



Cleansed and Fed: The Sacramental Life God Has Poured His Love Upon Us

BAPTISM DESERVES OUR CAREFUL ATTENTION

How desperate is our need for rescue from God?

How is Baptism a powerful means of rescue?

What are two key biblical pictures of Baptism *as justification*?

What is sanctification?

Why is living a sanctified life a daily battle?

Name some occasions when it's important to *pay attention* to something:

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Say the following hymn stanza together:

Built on the Rock the Church shall stand
Even when steeples are falling.
Crumbled have spires in every land;
Bells still are chiming and calling,
Calling the young and old to rest,
But above all the soul distressed,
Longing for rest everlasting.

Nikolai Grundtvig (1867-1937) Christian Worship, Hymn 856, s.1

Paying Attention to Baptism... In our personal life

Think of the hymn stanza above. Why will Christ's Church stand "even when steeples are falling"? Who or what are the bells that are "chiming and calling the young and old to ... rest everlasting?"

Mention some personal religious rituals people use (Christian or otherwise).

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What are dangers of doing these things?

What are benefits of doing these things, even if not perfectly?

Daniel 6:6-10 – read in your Bibles

What danger did Daniel face for disobeying the king's order?

What personal ritual had Daniel apparently been using for some time? How did this particular ritual prove beneficial to him in time of danger?

Martin Luther, from his Small Catechism

In the morning, when you rise, you shall bless yourself with the holy cross and say, "In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen."

In the evening, when you go to bed, you shall bless yourself with the holy cross and say: "In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen."

What is the origin of this personal ritual Luther encourages?

Setting aside for the moment the potential pitfalls of any ritual, what are some benefits that could be gleaned from this one?

Mention some other ways we may help ourselves pay attention to our Baptism each day.

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Say the following hymn stanza together:

We are God's house of living stones,
Built for his own habitation.
He through baptismal grace us owns
Heirs of his wondrous salvation.
Were we but two his name to tell,
Yet he would deign with us to dwell
With all his grace and his favor.

Hymn 856, s.3

Paying Attention to Baptism... In our congregational life

Read the Lord's specifications for Israel's place of worship while traveling in the desert.

Exodus 30:17-21 - Read in your Bible

Why did God order the construction of a large bronze basin for his people's place of worship? What was he teaching his people?

Colossians 2:16-17 - Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

Hebrews 10:1 - The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming – not the realities themselves.

Why doesn't our church have a large bronze basin like the one in Exodus 30?

We are going to take a look at a couple over-the-top baptismal fonts.

Comment on this: *"I want to be baptized in a font like that!" So she arranged to be baptized there, even though she had already been baptized.*

What rules does God give New Testament believers concerning the art, architecture, and symbolism present in our places of worship?

Why do we pay careful attention to the art and architecture of our places of worship?

What are some ways churches can use art, architecture, and symbolism to help people pay careful attention to God's gift of Baptism?

- Baptismal Font Design and Placement
- Music
- Art
- Ceremony

Say the following hymn stanza together:

Here stands the font before our eyes,
Telling how God did receive us.
Th' altar recalls Christ's sacrifice
And what the sacrament gives us,
Here sound the Scriptures that proclaim
Christ yesterday, today, the same,
And evermore, our Redeemer.

Hymn 856, s.4

Baptism: Fourth (from Luther's Small Catechism)

Baptism means that the old Adam in us should be drowned by daily contrition and repentance, and that all its evil deeds and desires be put to death. It also means that a new person should daily arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Review: What is contrition? What is repentance?

Matthew 16:19 - *[Jesus said to his disciples,] "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."*

John 20:22-23 - *[Jesus] breathed on [his disciples] and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."*

How does God help a contrite and repentant sinner find relief? In what sense is the use of the keys really a return to Baptism?

Discuss these three ways God invites each of us to relive our baptism.

- Confession and absolution before God
- Confession and absolution before a fellow Christian
- Confession and absolution before your pastor

As a closing prayer, say the following hymn stanza together:

Grant then, O God, your will be done,
That, when the church bells are ringing,
Many in saving faith may come
Where Christ his message is bringing:
"I know my own; my own know me.
You, not the world, my face shall see.
My peace I leave with you always."

Hymn 856, s.5