

Session 9 – The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

1. *What is the Sacrament of Holy Baptism?* The Bible is full of statements like: “*God so loved the world (John 3:16)*” and “*He [Jesus] died for all (2 Corinthians 5:15)*.” These statements are wonderful and remind us that God is for all people everywhere. But these statements are not very personal. “The world” means billions of people. You need to know that God loves you individually and personally. You need to know that the Good News of God’s love is _____. Baptism is one way in which God comes to each one of us personally.
2. The Bible describes the natural state in which we were born as being:
 - Spiritually _____. **Read Ephesians 2:1-2.**
 - Spiritually _____. **Read 1 Corinthians 2:14.**
 - _____ of God. **Read Romans 8:7.**
3. If not for God and His cleansing power, we would all be lost forever. And yet, God has done something for us. He sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue us and provided a means by which we can receive His personal blessings. Baptism is that means and through Baptism God:
 - Forgives all our sins (Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16).
 - Sets us free from the power of death and the devil (Romans 6:3-5, Galatians 3:27, Colossians 1:13-14).
 - Gives us everlasting life (Mark 16:16, 1 Peter 3:21, Titus 3:5).
4. Baptism is a Sacrament. According to the definition below, Lutherans generally teach that there are two sacraments: Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. This word “sacrament” is used to describe holy acts or sacred _____:
 - Commanded and instituted by God.
 - In which God Himself has joined His Word of promise to a visible element.
 - Which offer, give, and seal the forgiveness of sins earned by Christ.
5. Baptism joins _____ and _____ to give us life, forgiveness, and salvation. Water is the _____ element in Baptism which cleanses and renews us. Water is by itself only water, but with the Word of God it is a life-giving water which by grace gives the new birth through the Holy Spirit.
6. A valid Baptism is not dependent upon the amount of water used. The word *baptize* means to apply water by immersing, washing, or pouring. God’s Word is both the source of _____ and _____ in Baptism. **Read John 3:3-6.** How do these two verses reveal the power of Baptism? What does it mean to “born again”?

7. *What does Baptism do?* It unites us with _____. Holy Baptism is His act that unites us with Christ and makes us members of His family. **Read Galatians 3:26-29.** Baptism opens the door to _____ in Jesus Christ. It marks the beginning of our spiritual journey. God walks with us on this journey, forgives our sins, and sends us the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Holy Baptism lets us share in the new life voyage of Christ.
8. Holy Baptism also unites us with _____. **Read Ephesians 4:4-6.** Through Baptism we are _____ as children of God. We become brothers and sisters in a new family that includes Christians all over the world. The grace we receive at Baptism helps us throughout life to form relationships with others based on love and forgiveness.
9. The blessings that God gives us through Baptism are:
- _____ over _____. **Read Romans 6:3-5.** How has Christ brought you victory over death?
 - _____ of _____. **Read Acts 22:12-16.** How did the forgiveness of sins break the bonds of Paul's chains to the past?
 - _____. **Read Mark 16:16.**
 - Life in God's _____. **Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.** How does the kingdom of God differ from life outside of it?
 - The _____. **Read Acts 2:38-39.** What does the word *promise* imply?
10. *Who is Baptism for?* The command to baptize came from Jesus after His resurrection. **Read Matthew 28:19-20.** "All nations" are to be baptized, that is, all people, _____ and _____.
11. _____ are to be baptized after they receive instruction and are taught the main articles of the Christian faith (Acts 8:26-39, Acts 2:41).
12. _____ and _____ should be baptized when they are brought to Baptism by those who have authority over them (Acts 16:13-15, Acts 16:25-33). Whole households are baptized in Acts and 1 Corinthians.
13. Why are babies to be baptized?
- Baptism is a gracious _____ from God to all of us. Infants are included in the "*all nations*" of Matthew 28:19 to which Jesus sends us to "*baptize*" and "*make disciples*" (Acts 2:38-39, Acts 18:7-8, 1 Corinthians 12:13).
 - Jesus especially invites _____ to come to Him (Luke 18:15-17, Matthew 18:6).
 - As _____, babies need what Baptism offers (Ephesians 2:3, Psalm 51:5, John 3:5-6). All are born with original sin (Romans 5:12-21)

D. Babies are able to have _____ (Luke 1:15, Luke 1:39-45, Luke 17:1-2).

Note: Infant baptism can be traced to the very early years of the Church. Most Christian traditions have understood the Scriptures to teach that infants and children should be Baptized (which may be a surprise to many in our region of the country). When challenged by the Anabaptist to provide a Scripture to support infant Baptism, Luther responded, “Show me one verse in the Bible where it says to not baptize infants.” The Bible commands us to Baptize “all nations” and does not say that this excludes young people.

14. Much like the sign of circumcision in the Old Testament, Baptism is not dependent upon a person’s age, but on the faithfulness of the Lord to fulfill His Word. **Read Genesis 17:9-14.** Circumcision was a sign of God’s covenant of faithfulness which was performed on Israelite boys. These infants who were circumcised on the 8th day of their lives did not make the decision to be circumcised, nor were they really conscious of what was happening. The parents were acting on the word and promise of God. **Read Colossians 2:11-12.** How does the covenant of Baptism surpass the covenant of circumcision?

15. It is the responsibility of the *parents* to care for the spiritual as well as the physical needs of their children. Respond to the following statement: “Now that our entire household has been baptized, we don’t have anything to worry about.” **Read Matthew 13:22.** How must faith constantly be nurtured?

16. The primary responsibility of the *parents* is to:

- _____ for their child’s Baptism.
- Build a family upon the foundation of Christ and His Word where there is _____, _____, and _____.
- Teach them to pray and help them learn the basic teachings of Christianity. This is the primary responsibility of the _____. If there is no Christian husband/father present or if he is too weak, then this responsibility must be taken on by the wife/mother. The head of the family should teach his household the Word of God, the basics of the faith, and lead them in prayer on a regular basis. (*Directions for teaching the faith to your family may be found in Luther’s Small Catechism.*)
- _____ their children’s spiritual growth. Example: Confirmation
- _____ active participation in worship, education, and service.

17. *Sponsors* help the baptized person by encouraging to grow in the faith and serve as _____. They are to hold the newly baptized in their prayers, keep them mindful of their baptism, and encourage them to lead a Christian life. When a baby or young child is baptized these sponsors are commonly referred to as godparents. While godparents and sponsors are not required by the Bible, it is a good and useful practice that goes back far into Church history.

18. Although Baptism marks the beginning of our spiritual journey, throughout our lives it will assure us that we belong to God and that He made us His very own. We will need this great certainty for we will continue to face temptation, the rebellion of our old nature, and struggles of many kinds. **Read Romans 6:4-14.** Why must we, in daily remembrance of our Baptism, drown the old nature with all its desires and arise to live before God in righteousness?

19. Now that we have learned the power and importance of Baptism, a question often comes to mind. If in Baptism we are forgiven of our sins, given faith in Christ, and made a child of God then can a person enter heaven without being baptized?