

Our Spiritual Baptism – LD 26

Heidelberg Catechism 4 – 2017

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Bible Text: Luke 3:1-22

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We read now from Luke 3, we read the first 22 verses of Luke 3.

1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, 2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. 3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; 4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; 6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. 7 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 10 And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? 11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. 12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? 13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. 14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages. 15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; 16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and

with fire: 17 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. 18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people. 19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, 20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison. 21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, 22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Thus far we read in God's holy word.

We consider Lord's Day 26 of the Catechism this morning. In that connection, though, we're also going to look at the first two Questions and Answers of Lord's Day 27, saving Question 74, Lord willing, for next time. So we'll read all of that together, then, Lord's Day 26 as well as Questions and Answers 72 and 73 of Lord's Day 27.

Q. 69. How art thou admonished and assured by holy baptism, that the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is of real advantage to thee?

A. Thus: That Christ appointed this external washing with water, adding thereto this promise, that I am as certainly washed by His blood and Spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as I am washed externally with water, by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away.

Q. 70. What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?

A. It is to receive of God the remission of sins, freely, for the sake of Christ's blood, which He shed for us by His sacrifice upon the cross; and also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives.

Q. 71. Where has Christ promised us, that He will as certainly wash us by His blood and Spirit, as we are washed with the water of baptism?

A. In the institution of baptism, which is thus expressed: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and "he that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." This promise is also repeated, where the Scripture calls baptism the washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins.

Q. 72. Is then the external baptism with water the washing away of sin itself?

A. Not at all: for the blood of Jesus Christ only, and the Holy Ghost cleanse us from all sin.

Q. 73. Why then doth the Holy Ghost call baptism "the washing of regeneration," and "the washing away of sins"?

A. God speaks thus not without great cause, to-wit, not only thereby to teach us, that as the filth of the body is purged away by water, so our sins are removed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ; but especially that by this divine pledge and sign He may assure us, that we are spiritually cleansed from our sins as really as we are externally washed with water.

There are two Lord's Days, beloved, in the Catechism that deal with the subject of baptism: Lord's Day 26 and Lord's Day 27. Both Lord's Days treat baptism as a sacrament but we notice in Question and Answer 70 of the Catechism in Lord's Day 26, that there is no mention of the sacrament there, "What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?" That's not a reference to the sacrament, of course, because the sacrament of baptism uses water; here the mention is being washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ. And the answer too, "It is to receive of God the remission of sins, freely, for the sake of Christ's blood, which He shed for us by His sacrifice upon the cross; and also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives." No mention of the sacrament of baptism in that particular Question and Answer.

That indicates to us that there is a baptism apart from the sacrament. There is a baptism in addition to the baptism that occurs through the sacrament of baptism. There is a baptism with water that we can see, that's referred to as the sacrament of baptism; and there is a baptism with the blood and Spirit of Christ, something that we cannot see physically and that's because that's a spiritual thing, a spiritual baptism. So there is a spiritual baptism, being washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ, and there is a physical baptism, being washed with water, and the question is recognizing those two distinct realities, the question is: what is the relationship between those two? The relationship between the spiritual baptism and the physical baptism.

Question 72 begins to explore that, "Is then the external baptism with water," the sacrament, "is that the washing away of sin itself?" The real spiritual baptism. Is the external sacrament the thing that washes us from sin? Is that the relationship so that when one is baptized with the sacrament of baptism, that sacrament itself actually somehow cleanses a person from sin? And the answer is, "Not at all." Not at all. That's not the relationship. "For the blood of Jesus Christ only, and the Holy Ghost cleanse us from all sin." The sacrament, then, is not the real baptism, it's not the real spiritual baptism.

Question and Answer 73 then sets out the relationship positively; 72 negatively, 73 now positively. "Why then doth the Holy Ghost call baptism," the sacrament, "'the washing of regeneration,' and 'the washing away of sins'?" Why does the Scripture, why does the Spirit in the Scripture refer to the sacrament as if it is the thing, the spiritual thing, the spiritual cleansing? And answer says, "God speaks thus not without great cause, to teach us on the one hand, to teach us, that as the filth of the body is purged away by water, so too our sins are removed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ," there is a relationship in that sense, a picture relationship, "but especially that by this divine pledge and sign," the sacrament of baptism, "Christ may assure us, that we are spiritually cleansed from our sins." Spiritually cleansed from our sins. That assurance comes in part through the sacrament of baptism.

Again, notice there is a spiritual cleansing, a spiritual baptism; and secondly, there is a physical cleansing, externally washed with water, physical baptism. So the sacrament of baptism is a sign pointing at the spiritual baptism. Question and Answer 73 says that that sign is meant to assure us that we are spiritually cleansed, spiritual baptized. So we look at these Questions and Answers in these Lord's Days now from that point of view, then, from the point of view of our spiritual baptism and we do that under that theme, "Our Spiritual Baptism." First of all, adopted into the covenant. Secondly, washed by blood and Spirit. And in the third place, assured by the sacrament. Leave the sacrament somewhat aside for now. I'll come to that in the third point, but for now we're going to focus, then, upon that spiritual baptism.

There is in the sign of baptism, there is in the reality of baptism a washing, but there is more to baptism than washing. Again, we'll come to that presently in the second point especially, but there is more to baptism than simply washing. The idea of washing may come first to our minds but there is more to our spiritual baptism than that. That's evident from the institution of the sacrament of baptism, the sacrament itself. Matthew 28:18, there Jesus says, "All power," all authority, "is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations," and then he adds, "baptizing them," and we have the word "in," the idea is this, "baptizing them into the name," baptizing them, "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." When Jesus speaks about the sacrament, he means to say something about the spiritual reality, certainly, and that spiritual reality, then, is a being baptized into the name of the Triune God. Washing at that point, any washing is not brought up, is not mentioned by the Lord.

Baptism is referred to as a being baptized into the name. Again, there is a whole sermon or many sermons that could be preached on that text alone. We can't explain all of it now but already we can see more is meant with regard to baptism than simply washing. What is meant, at least in part and in summary, is that we are made to be part of the name of God. Not three names, not Father and Son and Holy Spirit, but one name of the Triune God. That's why all three persons are mentioned there because it refers to the Trinity. But there is one name, the name of the Triune God. In that one name, that one revelation of the Triune God is Jesus Christ. Baptism, then, is being baptized into Christ. Baptized into the name means baptized into God's name, God's revelation, God's Son, Jesus Christ.

But that also means that we are baptized into the name of God in the sense that we're brought into the family of God and given the family name. We have the right to be called the children of God. We have the right to wear and to speak of ourselves as the children of God, to wear his name. We're joined to God. We bear his name. We're revelations of Father as we live here in this earth as baptized into Christ.

John 3:3 and 5 through 8 also makes clear that there is something beyond washing in baptism, something in addition to being baptized into the name, just another angle on it, the same basic reality, but that passage speaks of the Spirit and the place of the Spirit in all of this, but that passage also speaks of being born again. It is the passage in Scripture to turn to with regard to gaining an understanding of regeneration, the first moment of new life as a child of God. We notice, verse 5, Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Notice there now we're speaking of, Jesus is speaking of our being born of the water and Spirit. The text there connects our baptism to regeneration. Our spiritual baptism is nothing different, nothing other than our regeneration, our new birth. Our regeneration, then, is our spiritual baptism.

Then next, yet especially looking at our baptism form which speaks to us with regard to baptism on the basis of the whole of the word of God, the whole of the Scripture, it teaches that our spiritual baptism, spiritual baptism, is really an adoption. We notice that in the first part of the baptism form which speaks of the principle parts and then, secondly, "Holy baptism witnesseth and sealeth unto us that we are baptized in the name of the Father. When we are baptized in the name of the Father, God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us that he doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us and adopts us for his children and heirs." That's our spiritual baptism. The Father adopts us as his spiritual children and heirs. And we thank God for that also in the prayer of thanksgiving where we speak to the Lord about what he has done for us in our spiritual baptism, we speak of our "being received through the Holy Spirit as members of thine only begotten Son and adopted us to be thy children." Adopted to be God's children. That's our spiritual baptism too from another point of view.

Spiritual baptism, then, is a wondrous work of God that can be looked at from different points of view and can be viewed as seeing different facets of that one reality, being brought into the name of God, being regenerated, being adopted into the family of God, and taken together all of those describe the same thing from different points of view. They all describe, really, our being taken into the covenant of grace at one moment in time in the history of our lives.

The baptism form also recognizes that. Perhaps you noticed that as we read it a moment ago in that first part again under secondly where it's speaking of our being baptized in the name of the Father, "When we are baptized in the name of the Father, God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us that," and before we get to being adopted as his children we read, "that he doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us." At one point in our lives and ordinarily that point in our lives when we are born within the sphere of the covenant to believing parents is very very early in our life, in the womb already or very

shortly thereafter. Ordinarily. Ordinarily. But at that one point in our lives, we were brought into the covenant of grace, into God's covenant, into God's family, for that's really to say one and the same thing. God's covenant is God's family relationship, God's family relationship of friendship and, therefore, also of fellowship between the Father, the Almighty Triune God, and his people, his children whom he's adopted unto himself and brought into his family as his friends.

At one point in our lives, we were brought into that family of God. We didn't deserve it. By nature we were not, by nature we were not part of that family and deserved not to be part of that family. And certainly it's true, it's true from another point of view that we were eternally part of that family as God viewed us in Jesus Christ eternally and had elected us in Jesus Christ to be members of that family, but as we were conceived dead in sins and trespasses, we were outside of that family as far as what had occurred within us so that God brought us into his family, brought us unto himself by regenerating us within our hearts, spiritually baptizing us into Jesus Christ, joining us inseparably to Jesus Christ. Once and for all on the basis of his decree of election and on the basis of the atonement of Jesus Christ, God has joined us to Christ, regenerated us and made us members of his family and that, too, we must say, that really is outside of our experience, at least first of all. It comes to be something we experience, but initially it's not something we experience, it's not something we ask for, it's not something that occurs because of our activity, it's not even something that occurs through our activity or in the way of our activity. It's absolutely only by the activity of God, the sovereign Savior, who comes to us who lie dead and hating him, resisting him, wanting nothing to do with him, he comes to us and awakens us, livens us, regenerates us, joins us to his Son, and draws us to himself and to his loving embrace as our Father and cares for us, then, as his child.

That change we say is described in different ways in Scripture. Brought into the name of Christ, the name of God, we wear his name. It's imprinted upon us as part of the family of God. Regenerated and planted into Christ so that we live his life and look like him. Are recreated into his very image so that we begin to live and think and walk like him. We're adopted unto Father and unto Father's family as he takes us unto himself. All of those speak, though, of that one reality: God bringing us into his covenant sovereignly and graciously through Jesus Christ which is our spiritual baptism.

Well, baptism is also referred to as a washing. Washing. Question and Answer 69, "How art thou admonished and assured by holy baptism that the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is of real advantage to thee? Thus: That Christ appointed this external washing with water, adding thereto this promise, that I am as certainly washed," there now is the reference to spiritual baptism, "I am as certainly washed," spiritually, "by His blood and Spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as I am washed externally with water." Our spiritual baptism, now leave aside yet the sacrament of baptism, our spiritual baptism, our regeneration, our being brought into Christ or being adopted unto God, brought into the covenant, that spiritual baptism is also a spiritual washing. Not done by water, not done by water. Water cannot affect the spirit of a person. Water, a natural element of this world, cannot perform a spiritual work. It cannot come into the soul and cleanse the soul. We ought to be clear on that, children too. The

water of baptism, the water of the sacrament of baptism is sprinkled upon the head of that little baby, it doesn't cleanse that baby's soul from sin itself. Water doesn't. But there is a spiritual baptism that happens in the soul of that child and that's done, that's work is performed, that washing happens by the blood and Spirit of Christ.

What does that mean? Question and Answer 70 helps us to understand what that phrase means. The Question is direct, "What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?" What does that mean? The Answer, "It is to receive of God the remission of sins, freely, for the sake of Christ's blood," washed with the blood of Christ, it's to receive the remission of sins freely for the sake of Christ's blood, "which He shed for us by His sacrifice upon the cross; and also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives." To put it simply, maybe overly simply but to put it simply: washed with the blood of Christ refers especially to justification and to be washed with the Spirit of Christ refers especially to our sanctification.

To be washed with the blood of Christ, first of all, means to be forgiven of our sins. God doesn't hold them against us anymore. God doesn't count them against us. They are not any longer imputed unto us, not our sins, not the guilt of our sins, but that's taken away. That has been atoned for and because it's been atoned for, it's forgiven so that God comes to us and through faith God says to us, "I have forgiven you. I do forgive you. I'm not against you. I don't hold your sins against you. I don't see your sins. I've taken them away. I've purged them. I've poured the blood of my Son upon them which blood is able to cleans them, to wash them away."

Then, again, we're declared righteous which is a legal declaration, not as it reflects something that has any pertinence to who we are or what we are or what we've done, but God from a legal point of view, declares us to be what we are not yet in ourselves, but he declares us to be righteous on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. That's what the Answer 70 is speaking of when it explains "washed with the blood of Christ. It is to receive of God the remission of sins, freely, for the sake of Christ's blood, which He shed for us by His sacrifice upon the cross."

When you were spiritually baptized, then, and I'm speaking now to most of us, at that very very young age, totally oblivious to it, but God came to you, helpless as you were, God came to you and washed you in the blood of Christ. That means that God cleansed you from guilt by divine declaration, washed that guilt off from you, made you to be legally pure and innocent. You were declared righteous legally and now always viewed that way by God. You were given the right at the same time, the right to eternal life, the right to be in the covenant, the right to be a family member in God's family. Adopted to be his cleansed, washed child.

Do you see how important that is? God doesn't take to himself filthy, stinking children and say, "Those are mine." I know that's how we are by nature, but looking at it legally, that's not how God takes, God doesn't take those uncleansed children to be his own. He cleanses them. That's why he sent his Son, to accomplish that cleansing for us legally so

that he could apply that unto us by uniting us to Jesus Christ so that we can be cleansed in Christ, taken to himself as his own children. All of that because Christ shed his blood on the cross for you, for his people.

Then, too, the sacrament or the reality, the spiritual baptism, is of being washed by the Spirit, washed with the Spirit. It refers to our sanctification. We're made to hate sin. We're made to love holiness. Those are changes now that do not occur only legally but have an effect upon us and within us so that we begin to change inside. We are made to reject sin and fight against sin; made to desire and to strive for holiness in our life. That's the second part of Answer 70, "and also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives." When you were spiritually baptized, you were joined to Christ by the Spirit of Christ, were given the Spirit in your heart so that he begins to work and he begins to make you desire God and hate and flee from sin. In that way, too, you are cleansed.

It's spoken of in Scripture in Luke 3, for example, verse 16, as a painful process. It's the meaning of the verse, Luke 3:16, which says, "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose," speaking, of course, of Christ, "he shall baptize you," Christ shall baptize you, "with the Holy Ghost," baptism with the Spirit, "with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Fire is a cleansing agent. It burns away the filth that's within us so that as God baptizes us with the Spirit, he begins that work of burning and purging the sin out of us by causing us to flee sin, to hate sin, to walk in godliness and uprightness and holiness and that, we well know, is a painful process. It involves repentance. It involves confession. It involves shame, sorrow, and bitter fighting and difficulty. But that's the work that God moves us unto as he baptized us with the Spirit. You were given the Spirit so that you're enabled to lead holy and unblameable lives, not perfect lives but lives that are unblameable so that we do not linger, walking unrepentantly in sin and continue therein.

Washed by the Spirit means, as the Catechism explains it, to be sanctified, but we understand this too: to be washed by the Spirit also means to be justified consciously. We view it this way: that Spirit of Christ comes, is sent into our hearts by God, by Christ, and that Spirit when he comes into our hearts, he's taking the blood of Christ, he's taking the atonement of Christ, that finished work of Christ, and he's bringing it unto us and applying it unto us and making us aware of that reality so that our hearts rejoice to know by the work of the Spirit within us as he operates through faith, "I am justified. I am forgiven. I am cleansed. I am righteous." And it's in that way that the Spirit moves us unto sanctification so that we say, "I'm forgiven. I'm cleansed. I'm righteous. I'm justified through nothing I've done but only by the work of my Savior, Jesus Christ, and I will live and love with the God who has done such a thing for me. He desires holiness. I find that I do, too. He desires holiness. I love him and I will walk in the way that he calls me to walk." That's all true with regard to our spiritual baptism.

Now the sacrament of baptism when parents take a little child and come to the front with that child and the child has water sprinkled upon their forehead and the baptism formula is spoken, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." Including also the name of that child. When that sacrament of baptism takes place, it's meant to assure us. It's meant to assure us of that spiritual reality. The spiritual reality is not dependent upon the sacrament, the spiritual reality takes place by the power of God according to the grace of God and in harmony with the decree of God and on the basis of the atonement of Christ. God does that spiritual baptizing but then he's given us a sacrament so that we can be strengthened in our assurance of that wonderful work that he performs for us and that because the sacrament is, as sacraments are, the sacrament of baptism is a sign. It's a sign. It's a sign which says, "Look, there's been a spiritual baptism." That sign doesn't want you to look only at it. The sign of baptism says, "Look at me so that I can point you a way to a deeper reality, to a spiritual wonder that God has done that has taken place within the hearts of his own chosen, elect children."

But the sacrament is not only a sign, the sacrament is also a pledge as the Catechism puts it. It's a promise. The sacrament says, "This is absolutely true. This is the promise of God so that we can have assurance of that spiritual baptism that God has performed for us." We read Answer 73 with regard to that, but especially, first of all it teaches us, "but especially that by this divine pledge and sign He may assure us, that we are spiritually cleansed from our sins as really as we are externally washed with water." As real as water washes away the dirt off from us externally, so real does the blood and Spirit of Christ wash our souls from the guilt and pollution of our sins.

The sacrament of baptism as a sign doesn't do much for that infant, does it? It doesn't know it's being baptized, doesn't understand that, doesn't know anything about it, not at that age. Later on as that child grows older and is instructed by their parents, that child can say, "I was baptized. I'm a child of God." And that's how parents ought to instruct their children too. "You're a child of God. You must behave as such. You must live as such. You must know that all the promises of God are true for you." So the parent speaks to their covenant child. But that sacrament of baptism, though it doesn't speak much or avail that infant at the moment that it's baptized, it has much to say to the parents, doesn't it, as covenant parents present their children for baptism? It has much to say for everyone who observes that sacrament saying in our hearts, "I was baptized when I was an infant. I see that sign now again being administered to another covenant child and I think of the fact that I was baptized. I think of my own spiritual baptism that I can't see, that I didn't have anything to do with, that God did for me, and I see that."

You see that by faith as you see the sacrament of baptism so that as you see that sacrament of baptism performed on your children, your infants, you say to yourselves, "That sign points to the fact that my elect children are brought into the covenant of grace. They're brought, have been brought or perhaps will be brought, but some moment in time spiritually into God's family. This is my child but this is also God's child. He's adopted this one into his family. He's adopted my elect children to be his own children. He has regenerated them by the power of the Spirit in their hearts. He's baptized them into the name, into Jesus Christ himself. And my elect children are washed by the blood of Christ.

His atonement is theirs, limited to his elect people but it's atonement for my elect children and that Spirit of Christ is theirs in their heart, washing them, sanctifying them, working within them already as an infant mysteriously, and I shall see the evidence thereof in my elect children in due time."

That's the assurance. That's the comfort of the sacrament of baptism to us as covenant parents, believing parents, and those same things are our assurances as individual members of the body of Christ, believing members of the church, so that we look at that sacrament by faith and we see in that sacrament all of these realities by faith and we're assured in our hearts by an external sign, by something that we observe outside of ourselves. A sign. A sacrament. Relatively ordinary, relatively humble, but in that sign we see because God has set it to be that way, appointed it thereto, in that sign we see that, "I am adopted. I am regenerated. I have been joined to Jesus Christ, baptized into the name of Christ."

See that, beloved. See that in baptism. Come to baptism prepared. When we hear there is a baptism on a Sunday morning or evening, come prepared to say, "I'm going to look beyond the sign. I'm going to see the sign but I'm going to look beyond the sign. I'm going to look to where that sign is pointing. I'm going to see those spiritual realities by faith and be assured. I belong to God. I'm a child of his. And yes, I'm a sinner but I've been washed. I've been washed from all the guilt of my sin, all the stain of the filthiness of my ungodliness. I've been washed. I've been washed by the Spirit too so that I do love him and his holiness. I do hate sin and by the Spirit of Christ in me, I will carry on and I will continue to fight against sin as painful as it may be, and to live unto God in love for him, thankfulness that he has baptized me." See that in the sacrament, beloved, and be assured and comforted. Amen.

Father, we thank thee for thy word, the glorious thing thou hast done in baptizing us with a spiritual baptism and what a blessed and powerful means thou hast given to us in the sacrament of baptism which testifies to us, teaches us, and assures us of thy work for us and in us in Jesus Christ our Savior in whom alone we are saved. Amen.