

GOD'S WATERING CAN ..

Through the waters of Holy Baptism God unites us to His Son Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:1-11). But once baptised, does God leave us to fend for ourselves? Certainly not! The apostle Paul writes: “By **His doing** you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30). God not only justifies you, but He works your entire sanctification – He makes you holy. Basing his teaching on this revelation from Scripture, Luther writes, “*We continually teach that the knowledge of Christ and of faith is not a human work but utterly a divine gift; as God creates faith, so He preserves us in it. And just as He initially gives us faith through the Word, so later on He exercises, increases, strengthens, and perfects it in us by that Word. Therefore the supreme worship of God that a man can offer, the Sabbath of Sabbaths, is to practice true godliness, to hear and read the Word*” (Luther’s Works, vol. 26, p. 64)

. Sadly, many people, even those who consider themselves Lutherans, but hardly ever attend church, only see baptism as ‘something they should get done’ for their children, and see baptism as a onetime only event that really has no meaning. This is unfortunate and quite wrong. Again, Luther says: “*Our baptism in Christ, in which He gives us the forgiveness of sin, baptising us with the Holy Spirit and with forgiveness, remains **and continues to be effective**. We receive the forgiveness from the Lamb, who bears the sin of the world.*”

On account of the Old Adam constantly warring against us, we are baptised for repentance. We must constantly repent; we must “constantly mortify our flesh,” says Luther. In other words, we must continually mend our evil ways and be cleansed and at the same time always hope for that forgiveness of sin which we now have. When we are baptised and believe in Christ and His Work, Christ says: “*I baptise and call you to repentance. But at the same time I confer on you the spiritual fire, that is, the Holy Spirit, so that you live under the forgiveness of sin, repenting daily and purging and cleansing the evil flesh, which strives against the Spirit,*” (Luther’s Works, vol. 22, pp 179-180).

In Luther’s explanation of Holy Baptism in his Small Catechism, he says in regard to the nature of Baptism that “*Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God’s command and combined with God’s Word.*” The Lord uses the water of His Word to water the faith He has given to you. In His watering of Absolution, God’s Word is the miraculous power that forgives you all your sins. As He waters you in Holy Communion, His Word gives you forgiveness, as Jesus promised. ²⁶ *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.”* ²⁷ *And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you,* ²⁸ *for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”* (Matt. 26:26-28). In the preaching of Christ and the administration of His Sacraments, God is always watering your faith. “*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.* ⁷ *So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth,”* (1 Cor. 3:6-7). “*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her,* ²⁶ *that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,”* (Eph. 5:26).

Because we daily have to fight our Old Adam and our sinful flesh, God gives us help through Holy Communion. Luther says, “*It is of course necessary for me to go to the Sacrament to strengthen my faith and spirit against the flesh which is opposed to my spirit,*” (Luther’s Works, vol. 38, p. 129).

Luther continues, “*Therefore the Lord’s Supper is appropriately called food of the soul, for it nourishes and strengthens the new creature. For in the first instance, we are born anew in Baptism. However, our human flesh and blood, as I have said, not lost their old skin. There are so many hindrances and attacks of the devil and the world that we often grow weary and faint and at times even stumble. **Therefore the Lord’s Supper is given as a daily food and sustenance so that our faith may be refreshed and strengthened and that it may not succumb in the struggle but become stronger and stronger.** For the new life should be one that continually develops and progresses. But it has to suffer a great deal of opposition. The devil is a furious enemy; when he sees that we resist him and attack the old creature, and when he cannot rout us by force, he*

sneaks and skulks about at every turn, trying all kinds of tricks, and does not stop until he has finally worn us out so that we either renounce our faith or lose heart and become indifferent or impatient. For times like these, when our heart feels too sorely pressed, this comfort of the Lord's Supper is given to bring us new strength and refreshment," (The Large Catechism, Part V).