

Colossians 2; Lord's Day 26

HOW FAITH IS CONFIRMED IN BAPTISM

- I. It's God's institution.
 - A. God first gave circumcision as a sign of our being separated from our sins.
 1. First, the cutting away of a piece of flesh represented the cutting of the of the sins of the flesh (11).
 2. Second, this sign indicated His people were separated from the world.
 3. God always taught that real circumcision was of the heart (Deut. 10:15; Jer. 4:4; Rom. 2:29).
 - B. Baptism came in the place of circumcision, having the same meaning (text).
 1. Because Jesus shed His perfect blood, no more blood was necessary, nor may any more be shed.
 2. So Jesus instituted the sacrament at His ascension (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16).
- II. Baptism's meaning.
 - A. Real baptism (like real circumcision) is spiritual and speaks of spiritual washing and cleansing (Titus 3:5).
 - B. More than must washing is the idea that it also speaks of our incorporation into Christ.
 - C. This is our real experience when our faith takes hold of God's powerful work of raising Jesus from the dead.
 1. Only faith is to grasp the meaning of baptism and see the reality pictured in the sign.
 2. Even believers do not receive the benefit of baptism if we do not exercise faith at that moment.
- III. The sacrament assures believers.
 - A. Our conscience can be free (good) toward God because baptism assures us that all our sins have been forgiven us.
 - B. My baptism gives me powerful incentive to have me live an antithetical life.
 - C. And the knowledge of my baptism gives me strength to fulfill my calling and to bear life's burdens.
 - D. Finally, when I fall into sin, I must not despair of God's unchanging mercy and forgiveness.