



His Word Is Truth!

This article is written by Pastor Tom Eckstein of Concordia Lutheran Church in Jamestown. "His Word is Truth" will appear in this paper every 3rd Monday.



This will be my last article in my series on Baptism and Infant Baptism. If you did not read my previous articles in this series you can find them on Concordia Lutheran's web page: www.concordiajt.org I have written these articles on Baptism and Infant Baptism for two reasons. First, I wanted to help Lutherans better understand what we DO and DO NOT believe about Baptism and Infant Baptism. Second, I wanted *non-Lutherans* to have a better understanding of what Lutherans believe about Baptism and Infant Baptism. If you do not agree with what I have written about this issue,

at least you have a more clear understanding of what Lutherans believe about Baptism and Infant Baptism. In addition, I want to stress again what I made clear in my previous articles in this series: ***I have good friends who are sincere Christians, and yet have different views than I do about Holy Baptism and Infant Baptism.*** Even though we may not agree on this issue, I rejoice that we have the essentials of the Christian Faith in common.

We believe in One God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:18-20 and 2nd Corinthians 13:14) We believe that Jesus is God in the flesh (John 1:14 and Colossians 2:9) who died on the cross as the atoning sacrifice (Romans 3:23-25 and 1st John 2:1-2) for us sinners who since the Fall of Adam and Eve (Romans 5:12-14 and 1st Corinthians 15:21-22) are by nature objects of God's wrath (Romans 5:9 and Ephesians 2:1-3). We believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus and His return in power and glory on the Final Day. (Luke 24:36-43, Acts 2:29-36, 1st

Corinthians 15:1-4, John 14:1-3, Acts 1:9-11, 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18) We believe that we are saved by God's grace alone through faith in Christ's work alone (see Romans 3:21-24 and Ephesians 2:4-9), and that the result of this free gift of salvation is that we rejoice in living a life of repentance and faith in Jesus – saying "No" to sin and "Yes" to God's loving will for our lives (Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 2:10 and Titus 2:11-14). We believe these things because they have been revealed to us in Holy Scripture, which is God's written Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and therefore without error in all that it teaches (Luke 24:44-47, 2nd Timothy 3:14-17 and 2nd Peter 1:19-21).

There are even more things I could mention that I also have in common with fellow Christians who believe these teachings of God's Word – *but the above mentioned teachings are the essentials for what it means to be a Christian.* Regarding the areas where we may disagree (for example, Baptism), as brothers and sisters in Christ

we should always be willing to humble ourselves before each other as we study the Holy Scriptures together in love and thereby allow God's Word to lead us into unity on those issues where we do not yet agree. **(See John 17:17-21; Acts 17:11; Ephesians 4:1-6, 14-16)**

I will now conclude this last article in my series on Baptism by stressing what God's gift of Baptism means for our daily lives as Christians. In his Small Catechism Martin Luther writes the following about the significance of Baptism for daily life: **"[Baptism] signifies that the Old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever."**

At this point I would like to correct an error that can be found among those who practice Infant Baptism. Simply put, some wrongly view Infant Baptism as a magic ritual that assures one

of salvation even if a person later rejects Christ and His Word. Even though God uses Baptism to give Christ and His salvation to an infant, and thereby creates faith in the heart of the infant, Scripture also teaches that our faith in Christ must be nurtured by God's Word throughout our lives or our faith in Christ will grow weak and may eventually die. Even though God adopts us as His own in Baptism, it is possible for us to "run away from home" and separate ourselves from the love of the Father by our rebellious unbelief.

Therefore, God's Word teaches that parents – *and especially fathers!* – should nurture their children in God's Word. (Deuteronomy 6:1-9 and Ephesians 6:4) At the beginning of each section of his Small Catechism Martin Luther writes these words: **"As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household."** *This is one reason Concordia Lutheran asks parents to attend all Confirmation classes with their children! Even more,*

we stress to our children that growing is God's Word is not something that ends after Confirmation. Instead, being nurtured by God's Word is something that must continue our entire lives until the day we die. God uses His Word to convict us of sin and give us comfort through the Gospel of Jesus. The Holy Spirit uses God's Word to help us live out our Baptism every day!



Please read the next "His Word is Truth" on Monday, February 16th! *In next month's article Pastor Eckstein will use Holy Scripture to examine the importance of believing in the Deity of Jesus and His Atoning Work on the Cross.*

For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran's web page: www.concordiajt.org

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