

What Does Our Baptism Involve?

Text: Romans 6:3-11

1) That we are dead to sin

Suggested Hymns:

2) But alive to God

332, 364, 280, 277, 279

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Romans 6:3–11, ³ *Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

⁵ *For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. ⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin.*

⁸ *Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. ¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

On the 29th of March, Jack Clemens Jenke was Baptised. The Epistle lesson for today teaches us what Baptism means for us so let us consider the question “*What does Baptism mean for daily living?*” This question is asked in our Catechism. Not as if Baptism was a mere symbol; for in accordance with the Word of God *Luther’s Small Catechism* teaches and confesses that Baptism is a Sacrament and a means of grace.

In Baptism God forgives sin, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe what He has promised. But still there is a reason for this question — not as if Baptism was a mere form, but to remind us of our duty.

The answer to this question is found in our lives. According to the Catechism: *It means that our sinful self, with all its evil deeds and desires, should be drowned through daily repentance; and that day after day a new self should arise to live with God in righteousness and purity for ever.*

The day when a Christian was washed with “*the gracious water of life*” will always be regarded as the day of greatest significance. It is the day on which the only true God became his God and he became the child of God by faith in Christ.

The results and blessed consequences of the day of Jack’s baptism and yours is filled with such far-reaching consequences as to influence the course of his and your whole Christian life. Of this our text speaks, saying, ³ ***Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?***

The theme for today is *What Does Our Baptism Involve?* May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Baptism Means That We Are Dead To Sin.

Christians have a reason to make much of Baptism. Not merely a washing of water as symbolising a cleansing from sin; for St. Paul says in Galatians 3:27 that ²⁷ ***For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*** And in our text: ³ ***Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?***

Let us consider what is meant by the expression? “*Baptized into His death.*”

It means that everything that was necessary for our salvation was finished with the death of Christ. We read in 1 Peter 2:24, that Jesus ***Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness — by whose stripes you were healed.***

What this means for us is that with the holy, innocent death of Christ as the purchase price, or the payment, the account of sinful man with God was settled in full.

Moreover, with Baptism as a means of grace the deed, as it were, the clear title and personal ownership, of these heavenly possessions are placed into our hands. Of this Scriptural truth there can be no doubt. With our baptism a duly signed and attested heavenly certificate of our salvation is placed into the files of our hearts.

God is reconciled, and salvation is ours. And when St. Paul asks: ³ ***Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?***” he is not so much referring to a changed relation on the part of God with respect to baptised Christians, as to the change that has taken place, or should take place in us. Just as Christ has died unto sin, so something should die in us.

Let us examine what is meant by the expression? *“Our old man is crucified with Him.”*

“It signifies that the Old Adam in us should ... be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts.” We know what is meant: our entire sinful depravity, which has come upon us by the fall of Adam and is ours by birth should be “drowned.” We know that is not pleasant.

But our text says ⁶ ***knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him.*** And we read in Galatians 5:24, that ***those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*** It is not easy but it must be done as our text says, ¹¹ ***Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin.*** The old man must *“die with all sins and evil lusts.”*

Without sin the Old Adam cannot live. A fish cannot live without water, a bird cannot fly without air; so the Old Adam cannot live without sin. Sin is his element. In the unregenerate state the unbeliever nourishes the Old Adam with his life of sin. There is no force or influence to counteract the dominion of sin.

However, a baptised Christian, baptised into the death of Christ, should be dead unto sin. A baptised Christian must fight against all sins and evil lusts. We read in 2 Corinthians 5:17, ¹⁷ ***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.***

Let us look at what is meant by the expression? *“That the body of sin might be destroyed.”* This follows. This is the purpose.

A dead body is buried. Our text says, ⁴ *Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death*. When a man is buried, he is dead. When the “old man is crucified,” the power of sin is broken. And this is how it should be.

The body, the physical body, should no more serve as a tool of sin. We should be dead and buried to sin, as if sin had altogether passed out of existence. We read in Romans 6:12, ¹² *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts*.

Our text says ⁷ *For he who has died has been freed from sin*, that is, placed completely beyond the jurisdiction of sin. All of this is included in, and follows as a result of, our baptism into the death of Christ.

Let us now consider some practical considerations.

Of course, it is to be admitted that in this respect, even with the best of Christians, things are not as they should be. St. Paul himself complains in Romans 7:18–19, ¹⁸ *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find*. ¹⁹ *For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice*. The Old Adam is continually active in us. Way back in Genesis 8:21 we read that *the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth*.

But we should fight, drown, and crucify the Old Adam in us by daily contrition and repentance. That is the significance of Baptism. To remind us of this duty, this is why this Epistle-lesson was written.

Thus Baptism becomes for us a source of life. Even though “*we sin every day and deserve nothing but punishment*”¹ still at the same time by daily contrition and repentance we wage unceasing warfare against the powers of sin.

We read in Philippians 3:12, ¹² *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me*. And as our text states “*know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death!*”

2. Baptism Means That We Are Alive To God.

But just as Christ was raised from the dead, so Baptism involves that in it we are alive unto God.

After St. Paul has told us what we should not do and explained to us that we are dead with Christ to sin, he now tells us what we should do — we should reckon ourselves “*alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” Dead unto sin, but alive unto God. Thus, in particular, Baptism is a source of a new godly life.

Here we have the argument from the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We learn from Romans 4:25 that Christ *was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.* The death of Christ was for a purpose. Our text states this very clearly, ¹⁰ *For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all.*

In the death of Jesus, in our place, and for our benefit, He definitely finished and conquered sin.

The second part of verse 10 states, *but the life that He lives, He lives to God.* Our life now belongs to God. “*Even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.*”

So also in its meaning our baptism is coupled with the death and resurrection of Christ.

In our Catechism. “*It signifies that ... a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.*”

In our Epistle-lesson we heard “*That just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*” ⁵ *For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.*

This is not figurative speech. Baptism is actually a “*washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.*” A new life follows Baptism. By Baptism the Holy Spirit has been active in us, created a new life in us, and enabled us to walk in newness of life.

This is why we sang before,²

A new heart, Lord, create in me,
A heart from sin and guilt set free;
Close fast the gate, and keep the door,
That sin may enter in no more.

Our text says, *Even so we also should walk in newness of life.* This means that we are *Dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* And it is the truth. We know it and feel it. In spite of sin and the fighting against sin, “*fightings and fears within, without,*”³ a believing Christian exclaims with St. Paul in the words of Romans 7:22, *22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.*

What are the practical applications? We are dead unto sin, but alive unto God.

This does not mean justification by works. Even as baptised Christians we must depend for our salvation upon the grace of God in Christ. We read in Romans 6:23, *23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The beginning of this chapter of Romans says, *1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*

We must fight against sin. The new man must come forth. Let us first seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Let us be diligent in the study of Scriptures and the use of the means of grace. Let us be slow in anger and guard our tongue. Let us forget insults and repay evil with good. Let us close our mouths against slander and false accusations and help the needy and the work of the Kingdom.

So in conclusion, we are dead unto sin, but alive unto God. May God grant that these words fill our hearts with a greater appreciation of our baptism and that our baptismal certificate may remind us of the fact that with the washing of Baptism we have actually become the children of God and put on Christ, so that this Sacrament may become more and more a source of life unto life! Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ *Luther's Small Catechism, 5th Petition of the Lord's Prayer*

² Hymn 364

³ Hymn 335