

Theme: Water baptism is the sign and seal of our union with Christ and the cleansing He provides for sin, a means of grace to provide strength in our struggle against sin, and the medium through which we testify of our faith in Christ and membership in the church.

I. Water Baptism - A Key Part of Christianity

- A. Today we had 2 people being water baptized!
- B. Christians have been doing this for over 2,000 years!
- C. Why do we do this? What is water baptism?
- D. Catechism Question and Answer 75

II. A Sign and Seal of Our Union With Christ

Water baptism is the sign and seal of our union with Christ and the cleansing He provides for sin...

- A. A sign and seal - covenant symbols
 - In him you were also **circumcised**... ¹² having been buried with him in **baptism**... Colossians 2:11–12
 - 1. Paul links circumcision and baptism
 - 2. Circumcision was the sign and seal of God's covenant with His people in the Old Covenant
 - 3. In the new covenant the covenant sign and seal, the symbol of being part of God's covenant people is now water baptism.
- B. Our union with Christ
 - For **in Christ** all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and you have been given fullness **in Christ**, who is the head over every power and authority. ¹¹ **In him** you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, ¹²having been **buried with him in baptism** and **raised with him** through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. Colossians 2:9–12

- 1. Water baptism points to our union with Christ
 - a. In Christ, in Him, with Him - 5x in 4 verses!
 - b. This points to our vital union with Jesus!
 - c. Everything we have comes from Christ - in Him we are cleansed, justified, adopted, given the Spirit, sanctified, and waiting to be glorified in Him in eternity!
 - d. In water baptism, our union with Christ is symbolized
- 2. Water baptism unites us with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection

Or don't you know that all of us who were **baptized into Christ Jesus** were **baptized into his death**? ⁴ We were therefore **buried with him through baptism into death** in order that, **just as Christ was raised from the dead** through the glory of the Father, **we too may live a new life**. Romans 6:3–4

- a. We were baptized into Christ Jesus!
 - b. We were baptized in Jesus' death, buried with Him in baptism, and raised with Him to new life!
- C. Our union with Christ - cleansing from sin
 - In him you were also circumcised, in **the putting off of the sinful nature**, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. **He forgave us all our sins**, Colossians 2:11–13
 - 1. Water baptism points to the cleansing from sin
 - 2. The cleansing and forgiveness are done through the blood of Christ, but baptism symbolizes that cleansing and purification.

III. A Means of Grace In Our Struggle Against Sin

Water baptism is ... a means of grace to provide strength in our struggle against sin...

A. Water baptism is a means of grace

1. Means of grace - specific activities in which God has promised to meet His people and strengthen them by His grace.
2. God may meet us in many different ways - but He **promises** to meet us and strengthen us via the means of grace
3. See catechism question 44 and the teaching series for more info (listed in the discussion guide)

B. A means of grace for our struggle against sin

In him you were also circumcised, in **the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism** and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. Colossians 2:11–12

1. The putting off of the sinful nature - not our literal 'flesh' but the old nature that wants to submit to sin.
2. This is not something we do - it is done by Christ
3. This is linked with water baptism!
4. Paul teaches something similar in Romans 6
Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life... ⁶ For we know that our old self

was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — Romans 6:3–4, 6

- a. When we turn to Christ our old nature is crucified with Him (v6)
 - b. In baptism, we bury that dead old man!!
 - c. In baptism, we are united with Christ in His burial, and raised with Him to walk in a new pattern of life!
5. This does not mean we become sinless, but water baptism is a means of grace that gives us strength to live as a disciple of Christ.

IV. Testifying of Faith & Membership In the Church

Water baptism is ... the medium through which we testify of our faith in Christ and membership in the church.

A. Baptism shows we are in union with Christ through faith

1. We saw this above (Sign and Seal of Union)
2. Both of today's texts are about our union with Christ
3. Water baptism is how we show we have come to faith in Christ

B. This was how Christ calls His followers to be identified

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19–20

1. Disciples are seen as they are baptized!
2. This is 50% make disciples - baptize, teach!

3. We do not need to look for other ways for people to be identified as disciples (sinners prayer, walking an aisle, signing a card)
 4. All who claim to be a disciple of Christ are called to be water baptized!
- C. This is how early believers were identified and became part of the church!
1. On Pentecost, this was what Peter told them to do!
Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.” Acts 2:38–39
 - a. Repent and be baptized - this is what you do!
 - b. This is for you, your kids, all who are far away - in space and time!
 2. In baptism they also became part of the local church
Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:41–42
 - a. Those who came to faith were baptized!
 - b. They were added to their number - they became part of the new church!
 - c. They participated in the life and worship of the church (v42)
 3. God is the One Who acts to unite us to Christ and empower us as we are baptized - but in response we are also giving public testimony that we are followers of Jesus and part of His people.

V. Applying the Word

A. Have you come to Christ?

1. Don’t misunderstand - every blessing is only in Christ!
2. Apart from faith in Christ water baptism is just getting wet in public!
3. Each of us must look to Christ to find the forgiveness of sin and new life!
4. If you have not then do so today - and then see me about getting baptized!

B. Have I been baptized in water?

1. This is not an option or nice ceremony - it is the command of the Lord Jesus Christ for ALL disciples!
2. This is the covenant symbol given by god and commanded for all of His people!
3. This is a means of grace to empower us in our struggle against sin!
4. This is THE means Jesus gave to identify as His disciple and to be part of His people in a local church!
5. You may feel aware of areas of faithlessness - God is faithful!
6. If you have not ever been water baptized - why not?

C. Our Sacramental Table

1. Water baptism and The Lord’s Table are the two new covenant signs and seals given by Jesus

2. They are more than just symbols; they are sacraments - a special symbol given by God to His people that, when received in faith, serves as a sign and seal of His promises to us, functions as a means of grace to strengthen us, and through which we testify of our faith in Him and His promises.
3. Here at the Table to Lord meets us, feeds us, and strengthens us!
4. Come and receive from Your Lord and be strengthened to serve Him!

What Is Water Baptism?

Colossians 2:9-15; Romans 6:3-7

April 16, 2023

Communion

Galatians 3:26-29

Teaching keywords: Catechism; water baptism; sacrament; means of grace; sanctification; Church

You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ Since you belong to Christ, you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:26–29

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. ¹¹ In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Colossians 2:9–15

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵ If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — ⁷ because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Romans 6:3–7