



Baptized into Christ

Isaiah 61:10-11 Ephesians 2:1-5 Titus 3:4-7 Romans 6:1-7,11 John 3:3-8

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Think about *marriage* for a minute.

Marriage begins with the *wedding ceremony*. The wedding ceremony usually takes 30 minutes or so; but it **begins** a lifelong relationship between a man and a woman. They are now husband and wife; and together, they begin a new family.

Holy Baptism is similar.

The Baptism service usually takes about 5 minutes or so; but it **begins** a lifelong relationship between a person and their Lord. In Baptism, you are given faith and become a disciple of Jesus. The Holy Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, gives you His Name and brings you into His Family.

In Holy Baptism, the Lord of heaven and earth comes to you through water and His Word to wash you clean from your sins and to purify you from all unrighteousness. **It maybe only took a few minutes for you to be baptized; but the significance of Baptism lasts a lifetime!** *You are in a lifelong relationship with God the Holy Trinity through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!*

Holy Baptism was instituted by Jesus to create faith in people and to bring them into His Church.

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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. Matthew 28:19-20

Holy Baptism is commanded by Jesus; and it is solely His work in your life. Holy Baptism is not a good work that you do; it is a Means of Grace where **God is at work** to wash you clean from your sins and to purify you from all unrighteousness¹. Baptism cleanses your conscience and gives you eternal life.

¹ This is one of the major dividing lines between Protestants and Lutherans: who does the work of Holy Baptism, God or man? Protestants believe it is a command to be obeyed, and it is therefore man's work of obedience. Lutherans believe it is a gift to be received by faith, and therefore God's gracious work of salvation in our lives. See for yourself who is really at work in Holy Baptism: Acts 2:38, 22:16, John 3:5-6, 1 Peter 3:21, Titus 3:5-7, Romans 6:3-5, Matthew 28:18-20.

We all need God to work in Holy Baptism!

The harsh truth is that we are conceived and born into sin². From the beginning, we are sinful and unclean and subject to death and dying. The reason we know that we all sin is because we all will die. Death is the sign of sin. Sin affects all of us; it is a stark reality that thoroughly corrupts us and completely separates us from God. On our own, we have no escape from sin. As St. Paul said today, we are “*dead in sin ... and by nature we deserve God's Wrath*.” (Ephesians 2)”

Jesus teaches us to think of Holy Baptism as being “*born again*.” This time, in Baptism, you are born of God, you are born from above. Your first birth was from your mother, where you were conceived and born into sin and death. Now, in Holy Baptism, you are *born again* – *a second time* -- *from above* -- by the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God in the water of Holy Baptism. In Baptism, you are washed clean of your sins and given eternal life. In Holy Baptism, you are redeemed from sin, set free from guilt, cleansed from unrighteousness, rescued from the world, delivered from the devil, and saved from death. Holy Baptism is a *life giving miracle* in your life! You will not die in your sin; you will live in Christ and His Resurrection³!

St. Paul describes Holy Baptism as being *united* to Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. Romans 6:3-5

² Doctrinally, this is called “Original Sin”. As Lutherans, we teach it like this in the Augsburg Confession: “since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence (Latin: evil desires); and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Spirit.”

³ Martin Luther writes in the Large Catechism: “Baptism is of divine origin . . . What God institutes and commands cannot be useless. It is a most precious thing, even though to all appearances it may not be worth a straw . . . Although it is performed by men's hands, it is nevertheless truly God's own act. . . . Thus you see plainly that Baptism is not a work which we do but is a treasure which God gives us and faith grasps.”

This is all God's work in your life! He made the events of your life happen so that you ended up being Baptized⁴. It is the kindness and love of God for you!

In Holy Baptism, all the blessings and benefits of Christ's life, death, and resurrection are given to you! These gifts were given to you in baptism, and they remain with you throughout your life:

Given the gift of faith

Your conscience is cleansed

Eternal Life is your inheritance

Justified by Grace

Access to God

Considered Holy & Pure

Declared "Not Guilty!"

God is your Father

Filled with Holy Spirit

These gifts were all given to you in Holy Baptism, and they remain with you throughout your life! *That 5 minute baptismal ceremony has eternal significance for you!*

In Holy Baptism, something brand new happened to you: your old sinful nature, *that you were conceived and born with*, is dead and buried with Christ. And just as Christ rose from the dead, so too you have been given new life! In Holy Baptism, you spiritually rose from the dead and have new spiritual life; you have been given eternal life so that you will survive death, and on the Last Day, your body will physically rise from the dead as a resurrected and glorified body. Until then, you are to consider yourself *dead to sin and alive to God!*

⁴ Holy Baptism is part of the doctrine of Election. God chose you in Christ, by grace, before the creation of the world to be His very own (Ephesians 1). At a certain point in history, God sent His Son Jesus to do the work of salvation for you. And during your lifetime, God intentionally worked to bring you the gifts of salvation through the waters of Holy Baptism. Since your Baptism, He has continued to work in your life to keep you in the faith through His Word and the Sacrament of Holy Communion. God's love and watchfulness over you continues even after you die, because He's given you eternal life at the moment of death, and the promise of the resurrection of the dead on the Last Day. God's love, kindness, and care for you extends from eternity past, throughout your lifetime, and into eternal life in heaven! WOW!

Being *dead to sin and alive to God* means is that you do not respond to sin or temptation --> you are “**dead to it**”. Rather, you respond to God and hear and obey His Word. You are *alive in Christ*! You have a new life of faith to live! You belong to God and live in His Kingdom! Baptism changed everything for you: *the old is gone, the new is here*!

If you or your children have not been baptized, or if you are unsure if you have been baptized, then let's talk! Baptism is a not only a command of the Lord, but more importantly, it is one of the ways that He works with His grace and mercy in your life!

One other thing about Holy Baptism.

Baptism brings you into God's Family; you are part of a group of people who have been given faith. You are part of the “Communion of Saints.” A congregation is a community of the Baptized.

- ⇒ **Church membership is important for the Baptized.** Church membership signals that you are publicly aligned with the Baptized people of God. It is a public confession that you are baptized and belong to Christ and want to be with His People.
- ⇒ Along with that, **weekly worship is important for the Baptized.** God's People gather each week for worship. It's what we do. It is the most public thing that Baptized people do. Worship is where God meets with us each week of our lives with His Word and Sacraments to forgive sins, strengthen faith, and empower spiritual life.

God has not set you free from sin and death so that you can live without Him and be separated from His People. *Baptism does not put you on an island; it places you in a community!* In Baptism, you have been brought into God's Family, a congregation to worship God and love others.

Baptism is important!
It is a treasure that God has given to you!
Your Baptism is eternally significant!

It may have only taken 5 minutes for you to be baptized, but it affects every minute of every day of your life! It's who you are! You are a Baptized in Christ! Amen!

Holy Trinity,

**we thank you for Holy Baptism,
and for washing us clean from our
sins, and cleansing our
consciences from guilt.**

**We praise and thank you for the
gift of eternal life, and the joy of
being part of your family.**

**Help us to live as your people,
ignoring sin and temptation, and
pursuing Your Word and Your
Will.**

In Jesus' Name, amen!

Isaiah 61:10-11

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 11 For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

Ephesians 2:1-5

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. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh[a] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Titus 3:4-7

When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he 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, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Romans 6:1-7,11

1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was

crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. ... 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

John 3:3-8

3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again. 4 “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!” 5 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”