

Getting to Know Jesus- Adult Bible Discovery Guide- May 3, 2020

Welcome to Adult Bible Study for this week. Today we will continue looking at the sacrament of Baptism. We have about two weeks left before we move into Holy Communion. This study has been crafted for you to do individually or in a small group with your family. You may need an Internet connection to do this study.

If you did not participate in the last few weeks, you can find the lessons on the Bethany website under Bible Discovery Resources: (www.bethanylutheran.org). You may also need an internet connection to complete all the parts of this study.

The last few weeks we have been looking at the questions and answers section of Luther's Small Catechism published by Concordia Publishing House in 2017. We may hit some of the same topics we hit in the past few weeks but that's OK.

Opening Prayer: *Heavenly Father, You have forgiven our sins, rescued us from death and the devil, and given us eternal life by Baptism into the death and resurrection of Your beloved Son. Strengthen our faith so that we daily put to death all sins and evil desires and, trusting Your sure promises, are raised to live before You in righteousness and purity. Finally, bring us to the fulfillment of our Baptism in the resurrection of the body to live everlasting; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

From Luther's Small Catechism:

The Nature of Baptism

Third

How can water do such great things?

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism.

But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter 3, "*He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, who He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying.*"

(Titus 3:5-8)

The Central Thought- God's Spirit, Word, and name make Baptism more than water. It is a "washing of new birth: (Luther's Large Catechism IV 27) in which our heavenly father adopts us and gives us the inheritance of eternal life through faith in His Son.

For you to answer:

- *Did you choose to be born? When the Bible calls Baptism a "birth," how does that help you understand that your relationship to God is not something you choose for yourself but a gift that He gives?*

Read- John 3:1-15

For you to answer:

- *Why are Jesus's words confusing for Nicodemus?*
- *What does it mean to be "born again" (that is, born from above)?*
- *According to verses 3 and 5, what does the new birth give?*

As Christians we can say, "I am baptized—I am washed—I am God's own child and an heir of heaven. My confidence in these great gifts is based entirely on God's Word and promises. I have so many faults and problems that I might lose hope. But I know that God does not lie and His Word is true. He has washed me clean. I can trust Him. He will help me in every trouble."

Hymns and Songs have been used for centuries to help express the faith we hold. One great example of the connection between faith and Baptism is the hymn “*God’s Own Child I Gladly Say It*” written by Erdmann Neumeister who was a German Lutheran pastor in the late 17th and early 18th century. The text was translated into English by Robert E. Voelker and is in the Lutheran Service book (#594). The text expressed the sure and certain truth of Baptism and faith. I would encourage you to watch this video of this hymn and sing along with the text: <https://youtu.be/ULrYskFmuFg>

God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It

Stanza 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!*

Stanza 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?*

Stanza 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!*

Stanza 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.*

Stanza 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!*

A Closer Reading of the Small Catechism

We see only water in Baptism. How does water work the forgiveness of sins, rescue from death and the devil, and give eternal salvation?

Answer: Our Lord’s institution of Baptism puts these blessings into baptismal water, and faith receives them.

NOTE: Read 2 Kings 5:1-15- In the Old Testament, God’s words promised healing for Naaman in the water of the Jordan. When Naaman believed God’s Word and washed in the Jordan River, he was cleansed of his leprosy. Now in the New Testament, God joins His Word to the water so that it is the instrument of God’s saving work.

Texts to consider: Ephesians 5:25-26; Galatians 3:26-27; Colossians 2:11-15; Acts 22:16

Why is Baptism called “the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit”?

Answer: The Holy Spirit works in and through Baptism to create faith in Christ Jesus, adopting us as children of the Father and making us new creatures in Christ who now live not according to the sinful flesh but by the Spirit.

Texts to consider: Titus 3:5-8; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:11-17

Is a Christian's faith in Baptism or in Jesus?

Answer: This is a false alternative; Baptism and Jesus cannot be separated. The Christian's faith is in Jesus and in Baptism, for Jesus has put His Word of promise in the water. Faith takes hold of Christ where He has promised to be for us. To trust in Baptism is to trust in Christ, who saves us through the washing He has joined us to His Word. As Luther explains it, "certainly not just the water, but the word of God and the water that does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water."

Text to consider: 1 Peter 3:21

NOTE: At the time of the Reformation, there were several false understandings of Baptism. Roman Catholics taught that Baptism worked simply by the performance of the rite apart from faith. Others (Luther calls them "new spirits") taught that Baptism was an empty ceremony with no power to bestow the salvation promised by God's Word. Both false teachings are also present today (perhaps in different ways). Luther's answer in the catechism rightly emphasizes both the power of Baptism to create faith and the need to receive Baptism in faith.

Are we to seek a "baptism with the Holy Spirit" in addition to Holy Baptism?

Answer: No, the Holy Spirit works through the one Baptism instituted by Christ.

- There is only "one baptism for the forgiveness of sins" (Nicene Creed)
- Ephesians 4:5- "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."
- 1 Corinthians 12:13- "For in on Spirit we were all baptized into one body."

NOTE: The "instructions about washings [baptisms]" from Hebrews 6:2 does not mean that there are several Christian baptisms, but that the one Baptism must be clearly distinguished from the man religious washings that were common in the ancient world (see Mark 7:4 for example). In addition, it is not correct for someone to be re-baptized who was previously and properly baptized as an infant or someone who had fallen away from Christ and the Church and then returns. Baptism is a singular event, and God does not ever revoke His promises, so it need not be repeated.

- Christian Baptism is not a water-only or a Spirit-only baptism, but a baptism is water and the Holy Spirit.

Texts to consider: John 3:5; Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 6:11

- The special signs granted by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost were not another baptism, but they testified to the truth and power of the apostle's preaching.

Texts to consider: Acts 2:42-43

For you to answer:

- *Based on what you have learned in this lesson, what would you say to someone who wanted to be re-baptized as an adult?*
- *What are some ways that you can daily live out your baptism this week?*