

Getting to Know Jesus- Adult Bible Discovery Guide- *March 29, 2020*

Welcome to Adult Bible Study this morning. Today we will continue looking at the wonderful gift of Baptism. This study has been crafted for you to do individually or in a small group. You may need an Internet connection to do this study.

If you did not participate in last weeks study you can find it on the website (www.bethanylutheran.org)

Before you begin this study make sure you have watched the video from last week:
<https://vimeo.com/83721195>

Last week we took a look at some of the core elements in the teaching of Baptism. Questions and ideas we pondered included:

How can baptism save me? I thought Jesus does the saving?
Who is doing the work or action in baptism—the individual or God?
Why is baptism not just water only?
Why is baptism not just Word only, do I really have to get wet?
Is there only one special way to get baptized?

If you have questions regarding these topics, please go back to last week's study or send pastor Seth an email (smoorman@bethanylutheran.org)

Today we will dig a little deeper into the gift of Baptism.

Opening Prayer: *Dear Heavenly Father, Your love for us is so great. Before time began, you choose us to be Your children. You brought us into your family through the waters of Holy Baptism and in those waters You gave us everything. In that moment all sin in us was washed away and we were forgiven and gifted life and eternal salvation. Help us to remember our Baptism every day and understand the great blessings you bring to us. Amen.*

If Baptism is so important, why is it not mentioned in the Old Testament?

Baptism is mentioned first in the New Testament in the third chapter of Matthew. Besides, very early in Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament, God instituted a holy act that was the Old Testament equivalent of Baptism.

Every male descendant of Abraham was to be circumcised when he was eight days old. That act brought them into God's covenant with Abraham and made them God's own children. Jesus bridged circumcision and Baptism by being circumcised when He was eight days old, and baptized when He was around 30.

There are actually some really amazing Old Testament stories that foreshadow God's grace for His people through water Baptism. Here are a few times when God saved his people through water, brought them into a land of promise, and gave them a new name: the **Flood** in Genesis 7; Jacob crossing the **Jabbok River** in Genesis 32; the Israelites crossing the **Red Sea** in Exodus 14; and crossing the **River Jordan** in Joshua 3.

Why do most Christians baptize infants?

While some churches object to this, it is the long-standing teaching of the vast majority of Christians.

The Bible gives us four reasons as to why infants should be baptized:

- Jesus commanded His church to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching. Since babies receive citizenship at birth, they are included in the "all nations" Jesus commanded His church to baptize.

- (Jesus said) *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."* (Matthew 28:19-20a)

Likewise, the book of Acts records Peter's words on the matter:

- *And Peter said to them, "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. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord calls to Himself."* (Acts 2:38-39)

Again, we would certainly consider newborn babies our children.

- Jesus also especially invited little children to come to Him.
 - *And they were bringing children to Him that He might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to Me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."* (Mark 10:13-15)

Once again, newborn babies certainly qualify as "little children."

- Babies are sinners who need the forgiveness Baptism offers.
 - *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* (Psalm 51:5)
 - *(We) were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.* (Ephesians 2:3b)
- Since faith is the work of the Holy Spirit, He is able to work faith in a baby.
 - *(Jesus said) "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."* (Matthew 18:6)

Don't children have to be old enough to believe?

No one, no matter their age, is able to believe on their own. The Bible teaches that if a person has faith, it is always given by the Holy Spirit.

- *Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.* (1 Corinthians 12:3)

Faith is not to be confused with intellectual ability. Those who argue for "believer's baptism" and reject the baptism of infants (or those with severe cognitive disabilities) often maintain that (1) infants are not guilty of (or accountable for sin) or able to commit sinful acts; (2) faith is a human decision that infants cannot make; and (3) Baptism is primarily our promise to God rather than God's promise to us. These views are not based in Scripture but upon human reason. Any time human reason is elevated above God's Word there will be misunderstandings.

Things to think about:

- What questions do you have in regards to who should be baptized?
- Baptism offers parents the certainty their babies have been given the gift of faith by the Holy Spirit. What other objections have you heard as to why people don't want to have their infants or children baptized? What can you say to people who might have such objections?
- Both Baptism and God's Word provide everything that God has for his children, including full pardon for sin, strength to meet the days ahead in faith, peace with God and with others. How does this give you comfort in times like what we are facing?