

Baptism

A Washing for All Time

No one likes the thought of being wet for a long time. Think of a toddler squirming in a squishy diaper or an adult caught in a cold April shower. What uncomfortable pictures flash before the mental video screen! The very thought makes us shiver.

For a child of God, the picture of being wet for a lifetime evokes a far different reaction. Instead of discomfort and chills, the Christian senses the warmth and comfort that radiate from the promises that are ours through the water of Holy Baptism. Through this washing of water and the Word, the holy God comes into our lives and leaves us “wet” for life. God comes to us through this Sacrament and engulfs us in his powerful grace. Although this washing happens only once, it is so powerful that it drenches our parched souls with the sweet refreshment of forgiveness over and over again. Baptism is a washing with lasting effect. It’s no wonder Luther, the great reformer, once said, “Every Christian consequently has enough to learn and to practice all his life in regard to Baptism” (Large Catechism, Janzow translation, p. 103).



Can Baptism mean so much throughout my entire life? Scripture says so. In fact, God has much to say about this washing of water with the Word. The various forms of the word baptize occur over one hundred times in the New Testament. The apostle Paul states, “You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11). Read carefully, and rejoice. Notice the passive verbs. You were cleansed. You were set apart. You were declared innocent before God’s throne. Notice the past tense. It is an accomplished fact. Let skeptics snicker, but no one can change what God has declared. In Baptism we have been united in Jesus and washed clean. The water of Baptism will affect our lives forever. If God makes a promise, it stands sure and solid. “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind” (Numbers 23:19).

Think of your baptism every morning as you face the mirror with water dripping from your face. Remember that God has washed you clean through the blood of Jesus and poured that forgiveness upon you through Baptism. “Be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). Through the water of Baptism, we have been washed for life. This precious water warms and comforts us.