

Catechetical Sermon, November 3, 2024

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 26, "On Baptism, Part 1"

Scripture Lessons: Romans 6:1-5; 1 Peter 3:18-22

Lesson Aim	To understand that baptism signifies and seals the promise of being washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ.
Steps to Learning	Read the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 26 and Romans 6:1-5 and 1 Peter 3:18-22 . Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
Discuss	<p>Discuss as a family: What has been your understanding of baptism, right or wrong?</p> <p>What does baptism signify and seal? It signifies and seals the promise of the Gospel.</p> <p>More specifically, what does baptism signify and seal in the Gospel as well as one additional thing? With respect to the Gospel, it signifies and seals the washing of Christ's blood, which relates to justification. In addition, it signifies and seals the cleansing of the Holy Spirit, which relates to sanctification. To qualify, sanctification is not the Gospel; the Gospel strictly speaking is the good news about Christ's death and resurrection. Sanctification is a consequence of the Gospel.</p> <p>What is one of the results of being baptized with respect to the church? Being baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit marks one as belonging to God and being a member of the visible church.</p> <p>In the 1 Peter passage Peter states that baptism saves. What does that mean? Peter is not arguing that the waters of baptism saves a person or regenerates him. Rather, it is "an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." This means the effect of baptism is to save a person eternally so that a person can pledge his life to God in good conscience or with a clear conscience having been cleared by God and this happens through faith.</p> <p>What is Paul saying in the Romans 6 passage? Paul says that Baptism unites us to the historic work of Jesus Christ. Baptism is a means or an instrument by which we are buried or dead with Christ. Burial with Christ by baptism is not the place in which we are buried with Christ as if coming down into the water and coming back out is our own grave experience linked to Christ's grave experience. That is not what Paul is saying – he is rather saying that <u>as</u> Christ was crucified and dead in the grave so are we. But also, as Christ was raised from the dead, so are we, through faith.</p>
Bible Reading	Psalms 111-118 (Reading through the Psalms)