

# Three Powerful Gifts.

The Church and  
Its Sacraments



## SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 2 June 23, 2024

“The Purpose and Power of Baptism”

### OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we come to you today asking for your guidance, wisdom, and support as we begin this gathering. Help us to engage in meaningful discussion; allow us to grow closer as a group and nurture the bonds that bring us together. We pray this in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

### SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

#### Luke 3:21-22 (NIV)

*<sup>21</sup>When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened <sup>22</sup>and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”*

#### Acts 2:38 (NIV)

*Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

#### Colossians 2:11-12 (NIV)

*<sup>11</sup>In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, <sup>12</sup>having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Christian denominations tend to disagree on various aspects of baptism. Should infants be baptized or should you wait until you can make a decision to follow Christ on your own? Should we baptize by sprinkling of water or immersion? What is the meaning of baptism?

The act of baptism is an outward and visible way of expressing some interior deep truth. There are several ways of thinking about what baptism does, communicates and how it gives us the grace of God. Baptism signifies **forgiveness, initiation** into God’s family, and the **outpouring of the Holy Spirit**. It also is associated with **Jesus death and resurrection**, the Jewish initiation of **circumcision** and that we are all **one in Christ**. Baptism is something that is meant to shape who you are in the present, and everyday going forward.

## QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been baptized? If so, when and how?
2. Do you feel it is important to be baptized? Why?
3. Do you believe that churches should baptize infants? Why or why not?
4. How do you believe baptism should be conducted (sprinkling, immersion, pouring of water, any way possible?)
5. Read the introduction section above. Pastor Eric lists 6 ways of thinking about what baptism does, communicates and how it gives us the grace of God. Did any of these change your ideas on the meaning of baptism? Which ones and how?

## FINAL APPLICATION

If you have never been baptized, do it soon. If you have been baptized you should frequently remember your baptism.