

14. Remember Your Baptism

When you were born into a family, you took on a name. You had nothing to do with your birth. It was something that happened to you. You were born. So in Holy Baptism, you were not baptized into a congregation or a denomination, but into the name, the family, of the one, true, holy, triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As you had nothing to do with your physical birth, so also you had absolutely nothing to do with your new birth in Holy Baptism. You were baptized. It was something done to you and in you. You were the object of God's grace. It was divine action upon you.

Baptism is not simply a symbol or a hollow ritual. Rather, it is a glorious means of grace - a means by which the holy Lord God comes to us and blesses us. Not only do the Holy Scriptures teach, but we firmly believe that "Baptism works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe." (Luther's Small Catechism) The Bible says, "Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins." *Acts 22:16* As water cleanses our bodies, so the water of Baptism, used with the Spirit-filled Word of God cleanses our souls. Through Holy Baptism you became God's very own children, members of His household, taking on His blessed name. Listen: "You are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." *Galatians 3:26, 27*.

By baptism you have become heirs and joint heirs with Christ. In baptism your names were not only inscribed in the church records and on a baptismal certificate, but in God's own Book of Life. Peter declares: "Baptism also now saves us." *1 Peter 3:21*. And so you not only belong to your earthly family, but through the washing of the water and the Word you belong to the holy Lord God, the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of saints.

What does your Baptism mean to you? How often do you think of your Baptism? Do you faithfully apply your Baptism to your every day living? Is your Baptism a source of peace and joy and strength? Let me quickly point-out a couple of ways in which your Baptism can be a special source of wonderful help and comfort to you.

Let us say that things aren't going well for you in the home or at work or wherever. You feel pressured and perplexed. You become discouraged and despondent. You begin to feel alone, helpless, deserted. But wait a minute! You have been baptized into the family of God! You are His! He loves you! He is going to see you through. He has promised that and He keeps His promises. You are His child. He has laid down His life for you. Take heart, in Christ your Lord and Savior there is help and there is hope. Remember, you have been baptized into His name most holy.

And here is another way in which your Baptism can be a wonderful source of help and strength. Let us say that you are tempted to think or to say or do something that is not in accord with the holy will of God. But then you recall your Baptism. You remember who you are and to Whom you belong. Recalling your Baptism, in the strength of Him Who has all power in heaven and on earth, you resolve: "I cannot do that or say that or even think that. I am God's child. I belong to Him." In humble, fervent prayer you enter His outstretched arms pleading for His mercy and strength and you know "God will take care of you, God will take care of you."

Remember your Baptism. Don't forget who you are and to Whom you belong through Holy Baptism. When you hear those opening words at a worship service: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," remember your Baptism, for those were the exact same words spoken at your Baptism as water was applied.

Would you like to relive your Baptism every day? Each time you wash your hands, recall your Baptism. It could prove to be a wonderful blessing!

Remember Your Baptism

We Begin

Leader (L) and Group (G)

L: We begin in the name of the God into Whom we were baptized,
G: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We Search Scriptures - Galatians 3:26-29

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

We Meditate

Follow this outline as the meditation is presented

You were born into a family
You were baptized into a family

Baptism: the Father's way of forgiving us and saving us
Baptism: the Father's way of choosing us

What does your Baptism mean to you...
During times of trouble?
During times of temptation?

Times to remember your Baptism
The Invocation ("In the name of ...")
Hand-washing

We Respond

L: Lord, when I get discouraged by my troubles in life,
G: Remind me of my Baptism.
L: Lord, when I am tempted to doubt Your love for me,
G: Remind me that I am Yours.
L: Lord, when I sin against You and then seek Your mercy,
G: Remind me of my Baptism.
L: Lord, when I am tempted to go against Your will,
G: Remind me that I am Yours.
L: Lord, as long as I live,
G: Remind me of my Baptism. Remind me that I am Yours.

We Pray

Dear heavenly Father, Your love for us is so great. You chose us to be Your children. You brought us into Your holy family through Holy Baptism. You thus gave us forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Help us to remember our Baptism and bask in its blessings every day.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

