

Beloved, I bring you Grace & Peace from our Lord & Savior Jesus the Christ, Amen.

### First ?:

What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word. (*Luther's Small Catechism*)

We have a fascination with water. 71% of the earth is covered in water. Up to 60% of our body is made up of water. As we age lose water, & dropping down to about 50% water, literally becoming the dry bones that Ezekiel speaks of as we age.

Try driving straight for more than 2-3 miles. It doesn't work without a bridge, or an overpass, or a bend in the road... because of water. The most prized properties are those... on the water. We live in in Lake County which has that name for a reason.

Water plays a very prominent role in the Bible. God's Spirit, the third person of the Trinity hovers over the water in the Creation narrative. Jesus being with the Father, as we heard last week. At this point besides the Trinity, & the earth, only water existed.

Flowing water in the Garden of Eden. Moses floating on a river to a new life. Moses & the Hebrews saved at the Red Sea from the Egyptians. Going through the water; a Baptism to salvation & a new birth & a new life. Moses striking a rock, which Luther & other's see as being Jesus, for life giving water for the people.

When he abuses that gift from the rock (Jesus). He is denied entrance into the promised land. Leading to a 40 year journey, for what should have taken 2-3 weeks. The previous generation dies off & the Hebrews finally enter the promised land. A new generation given a new life & Baptism while crossing at the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Later, John the Baptist baptizes Jesus in that same Jordan River.

The ESV version of the Bible contains 908 references to water, 151 verses about thirst, & wells are mentioned in 2,050 verses. Most not in reference to... 'well' as in I'd rather not hear any more about water, thirst, or wells!

In the real olden days water flowed up; because rain hadn't happened. When Noah built the ark; that was done in Faith. The concept of rain was unimaginable. In Faith, he & his family are given new life & a re-birth; after rain happens & water covers the earth.

The water saves those God spares & kills those God judges.

## Second ?:

What benefits does Baptism give?

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death & the devil, & gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words & promises of God declare.

*(Luther's Small Catechism)*

If it is not becoming crystal clear, water is important in the Biblical narrative. Jesus, the Word made Flesh, is the Living Water. The Holy Spirit hovers over the Living Water; Baptizing Creation.

Jesus's first miracle? Turning water into wine. What did Jesus walk on that was so strange to His disciples...? Water. What did Jesus command when He calmed the Storm? Calmness of the turbulent water.

Combining the first two answers of the Small Catechism:

“Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command & combined with God's word.”

“It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death & the devil, & gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words & promises of God declare.” *(Luther's Small Catechism)*

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new Creation. We receive a re-Genesis from Jesus, the true light of the world, in our Baptism. By the creative & sustaining Word of God.

**Third:**

How can water do such great things?

Certainly not just water, but the Word of God in & 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 & no Baptism. But with the Word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, & a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit,  
*(Luther's Small Catechism)*

The Holy Spirit hovers over water. He alighted on Jesus at His Baptism... as He also does in your Baptism. Once more, The Holy Spirit is working with the Word to put us into Communion with the Father. He repeats this in every Baptism. Uniting us to the one Baptism of Jesus. So that in Him, we are made people fully alive.

Then as God speaks... there is light. The shekinah glory of God lighting up Creation.

“And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.” (Genesis 1:4 *ESV*)

The first things to be Christened, to be named, & to be Baptized, were day & night. In that order. Day, the light, made first & foremost in Creation, even though night, darkness, existed first. Just as you were Christened, named, & Baptized.

As St. John recorded “In Him (Him being Christ) was life, & the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, & the darkness has not overcome it. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. (John 1:4, 5, & 9 – *ESV*)

Sin undermines Creation by rebelling against the very Word that spoke Creation into existence. Instead of light & life, darkness & death brood over Creation. The Word becomes Flesh..., of Creation, to redeem Creation.

Into the chaos of the world & your Sin, Jesus comes into Creation, to re-form, & refashion, a new Creation. This Creator makes all things new & He makes the Dead alive. In your Baptism you are Born Again & you are forgiven.

#### Fourth ?:

What does such baptizing with water indicate?

It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition & repentance be drowned & die with all sins & evil desires, & that a new man should daily emerge & arise to live before God in righteousness & purity forever.

*(Luther's Small Catechism)*

As I said last week, Christianity points forward, we acknowledge our past; but you are to look forward. Don't look to your Sin, even though you will return to it; keep looking to who has saved you. He re-claimed you & brought you through to new life. Born again... in your Baptism. In His Living Water.

Look to your Baptism to when He accomplished something for your benefit. He knows you & your Sin, more importantly He knows you are His. Just as He knows every hair on your head. You are a forgiven Baptized child of God.

Christ & His benefits given to you by simple tap water & the Promise, in His Word. This is your confidence.

### Fifth ?:

Where is this written?

St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: “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.” (Romans 6:4)  
*(Luther’s Small Catechism)*

When did you die? When did you acquire new life? When were you born again? When were you raised to newness of the life eternal? At the Cross, through your Baptism, this is a guarantee from God.

In closing St. Mark tells us:

10 And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open & the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

*(Mark 1:10-11 – ESV)*

God was not pleased that Jesus finally took a bath. God was not pleased that Jesus set an example on how to be good. God was not

pleased that Jesus took that first step towards God. God does not need works.

While simple in appearance, after all how many Baptism's have we seen? It is plain water mixed with God's Word of Promise. Abide in the saving Grace & the confidence of His saving work. You are met by The Trinity, meeting in the water, to receive the pure light of God's Truth & the benefits of their grace.

In Jesus, & in His Baptism, & your Baptism... All things are being made right. All water blessed & cleansed. Jesus's Baptism is God coming to bless & cleanse Creation. It is God coming & alighting on you. God the Father looking down, seeing you in His Son, gifting you the Holy Spirit & boldly exclaiming that you are His beloved child with whom He is well pleased. Amen.