

1 Cor. 12:13 “Baptized into One Body”

For the Children: When people join together in a group, they often feel united in the things they have in common. A sports club is united by the sport. A fan-club is united by their love of some movie-star or band. Family-groups are united by their family-ties and shared experiences. God’s children have an even greater tie. We are united by what we have in the Lord Jesus, in His Word and Spirit. That should make us more united than any other group in the world. **Questions:** Are we as united as we should be? If not, why not? How can older members of the church help younger members understand what their baptism means? How does the Holy Spirit make Christ’s work for us real in our lives?

Introduction:

First Point: One Baptism

- 1) Against Grand-Standing: The apostle is speaking against the tendency to use one’s gifts to promote one’s own interests. He reminds the Corinthians that they have a God-given unity in their diversity. The diverse gifts are meant to be used for the common good of the body. That unity is seen in that they share a common baptism
- 2) They Share What Baptism Signifies: It’s not entirely clear whether Paul is speaking here of water-baptism or “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” But either way, the significance of the baptism is essentially the same. It refers to the washing away of sins due to Christ’s work on the cross; union with Him; entry into covenant and church; and calls us to live a holy life. This is a lot of truth shared by those who are baptized – implying an extraordinary amount of unity

Second Point: One Spirit

- 1) The Spirit Applies What Baptism Signifies: Christ accomplished what baptism signifies, the Spirit applies it to us. He brings the new birth that joins us in union with Christ, so that are sins are washed away. He moves us to join the true church. He moves believing parents to baptize their children and bring them up in the Lord. He enables us to start living the “washed” life. The apostle therefore says “we were all baptized by one Spirit.” See also LD 26, Q/A 69-70 and the Baptismal Form, also Titus 3:5
- 2) All Made to Drink One Spirit: The word “drink” implies a once-off drenching by the Spirit. It refers to Joel 2:28, the out-pouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, by which all God’s people receive the Spirit. This does not mean “all-without exception,” but all *types* – Jews, Greeks, slaves, free etc. However, most in our churches do receive the benefit from this out-pouring in due course. This shared work by the Spirit reinforces the point made about unity. It also reminds us that the external rite of baptism does not automatically mean that one is born again. Covenant children must be instructed in and called to take to heart what their baptism signifies

Third Point: One Body

- 1) The Church That Cares about These Truths: When a church cares about these various aspects of unity – in the one baptism and Spirit – the members will strive to instruct, encourage, pray for and even admonish each other in these very areas. For the desire is to see the in-principle unity made real in everyone’s life
- 2) Unity in One Body: Since the unity is a unity of the one body, the church, this striving to support one another should not discriminate. It should be extended to young and old, male and female, different nationalities and cultures, etc. Thus, when a covenant-child is baptized, we all have a responsibility

Conclusion: