Baptism

At FBC Snyder

What is the Gospel?

The gospel is the historical narrative of the triune God orchestrating the reconciliation and redemption of a broken creation and fallen creatures from Satan, sin and its effects to the Father and each other through the life, death, resurrection and future return of the Son by the power of the Spirit for God's glory and the church's joy.
The Gospel (good news of Jesus) is able to answer 3 big questions.

- Why am I here?
- What went wrong?
- How can the world be set right again?

What is Baptism?

Water baptism is only intended for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become His disciple. Therefore, in obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the church, oneself and the world, a believer should be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a visual and symbolic demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. It 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:

1. Christ's death and resurrection
2. The disciple's union with Christ in His death and resurrection
3. The new life in which a disciple walks
4. Cleansing and washing away of sin

Why should a person be baptized?

1. To obey the commands of Christ
2. To evidence that a person is a disciple of Christ
3. To follow the example of Christ

Why should a person ***NOT*** be baptized:

1. ***Baptism does NOT save.*** Though grace is mysteriously mediated through the ordinance, it is not saving grace but rather sanctifying grace. We are more conformed to Christ as we obey Him to be baptized.
2. ***Baptism is NOT required for salvation.*** Though baptism is a delight and a duty for a Christian, one's salvation is not dependent upon baptism. The gospel is one of salvation by grace alone through faith alone.
3. ***Baptism should NOT be motivated by anything other than glorifying God.*** Any other motivation (joining a church, pleasing a friend or family member, etc.) should not be the ultimate reasons for being baptized.

Who should be baptized?

Baptism is intended for those who have received the saving benefits of Christ through the new birth of the Holy Spirit. It is for those who believe and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

1. The question of "rebaptism"
    a. It is important to understand that we should only be baptized once. If you trusted Christ at that time for salvation, your baptism is valid and need not, and should not, be repeated. If, however, you experienced baptism before being born again and trusting Christ, your experience was not baptism, and thus you need to be baptized. The question becomes, "Was I truly trusting in Christ when I was baptized?"
    b. There should always be seasons of growth and greater periods of maturity in the life of those who have trusted in the gospel. Believers must not be rebaptized each time they experience greater joy and sanctification. But, if you believe that your original experience was prior to truly trusting in Christ as Lord and Savior, you should pursue obedience in this area of being baptized now.

When should a person be baptized?

As soon as a person trusts Christ, he or she should be baptized. The Bible does not speak of a delayed baptism in which a new believer refrains from obedience. Regarding children, since there is no clear factor regarding age in the Bible much of the weight and responsibility rests on parents and Christian parents particularly. When discerning whether or not a child is ready, a key indicator is whether they have given evidence of a relationship with Christ.

Improper motivations for delaying baptism

1. *Fear:* A common reason for delaying is fear, but such anxiety should not hinder obedience. Fear is sinful and should not be accepted, and confronting sin is an essential aspect of discipleship, and one's obedience in this area is an excellent way to begin the process of sanctification in the area of the fear of others.
2. *Not being good enough:* There will never be a time where a person is "good enough" for baptism. Our right to be baptized is grounded upon Christ's righteousness, not our own. If we have been united to Him, we should draw near with confidence to His command and example.

How should a person be baptized?

Though other traditions baptize by pouring or sprinkling, FBC Snyder practices baptism by immersion.

1. The Greek word for baptize (baptizo) literally means to plunge, submerge or immerse.
2. The representation of union in Christ's death and resurrection is best expressed through immersion.
    a. 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. Immersion best symbolizes this reality by actually placing the believer under the water and bringing them out.
    b. It is interesting to note the use of water to symbolize judgment in Scripture (e.g. the flood of Gen. 6-7 and the destruction of Egypt in the Red Sea of Ex. 14). Thus, by passing through the waters of baptism, the believer expresses trust that God's judgment has been satisfied by Christ.
3. Language around baptisms in the Bible suggests baptism by immersion.
    a. Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:5, 10; John 3:23; Acts 8:38-39

Where should a person be baptized?

There is no prescription in the Bible about location, but Scripture seems to imply that the church is present to witness, so we prefer to practice the ordinance within the context of the local church in order for the congregation to celebrate together in a person's act of obedience.

Baptism Service:

1. Participants will be asked, "Do you confess and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?" To which the participant being baptized will respond with, "Yes" or "I do."
2. The baptizer (typically one of the pastors) will then immerse and raise the participant out of the water while saying, "I baptize you, my (brother or sister) in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Buried with Christ in baptism, raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4).
3. Wear dark shorts and a shirt to maintain modesty.
4. Bring a change of clothes (a towel will be provided and bag for your wet clothes).

For further study

Relevant passages is the Scriptures:

- Matthew 3, 21, 28
- Mark 1, 6, 7, 10, 11, 16
- Luke 3, 7, 11, 12, 20
- John 1, 3, 4, 10
- Acts 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 22
- Romans 6
- 1 Corinthians 1, 10, 12, 15
- Galatians 3
- Ephesians 4
- Colossians 2
- Hebrews 6, 9
- 1 Peter 3

Further Information, Questions & Follow-Up

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Writing Your Testimony For Your Baptism

Here are some prompts to help you write out your testimony. It is merely a guide to help you think through some aspects of what your life was like before being a Christian and after becoming a Christian through faith in Jesus. It does not have to be written perfectly, but it is important to think clearly about the work God has done in your life so you can share it with others. Do not worry about what your testimony sounds like! Just be faithful to share what God has done in you and your life!

A simple structure you can consider as an outline:

- **(Before)** What was your life like, or what did you think about God before trusting in Jesus?
- **(Change)** How did you learn about Jesus and why you have decided to follow Him?
- **(Now)** Why are you getting baptized?

Additional prompts to help you think through:

1. Write out what you were like before Christ (your family, friends, interests, hope, attitude toward God, etc)
2. What God did to open your eyes (becoming aware of your need for Jesus and how God was working in you)
3. What was it like for you to receive Christ as your Lord and Savior? (Aspects of the gospel that touched your heart, or what you came to understand about Christ)
4. How Christ is affecting your life now (family, friends, interests, hope, desires, attitude toward God, etc)
5. How you hope to serve in the church now and/or what you value about the church

My Faith Story

(Before):

(Change):

(Now):