is what makes us right with God. Thankfully, God helps us to change and live for him.

Read Matthew 3:8, John 15:1-4,
Galatians 5:22-23 & Romans 8:16

- *What are some of the ways we know that people are Christians?*
- *In what ways do you desire to grow as a Christian?*

Pray: Thank God that He doesn't leave us as we are and ask that He would continue to grow us as Christians.

Why get baptised?

This booklet is designed to answer that question and help you decide and prepare to be baptised at Grace Church.

It contains three 'sessions' to be discussed with another person:

- 1) Jesus' Baptism
- 2) Believers' Baptism
- 3) Your Baptism

If you would like to be baptised,
please let an Elder know.

The next date for baptisms is: