

Baptism Is A Source Of Comfort And An Incentive To A Life Of Holiness.

Text: Rom 6:3-11

1) How Baptism Is A Source Of Comfort

Suggested Hymns:

2) How Baptism Is An Incentive To A Life Of Holiness

280, 279, 332, 277, 226R&S

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,

The great subject of our Epistle is Baptism. St. Paul reminds the Christians at Rome of the fact that they have been baptised into Jesus Christ, and tells what great things this holy Sacrament accomplishes in the believing Christian.

It is to be deeply regretted that Baptism is so little valued and estimated in our days. Most of the Christian churches of the day take Baptism for a mere ceremony which may be done or left undone, according to one's own pleasure.

Many people oppose infant Baptism, and say that only adults should be baptised, and those who still believe in infant Baptism attach no importance to it.

And how about us Lutherans in whose Catechism the Sacrament of Holy Baptism is set forth as one of the chief parts of Christian doctrine, who have been taught from childhood that Baptism is of the utmost importance.

Baptism works forgiveness of sin, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this. It is the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.¹

We know that our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded us to bring our children to Him in Baptism, that He has given the command that all nations, including the children, should be baptised. Jesus says in Mark 10:14, *“Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.* And the Apostle says in Galatians 3:27, *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

But we are as quick and as desirous as we should be that our new-born infants be received into Christ's kingdom, and put on Christ, and be clothed in His righteousness? Do we always bear in mind what blessings have been bestowed on our children in Holy Baptism?

We teach our children to pray, and tell them of their Saviour Jesus, but do we also remind them of the solemn covenant which they have made with God in their blessed Baptism?

Do we tell them that in this blessed Baptism Jesus has received them into His grace, and laid His divine hand upon them, and blessed them?

Do we tell them that things have been bestowed upon them in Baptism which are worth infinitely more than all the treasures of this earth, and that they have been made heirs of eternal life?

O how would the minds of our little ones be impressed with heaven, how much more would they be led to keep the faith, if we would tell them what Baptism meant for them!

But this holy Sacrament is also of vast importance for us all as long as we live. With the help of God's Holy Spirit let us observe that *Baptism Is A Source Of Comfort And An Incentive To A Life Of Holiness*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. How Baptism Is A Source Of Comfort

All that is done in Baptism is, that water is applied and the words are spoken, *"I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."*

How foolish in the sight and from the standpoint of human reason to expect any benefit for the soul from such an act! How foolish to think that the water in Baptism washes away the sins from the soul, and gives life and salvation to the believer by virtue of the Word of God connected with the water!

But these are the words of God. They are nothing in the sight of men, insignificant, foolish, and faith is required to obtain the great benefit which God bestows on us in His holy Sacraments.

The Apostle says in our text, *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.*

In other words, Christ died for your sins, Christ has reconciled you with God by His suffering and death, Christ took your sins with Him into the grave, and He came forth from the tomb with life and immortality. And all that Christ has done for you has been conferred upon you in Holy Baptism.

When you were baptised into Jesus Christ, the Saviour from sin united Himself with you in a most wonderful way, and you were made Christ's own. When the water was applied to you in Baptism, you were changed at once in the sight of God. From that moment God looked upon you as if you had died and were risen again, as if you yourself had borne the punishment for all your transgressions, and had obtained the victory over death and hell.

And it is for the sake of Jesus Christ that God looks upon you so favourably. You have to thank Christ for that. With Christ you died and rose again in

Baptism. Baptism is the formal application of Christ's great work for the whole fallen human race to the individual.

O the happy day when we were baptised into Jesus Christ! Should we not consider that day the happiest day of our lives? Polycarp, the aged martyr, found comfort in his early Baptism when he was led to the stake to be burned to death.

Polycarp had been a pupil of the Apostle John, and had attained to the high age of ninety years when in the persecution waged against the Christians he was brought before the heathen authorities and asked to renounce Christ. He answered: *"For eighty-six years I have served Him, and He has never done me a wrong; how can I blaspheme my King who has saved me?"*

Now Polycarp was ninety years of age. Why did he say: *"For eighty-six years I have served Him?"* Doubtless, because as a child of four years he was brought to Christ in Holy Baptism, and ever since then he had been a Christian.

There is not another day in the life of a Christian in which God does greater things for him than the day in which he is baptised into Jesus Christ. On that blessed day God did for us even more than on the day when we were born into this life.

On the day when we saw the light of this world, we were made children of men by our natural birth. But on the day when we were baptised, we were made children of God by a new spiritual birth.

On that blessed day God formally adopted us for His children, and received us to Himself that we should be His own, and forgave us all our sins, not only the sin with which we were born, but all our sins, the sins of our whole life.

Must not, then, our blessed Baptism be a source of comfort to us for all the days of our life? Are you troubled in your mind, my dear Christian friend? Do you realise that you are a damnable sinner? Does your conscience convict you? Do you feel the wrath of God? Do the sins and transgressions of your youth stand before the eye of your soul condemning you?

Does a voice say within you: *'Who knows what will be your fate in the end; perhaps you will end in hell and torment after all, in spite of your religious conviction?'*

If such thoughts trouble you, remember that you have been baptised. You have been baptised into Jesus Christ. Then and there have you put on Christ. Christ was made your own. His suffering, His death, His resurrection, everything that He has accomplished for the whole sinful world was applied to your person in Baptism.

O grasp and receive those blessed things which God a long time ago has given you in Baptism; they are yours, and God tells you that they are still yours. Even if you have broken your part of the baptismal covenant and have fallen into sin, God will never break His part of the covenant.

He says to you in Isaiah 54:10, *¹⁰ For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,” Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.*

Or must you suffer a great deal in this life, are the joys but few which you have on this earth, are you forsaken, have you no friends, are you stricken with illness, are you afflicted in any way?

Remember that you have been baptised! You have been baptised into Jesus Christ, into His death. Then and there you have been made an heir of eternal life, which Christ has gained for you by His victory over the grave. What are all the sufferings of this present time compared with the glory which is to be revealed in us?

What do you care for earthly friends when you have a Friend in heaven who sticks closer than a brother?² What is the world for you, which soon passes away with the lust thereof,³ when heaven with its unspeakable joy is your true home?

O let us always bear in mind what God has actually done for us, given us, presented to us in Baptism, and this blessed Sacrament will be a source of blessing to us and a source of comfort always, as often as we are bowed down with grief and made despondent.

2. How Baptism Is An Incentive To A Life Of Holiness.

But in Baptism we also have an incentive to a life of holiness. This is the second part of our consideration.

The Apostle’s object in the chapter of our text is to show that the doctrine of God’s grace in Christ does not give a man liberty to sin as much as he pleases.

This is the objection which has always been raised, and is raised to this day, against the doctrine of God's grace, and also of His unlimited grace in Holy Baptism.

It is claimed that, if God so freely extends forgiveness for Christ's sake, and if in Baptism He forgives the sins of our whole life, then it does not matter how much we sin because our forgiveness is always there.

But there is no foundation for such an objection, as we shall readily see. The Apostle says, 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.*

To what end, then, does God forgive us our sins in Baptism? That we should continue in sin, and that we should not care how much we do sin? Certainly not!

Baptism itself has the purpose to help us from sin, and to help us to walk in newness of life. *We were buried with Him through baptism into death,*" says the Apostle; and being baptised, *we should no longer be slaves of sin.*

There is a special significance to such baptising with water. As Luther so precisely puts it: *"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."*

What an incentive we have, then, in Baptism to lead a holy life! This doctrine of Holy Baptism will not produce secure sinners, as some people think. This doctrine will not lead people to think that they may sin as much as they please because all their sins have been forgiven them in Baptism.

Those who make light of their sins in this way will not give any thought to Baptism, but despise the Sacrament. On the contrary, if a Christian rightly views his Baptism with its meaning, it will serve him as a stimulus to shun sin and to walk in true holiness.

For it is true that in Baptism you have put on Christ, and if in Christ, clad with the robe of His spotless righteousness, you appear before God's throne, you will be saved; but if without Christ, without His righteousness, you will pass into eternity, and you will be lost forever.

It is true that Christ has been made your own in Baptism, and that you have been united with Christ in this blessed Sacrament; but have you also remained with Christ?

Countless numbers of people sever their connection with Christ as they grow up after Baptism, and deliver themselves to the devil and his works and his pomp, which they had renounced when they were Baptised.

And what does Baptism benefit them if they throw away and cast aside those heavenly treasures which God has given them? And it is true that Christ's death and resurrection have been made yours in Baptism. You have been freed from sin and transferred into a new, spiritual, heavenly life.

But do you also walk in newness of life? Or do you walk according to the lusts of your own sinful flesh?

Remember that if on this earth you do not begin and attempt to walk in holiness, then you deny your own Baptism, and you will never reach the land where sin is no more.

Finally, it is true that in Baptism you have been made a child of God and an heir of eternal life; but do you also remain God's dear child, and do you still find yourself in the kingdom of His grace? Remember that you cease to be God's child if sin has dominion over you, and that by wilful sinning you break your baptismal covenant.

Let us not be deceived, my friends! All things that we need for our eternal welfare, for our salvation, have been freely given to us in Holy Baptism; this is true.

But just as true it is that we can lose each and everything. Let us hold fast to the grace of our God which He has extended to us in Baptism! Let us show by our walk and conversation, by leading a godly and holy life, that we have not fallen from our baptismal grace.

Let us conclude with this word of Scripture, Revelation 3:11, ***"Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown!"*** Amen.

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

¹ Titus 3:7

² Proverbs 18:24

³ 1 John 2:17