

LD 26; Rom. 6:1-11; I Cor. 10:1-13 “Baptized Into Jesus” I. Death by Water II. Life through His Blood III. Renewed in His Spirit

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, what does baptism mean and what is it supposed to remind us of? Since we have just witnessed a baptism, it is fitting to jump ahead in our catechism to consider this visible means of grace. As a means of Grace, Christ by His Spirit strengthens our faith as we receive and meditate upon this sign and seal. This week we begin to consider Baptism and its benefit. Most of us sitting here today have been baptized as children- most of us do not remember our baptism because we were too young. But the benefit and application of baptism does not end after we receive it. The benefits and the promises apply today as well! Today we will see that baptism into Jesus points to the benefits of new life in Him. Children- is a water a danger or blessing? Depends on how it is used? You need it- but you can drown in it- right? Well- today we will see both uses of water- to bring both death and life!

### **I. Death by Water**

We begin then by considering how baptism points to death by water. In our first reading in I Cor. 10 we find that the Israelites as they passed through the Red Sea were baptized into Moses. Perhaps one of the most memorable OT events is when Israel crossed the Red Sea in Exodus 13. Paul takes this historical event to teach us about baptism. Children, did you know when the Israelites came out of Egypt- that one of the reasons God had them pass through the Red Sea was to teach them and us about what it means when we are baptized? While living in Egypt, the Hebrew people were dirty. Their lives were filled with slavery, idolatry and difficult labor- they were serving the hard taskmasters and they were in bondage to Pharaoh. They were hopelessly caught in bondage- living in a land filled with idols with little hope of a better future. They needed to be cleansed! In this context of hopelessness, God sends His servant Moses. Moses comes as a prophet and shepherd, and he leads the people out of Egypt being a mediator from God. While traveling in the desert, Israel is brought to the shore of the Red Sea. Pharaoh and his army have changed their minds, and they are in hot pursuit- they want their slaves back! But by the grace of God, a way of deliverance was opened up. The Red Sea was divided, and Moses led God’s people across the Sea on dry ground. A great death happened at the Red Sea- if you were not baptized into Moses- united to him and under his staff- you were destroyed! As Pharaoh and his army learned- the water of baptism points to death! Like Noah and the flood, the same water can mean life and deliverance- or death and

destruction- depending where you are! Paul says- this was in fact a baptism- the Israelite people were baptized into Moses as I Cor. 10:2 says. This historical event teaches us spiritual truth. God brought them out of slavery to sin and death- and the sign they received was baptism- washing at the water of the Red Sea. The Israelite nation was baptized into their leader- Moses. As a people, they had become new and alive! And where were the people going? They were going to be brought to the Promised Land- to a land flowing with milk and honey! Paul makes it clear in I Cor. 10: 4-5 that this was a physical event with a spiritual meaning- they had not only received a physical deliverance- they were meant to learn of their spiritual deliverance as well. Even if they received the external sign- even if their forefathers were baptized into Moses- it did them no good if this sign was not embraced with a heart of faith! That is why they all died in the wilderness- their hearts did not believe in the Spiritual Rock and thus they were overthrown in the wilderness. In order to come into a new land and live a new life- they had to die to the old life- but the Israelites loved the old life and wanted to go back to it! But we, however, have not been baptized into Moses. Rather, we have been baptized into Jesus. We follow Christ through the water- we die with Him and become a consecrated as His people. As the nations saw and heard that Israel had been saved through the Red Sea- so God's people today receive baptism as a sign to the world- we belong and are saved through Him! His name upon us! We are dirty by nature- infected- dead in our sins and enslaved to Satan. Something needs to die! But what dies when we are baptized into Jesus? If the water of baptism points to death- what is put to death? As we read in Rom. 6:3- all who have been baptized into Jesus have been baptized into His death. What dies? Well, when we are baptized into Jesus our sin is put to death! We join Jesus in the tomb first of all- our old man is dead and buried. We die to sin and the tyranny of the Devil! Our bondage to sin and death is removed as we die with Christ in our baptism- as Rom. 6:9 says- we are set free- no longer enslaved! We too are going somewhere- we are traveling not to the land of Canaan- but to the promised land of rest! As Israel was delivered, so we too are delivered at our baptism! Baptism is a sign and a seal- as a picture it tells us that our sins are dead- the old man in the grave! And those who are united to Christ in faith receive the very thing that is promised! Sin has no dominion over us- for it died once and for all!

## **II. Life through His Blood**

As QA 69 says, baptism is a sign of our sins being washed away. But baptism has more to say- not only does it speak of death it also speaks of life. As we read in QA 70 we are washed with Christ's blood. As we have

seen already, the outward sign of baptism- be that in the OT or in the NT- is a sign that points to an internal truth. Those who are united to Christ in faith not only have their sins put to death, we also find that those united to Christ are washed with His blood. Baptism is a sacrament of water- and water is used for cleansing. It is not enough that our sins be put to death- we need clean life to be given to us. As Rom. 6:8 says, if we have died with Him we will also live with Him. Christ's blood not only washes us- it also gives life! Being united to Christ means we have life everlasting! We are no longer enemies and strangers, but we are children and heirs! We could summarise this new life in one word- Justified! Baptism points to the benefits of righteousness and life which Christ has purchased for us. Those who go down to die in the water of baptism are also raised up- alive- to come out of the water to live! Just as water washes away dirt from my body- all my sins are washed away by the blood of the Lamb- and I am made alive! My sins taken away- and new life received! If we died with Christ, we will live with Him II Tim. 2 says! This is what baptism promises- assures us! Remember again, that the benefits of baptism are received by faith- the external act does not change the heart! As the Israelite people needed to be circumcised in the heart- so we need to be baptized in the heart! As we rest and rely on the promises of God- we embrace them and believe in the appointed Savior! Not only do God's people enjoy the benefit of freedom from sin and slavery to the Devil- we also have been purchased by precious blood so that we do not belong to ourselves- but we belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ! The shedding of blood normally brings death to the one who shed it- but here this blood gives life to those upon whom it falls because Christ both died and rose again! Blood covered and now living- that is who we are in Christ!

### **III. Renewed in His Spirit**

But there is one more benefit to consider. First we saw that our sins have been put to death with Christ- plunged and destroyed in the water of baptism. Secondly we received life- justification as we are washed and purified in God's sight to be holy and acceptable. Thirdly we see that baptism has something to offer us in the here and now- a benefit and a calling in this life! Not only is the old way of live dead- but we have forgiveness and renewal. Or I could say- we have justification by the blood of Christ and we have sanctification by the Spirit of Christ! All of these benefits are promised in the sacrament of baptism- and these are the certain possession of those who are united to Christ in faith! After passing through the water of the Red Sea, Israel was a new nation. But as a new nation coming to Mount Sinai they needed to be taught how to live. So the LORD gave them the 10

Commandments. These are the words of the Law- live in this way because I have made you new! In Christ, we have a two-fold washing. Washed in the blood and sprinkled by the Spirit. In baptism, God's people are consecrated- set apart for service to Him. As QA 70 says, we are washed with Christ's Spirit for renewal. Not only have we already died and now already live with Christ- as Rom. 6:11 says- we who live with Christ are to consider- recon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ. The life He lives is the one we must live- a living unto God! Set apart- so that I more and more look like Christ whose blood and Spirit I have received! In other words, there is a holy calling that goes along with our baptism. Remember that a Covenant has two parts- as our form for baptism reads- we receive both a promise and an obligation. Jesus Christ died on the cross to keep God's promise of deliverance. By His blood we are washed. But he also rose again- to give resurrection life to His people. He poured out His Spirit to set us free so that we might in this life- already now live like we have been set free. As covenant people- we are obligated to respond. We have been liberated to serve and obey! So the commands of Christ are not burdensome- they are delight! We want to- we desire to obey- and by the Spirit- we are assured that those who are truly baptized into Christ will obey! So do not desire evil as I Cor. 10:6- but flee from idolatry.

To conclude, we have just begun to see the blessing, benefit and calling connected to our baptism. Our sins have died- and the Devil along with the old man have been drowned in the depths of the sea. By the blood of Christ, we receive forgiveness of sins and life! Israel was baptized at the sea- baptized into Moses on the way to Canaan. We have been baptized into the blood and the Spirit of Christ- baptized on our way to the heavenly land of rest. Remembering your baptism should stir your heart to thankful obedience- that God would call you and deliver you- that He would make you His own! At baptism we see the crushing water deal a death blow to Satan and my sin- but we also find a healing stream and a cleansing sprinkle. If united to Christ, you will be safely brought through the water- He will bring you to the land of Rest. Baptism is a sign of judgment and death- and it is a sign of consecration, life and renewal. Like the flood which destroyed a wicked world but spared Noah- so we who are in Christ find deliverance and protection! In His blood our sins are forgiven- by His Spirit we are renewed. Does water wash away dirt? So also does Christ's blood and Spirit wash away all my sins! Baptism into Jesus points to the benefits of new life in Him- and those who embrace Christ by faith receive that which is promised and portrayed!