

In the HOUSE *of the* LORD



LESSON #7 – HOLY BAPTISM

Lutherans recognize Holy Baptism as God working through water and the Word to wash away sins, create faith and liberate from sin, death, and the devil. Jesus revealed the vital importance of Baptism when He spoke to Nicodemus one evening, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit” (John 3:5). Before He ascended into heaven, Jesus commissioned His disciples to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19-20).

Throughout their epistles, the apostles proclaimed the power of Baptism. Peter told the crowds on Pentecost that Baptism is for the forgiveness of their sins and reception of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38-29). Peter later wrote that Baptism saves by its connection to the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:21). Paul reminded Titus that God saved us by the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5-6). Baptism is clearly God’s action of imparting Christ’s benefits through the means of His Word poured over His chosen people with water.

The Sacrament of Baptism

Today we study the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. A Sacrament literally means “a holy thing.” The Lutheran Church defines a sacrament as ...

1. It is a sacred act instituted (commanded) by Jesus while He was on earth.
2. It has a visible element connected to the Word of God.
3. It offers, gives and seals to us the forgiveness of sins, new life, and salvation.

In a general sense, what does the word “baptism” mean?

- Mark 1:8 [*John said,*] “*I baptize you with water.*”
- Mark 7:1-4 *The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and² saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were “unclean,” that is, unwashed.³ (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders.⁴ When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)*

How many people does God want to be baptized? How many restrictions does He put on Baptism?

- Matthew 28:19-20 “*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.*”
- Mark 16:15-16 [*Jesus*] *said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*
- Acts 2:38-39 *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.³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off-- for all whom the Lord our God will call.”*
- Acts 16:29-34 *The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.³⁰ He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”³¹ They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved-- you and your household.”³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.³³ At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.³⁴ The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God-- he and his whole family.*

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is water used in connection with God's Word. What are those words we are to use in Baptism? (v19)

- Matthew 28:19-20 *"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,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

What is the significance of those words "in the name of" the Triune God?

After a person is baptized, what else does Jesus want us to do? (v20)

In his Small Catechism, Martin Luther provided a concise explanation for us: Baptism works forgiveness of sin, delivers from death and the devil and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

What are the blessings of Baptism?

What is one problem that all people share when they are born?

- Ephesians 2:1 *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.*
- Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- Ezekiel 18:4 *The soul who sins is the one who will die.*

Since we are born dead in sin, what does Baptism do for us?

- Titus 3:5 *He (God our Savior) saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*
- Acts 2:38 *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."*
- Acts 22:16 *And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.*

What is another problem with all people when they are born?

- Romans 8:7 *The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*
- Genesis 6:5 *The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.*
- Romans 3:10-12 *As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."*

Since we are born enemies of God, what does Baptism do for us?

- Galatians 3:26-27 *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

What is another problem with all people when they are born?

- Psalm 51:5 *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*
- John 3:6 *Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.*
- Jeremiah 2:22 *Although you wash yourself with soda and use an abundance of soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me," declares the Sovereign LORD.*

Since we are born sinful, what does Baptism do for us?

- Acts 2:38-39 *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.³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off-- for all whom the Lord our God will call."*
- John 3:5-6 *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."*
- Ephesians 5:25-27 *Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.*

Though you may have been baptized years or even decades ago, Baptism is still important to your daily life.

Because of our sinful nature that is alive and well inside us, who do we often choose to follow?

- Ephesians 2:1-2 *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*

What new desire does the Holy Spirit work in us by Baptism?

- Romans 6:1-6, 13 *What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?² By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?⁴ 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.⁵ If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin ...¹³ Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*

It is difficult to constantly and consistently live a new life for Christ. What must we do daily with our sinful nature which is leading us back into the slavery of sin?

- Psalm 38:18 *I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin.*
- Luke 15:21 *"Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son."*
- Psalm 51:4, 17 *Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. ...¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*
- 2 Corinthians 7:10 *Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.*

How does Baptism aid in the desire to daily live a new life for Christ?

- Galatians 3:27 *For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*
- 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*
- Colossians 2:6-7 *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him,⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*

Martin Luther, in his Small Catechism, wrote that Baptism has a deep meaning for our daily life: *[Baptizing with water means] that our Old Adam with his evil deeds and desires should be drowned by daily contrition and repentance, and die, and that day by day a new man should arise, as from the dead, to live in the presence of God in righteousness and purity now and forever.*

What connection is there between Baptism and the Flood?

- 1 Peter 3:20-21 *In it [the ark] only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water,²¹ and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also-- not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

Too often, we find ourselves alone and lonely in this world. What is another blessing that the Holy Spirit offers us in Baptism?

- 1 Corinthians 12:13 *For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

One of the great divisions among Christians has to do with the Baptism of infants and small children. How does each of these Bible passages show that the forgiveness of sins through Baptism is also for infants and small children?

- Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*
- Ephesians 2:8-10 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*
- Matthew 18:6 *But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.*
- Luke 18:15-17 *People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them.*
- Matthew 28:19 *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.*
- Acts 2:38-39 *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."³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off-- for all whom the Lord our God will call."*
- Acts 16:33 *... then immediately [the jailer] and all his family were baptized.*

What is the fate of the unbaptized?

- Mark 16:15-16 *He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."*

How often do we need to be baptized? How can this comfort a person who has fallen away from faith after Baptism and then returns to faith?

- Isaiah 54:10 *Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.*
- 2 Timothy 2:11-13 *Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him;¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us;¹³ if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.*

How soon should I baptize my children?

Order of Holy Baptism

This order, from Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal, incorporates Holy Baptism into congregational worship by combining the Sacrament of Baptism with the Confession of Sins. Martin Luther said that confessing sins and receiving forgiveness is nothing else than a reliving of Baptism. Thus this order provides opportunity not only to baptize but also to recall the lasting blessings of Baptism.

A baptism hymn may be sung.

M: The grace of our Lord † Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: And also with you.

Confession of Sins

M: Our Savior Jesus Christ commanded Baptism when he said: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." All of us are born into this world with a deep need for Baptism. From our parents we inherit a sinful nature; we are without true fear of God and true faith in God and are condemned to eternal death. But Jesus took away our sin by giving his life on the cross. At our baptisms he clothes us with the robe of his righteousness and gives us a new life. Our sinful nature need not control us any longer. We recall what Baptism means for our daily lives as we speak these words:

C: Baptism means that the sinful nature in us should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance, and that all its evil deeds and desires be put to death. It also means that a new person should daily arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

M: As baptized children of God we confess our sins:

The congregation may kneel.

C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

The Rite of Baptism continues at the font.

Sacrament of Baptism

For the baptism of children

M: In obedience to the command of our Lord and trusting in his promise, you have brought this child to be baptized. Jesus told us: "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." It is in Baptism that God grants the new life of forgiveness, joy, and peace to little children. By the power of God's Word, this gracious water of life washes away sin, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe.

OR

For the baptism of adults

M: _____, by the power of the Word, the Holy Spirit has led you to believe that this new life in Christ is yours. Now in Holy Baptism the Lord Jesus assures you of your salvation. That you may give public testimony of your faith, I therefore ask you:

Do you believe that you were born in sin and therefore eternally lost?

A: Yes, I believe.

M: Do you believe in the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

A: Yes, I believe.

M: Do you believe that this triune God planned and carried out your salvation?

A: Yes, I believe.

M: Do you believe that God grants you the forgiveness of sins in Holy Baptism?

A: Yes, I believe.

M: Do you desire to be baptized?

A: Yes, I do.

M: Receive the sign of the cross on the head and heart † to mark you as a redeemed child of Christ.

The minister applies water to each of those present for Baptism as he says:

_____, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The Almighty God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—has forgiven all your sins. By your baptism, you are born again and made a dear child of your Father in heaven.

May God strengthen you to live in your baptismal grace all the days of your life. Peace be with you.

Exhortation

M: Brothers and sisters in Christ, our Lord commands that we teach his precious truths to all who are baptized. Christian love therefore urges all of us, especially parents and sponsors, to assist in whatever manner possible so that _____ may remain a child of God until death. If you are willing to carry out this responsibility, then answer: Yes, as God gives me strength.

C: Yes, as God gives me strength.

M: Let us pray. Merciful Father in heaven, we thank you for the blessing of Baptism by which you offer and grant the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Help us to regard our baptisms as the robe of righteousness we are to wear all the days of our lives. Look with special favor on _____ and grant *him* a rich measure of your Spirit that *he* may grow in faith and godly living. Make us willing to carry out our responsibilities to those who have been baptized, so that all of us may finally come to the blessed joys of heaven, through Jesus our Lord.

C: Amen.

A hymn that teaches the faith: Christian Worship Supplement #737 – “God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It

1 God’s own child, I gladly say it:
I am baptized into Christ!
He, because I could not pay it,
Gave my full redemption price.
Do I need earth’s treasures many?
I have one worth more than any
That brought me salvation free,
Lasting to eternity!

2 Sin, disturb my soul no longer:
I am baptized into Christ!
I have comfort even stronger:
Jesus’ cleansing sacrifice.
Should a guilty conscience seize me
Since my baptism did release me
In a dear forgiving flood,
Sprinkling me with Jesus’ blood?

3 Satan, hear this proclamation:
I am baptized into Christ!
Drop your ugly accusation;
I am not so soon enticed.
Now that to the font I’ve traveled,
All your might has come unraveled,
And, against your tyranny,
God, my Lord, unites with me!

4 Death, you cannot end my gladness:
I am baptized into Christ!
When I die, I leave all sadness
To inherit paradise!
Though I lie in dust and ashes
Faith’s assurance brightly flashes:
Baptism has the strength divine
To make life immortal mine.

5 There is nothing worth comparing
To this lifelong comfort sure!
Open-eyed my grave is staring:
Even there I’ll sleep secure.
Though my flesh awaits its raising,
Still my soul continues praising:
I am baptized into Christ;
I’m a child of paradise!