



# Living in Faith

Discipleship Series



Life  
powered  
by the  
Spirit through  
the Means of  
Grace

# You Must be Born Again



# **You Must Be Born Again**

*Life powered by the Spirit through the Means of Grace*



Multi-Language Publications  
Bringing the Word to the World

# **YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN**

## ***Living in Faith*** Discipleship Series

***LIVING IN FAITH*** Discipleship Series 2018

Text adapted by Multi-Language Publications of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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# Getting Started

This book is about God the Holy Spirit, and how he makes us Christians and keeps us in the Christian faith. We will take a closer look at how people become Christians and continue to live as Christians. We will do this by studying his Word, the Bible.

## READ THE TEXT

Each lesson is broken up into smaller sections with a review question after each section. Feel free to stop at any of the passages to make sure you understand them or to dig more deeply into what they are saying. Circle, underline, or highlight key words.

## GRAPPLE WITH THE QUESTIONS

In this book there are also questions to start, review and end the lesson. If you are studying this on your own, think through the questions for yourself. If you are studying in a group, use the questions for deeper discussion. Designate someone as a facilitator. Allow each individual a level of comfort to ask questions and freedom to discover and grow.

## NOTICE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Each page also includes additional references on the sidebar for those who want to dig deeper (You will need a Bible or a Bible app to read those sections). They are available to use in group or in personal study.



= Location of Bible Story



= Search options – related passages

## MAP OUT YOUR NEXT STEPS



After connecting the timeless truths to your life, make sure you map out Next Steps before ending the lesson.



## Chapter One

# OUR NEED FOR A NEW BIRTH



The father nervously paces while his wife gives birth to their new baby. Finally, the moment arrives. The baby cries and the new life is celebrated. Now wherever the young couple goes, people stop to see the newborn. They admire how cute and innocent the child looks. But there is also a nervousness. How will we take care of the growing child? Will there be any unseen defects, any hidden problems?

1. What are your reactions and thoughts when you see a new baby?

Like the new life of a baby, there is excitement also when a someone first believes in Jesus – a newborn faith is born, a person added into God’s family. But how does that all happen? What happens next? We can learn a lot from a conversation Jesus had with a man named Nicodemus when he told him *“You must be born again.”*

Born again? This book digs deeper into what Jesus meant. In this chapter, we will look at what makes it essential for us to be *“born again.”*

## THEY LOOK SO PURE AND INNOCENT



**Nicodemus visits  
Jesus after dark**

John 3:1-21

Nicodemus was a recognized expert in the Jewish religion of Jesus’ day. He was known for his zeal to live an upright life by following the rituals and rules of the Jews. People assumed that if anyone could be accepted by God, it would be people like Nicodemus. So it must have been hard for Nicodemus to seek out Jesus. He came at night. Maybe he didn’t want others to know. However, he recognized that Jesus was doing miraculous things only God could make happen. He needed to find out more. Jesus showed it was Nicodemus who needed rebirth.

*“Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom*



*of God unless they are born again" (John 3:3).*

Jesus understood that the spiritual life within Nicodemus was on the wrong track and would need a radical change. He would need a brand-new way of seeing and thinking about God and his salvation – a new birth spiritually. Perhaps we also get caught up into thinking our lives are morally pretty good – especially compared to others. But there is something wrong. It has been wrong all along in all of us. It needs a radical change. Let's start by looking at the beginning where the real problem lies.

When a little baby is born, he looks totally innocent. As the infant is sleeping in his bed, he seems like a little angel. But the Bible tells us there is something very wrong. Jesus gave Nicodemus a lesson on heredity.

*"Flesh give birth to flesh" (John 3:6).*

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**We inherit a condition of  
sinfulness from our  
parents**

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Not only do we inherit our skin color, our hair color, our eye color and other characteristics from

our parents, we also inherit our condition of sinfulness.

It wasn't always that way. Originally God imprinted his own pure character into the first two humans. He gave them a role of honor to reflect God's loving care and glory to all of creation. But Adam and Eve chose to go against their Creator and brought disgrace to all humanity. They fell into the trap of selfishly seeking their own independent glory in defiance of God. Their distrust of God's intentions and disobedience to his command separated them from fellowship with their Creator. That is where the problem began. The shame



**Adam & Eve's  
sin corrupts a  
perfect world**

Genesis 1:27-31

3:1-19

and fear of being seen as sinners sent them running for cover to hide from God. Instead of reflecting God's image, Satan had enslaved their hearts and imprinted his image there. This made a wreck of a perfect world and started the tumbling effect of brokenness from one generation to the next. It fills the world with the heartbreaking reality of sin settled deep down in our inner being.



So, no matter how decent and virtuous we think someone appears on the outside or how much good they have done for society, our holy, righteous God is not impressed. The Bible explains a deep-seated problem:

*“There is no one righteous, not even one”* (Romans 3:10).

No one has the clean hands and pure heart that would qualify them to stand acceptably before a pure and holy God. Deep down inside we know he sees what we are like and we start to feel

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**We call this terrible inheritance “original sin” or “inherited sin”**

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### **SLAVES to sin and the devil**

Romans 6:20

7:14-21



### **Corruption of the heart**

Jeremiah 5:21-25,

17:9-10

Matthew 15:16-20

unacceptable. Even after the destruction and cleansing of wickedness at the Great Flood, the problem in the world remained:

*"Every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood"* (Genesis 8:21).

King David recognized it was the root of the problem in his life. It wasn't an excuse, but an admission:

*"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me"* (Psalm 51:5).

What about your life? This terrible inheritance is often called "original sin" or "inherited sin" because we inherited from our ancestors all the way back to its origin in Adam and Eve, the first humans.

2. Explain in your own words why a new baby is a sinner in the eyes of God.

## **SPIRITUALLY DEAD, BLIND, AND HOSTILE**

We have gotten so accustomed to the contamination of sin that we become unconscious of the extent of it. It is a terminal illness spiritually. Paul explains,

*"You were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air [that is, the devil]"* (Ephesians 2:1-2).



### **The Great Flood**

Genesis 6-9



### **DEAD in sin**

Psalm 14:1-3

Ephesians 2:1-2

Colossians 2:13

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**We have no more spiritual ability to follow God than a dead body to come to life**

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We have no more spiritual ability to follow God than a dead body can decide whether it



**BLIND to God**

Matthew 23:13-27

1 John 2:9-11

will get up out of its coffin or not.

St. Paul adds another picture to our sin condition:

*“The god of this age [that is, the devil] has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Corinthians 4:4).*

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**We enter life blind to our faults and selfishness and its only cure**

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We enter life blind to our faults and selfishness and its only cure. We are unable to accept that even our



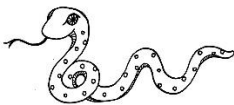
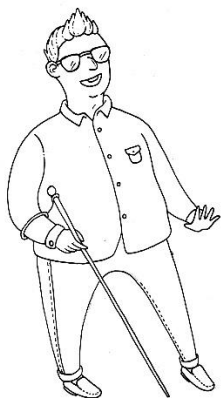
**Spiritual DARKNESS**

Romans 1:18-25

Isaiah 44:9-20

Isaiah 59:9-11

“smallest” sins are evil in the sight of God and we need Jesus to fix it.



That blindness causes people to run after gods they create instead of living for the true God who made them. The Bible calls this “darkness.”

The Bible also describes our natural minds and instincts as outright enemies of God.

*“The mind governed by the flesh is **hostile to God**; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God”* (Romans 8:7-8).

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### **We are outright enemies of God by nature**

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In other words, from birth onward, we show hostility and resistance against God. Like Adam and Eve, we think God is keeping us from enjoying life or being our own person. We run after what we think will give us greater satisfaction and build a life that is directly in conflict with God’s ways – hating the light and preferring the darkness so our deeds would not be exposed (John 3:19-20). But no matter who we are, our natural-born darkness, blindness, and hostility leave us spiritually helpless and bind us to its eventual end - eternal “death” in hell, shut out of his kingdom forever.

3. Summarize the main messages of this section.

## **A FUTURE FULL OF HOPE**

But it isn’t so dark when Jesus enters and we recognize who he is and how he came to change who we are.

Nothing changes until we realize we are the problem and Jesus is the solution. The Jewish leaders thought they were pleasing God. But when Jesus, God’s Son,



### **HOSTILE towards God**

Deuteronomy 31:27-29

Isaiah 48:8

Hebrews 3:7-16

James 4:3-10



### **Your righteousness would have to exceed the Pharisees**

Matthew 5:17-20

Galatians 3:10



### **Shut out of the Kingdom of God**

Matthew 7:21-23

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Galatians 5:19-21

Ephesians 5:5-6

personally came on earth, they hated him! Jesus' teachings were a threat to their lifestyle. His love brought to light their selfishness. He told them that because of their blind pride, the despised tax collectors and prostitutes would enter the kingdom of heaven before they would.

Like a good physician, Jesus identifies for us the deep-seated problem so we can finally come to him for the only cure. He shows our helplessness and

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**Just like a good surgeon,  
Jesus exposes the deep-  
seated problem so we can  
come to him for the only  
cure**

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hopelessness so we can begin to depend on him who is our only hope.

When Jesus told Nicodemus "*Unless you are born again, you will not see the Kingdom of God*" it meant Nicodemus would have to give up what he had believed all his life would make him right with God. He can't earn his way into God's favor. He could never be righteous enough. He needs humble repentance and forgiveness. So do you...all of us.

To help people understand, Jesus told about two people who came to the temple to pray. One bragged to God about the great things he had done and how he was better than others. The other was a tax collector whose profession was known as being dishonest. He wouldn't even look up, but hit himself on the chest and said,

*"God, have mercy on me, a sinner."*

Jesus explained the truth of the story.



### **The Pharisee and the Tax Collector**

Luke 18:9-14

*“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and **those who humble themselves will be exalted**” (Luke 18:13-14).*



When King David was broken with grief and shame because of his sins, he knew he could run to God instead of away from him, for he knew God’s love:

*“A broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise” (Psalm 51:17).*

And through Isaiah, God explained,

*“I live in a high and holy place, but also **with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit**, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite” (Isaiah 57:15).*

It comes down to this: God didn’t abandon humanity because of sin, but set out to repair the damage. It is the pivotal story of the world and centers on Jesus:

*“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.... While we were still sinners, Christ died for us... while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son!” (Romans 5:6,8,10).*

It is an amazing story of God battling to get us back.

*“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13-14).*

The solution to our lives and to our world does not lie in us or what we do, but outside of us – in Jesus. And when we understand God can love and forgive us because of Jesus, we can be honest about our sins and not live in darkness trying to cover them up before God. As you go through the next chapter you will see how God sent Jesus to change us from being unacceptable to being gloriously loved – from being shameful to becoming an honored member of God’s family. It only happens through Jesus. That is where you find hope and confidence today and into the future.

4. Where does a sinner find the hope to get rid of sin?



**Fix your eyes on  
Jesus**

Luke 2:27-33

Hebrews 12:1-3

2 Corinthians 4:16-18







## **CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE**

1. Some believers do not baptize their baby because they think the baby does not have sin. What will you respond to them according to this chapter?
2. Discuss how knowing we are born enemies of God affects our understanding of ourselves and the salvation of Jesus Christ.
3. Discuss how this chapter helps explain why laws and governments have not been able to eliminate evil in the world. How does that affect where you put your confidence?
4. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



## YOUR NEXT STEPS

### **Study it!**

Read again more carefully the Bible passages in this lesson to understand what God is saying.

### **Memorize it!**

Identify a Bible passage in this lesson that is most meaningful for you and memorize it.

### **Apply it!**

Discuss how you can put this lesson into your life this week.

### **Share it!**

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

*Go on to Lesson Two to see how God rescues us and works in our lives*

## Chapter Two

# RESCUED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH



The man was drowning at sea. The waves were rough and the water was cold. The situation seemed hopeless. He had no energy left to keep his head above water. Suddenly a boat appeared. A man jumps into the water and swims toward the desperate man. In his panic to save himself, the drowning man starts fighting his rescuer, pushing him down into the water. Finally, the rescuer gets him under control so he can relax and trust him. When he is safely in the boat, the rescued man feels he's been given a new life - thankful for the one who risked his life to save him.

1. Describe what it must have been like to be the drowning man. When have you experienced, or read similar situations in life?

By nature, we are like the drowning person. We flounder in life grabbing at anything to keep us afloat. But even when we don't recognize it, we are helpless when it comes to our spiritual life. As we learned in the first chapter, we don't have the ability to turn things around.

But Jesus has the power to do what is impossible for us. Jesus put himself into our world to save us because we couldn't save ourselves. That same Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to do miraculous things in us to give us this new life. In this chapter, we will learn how God, the Holy Spirit, works to bring us into a new life through "the Means of Grace."

## SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

A young child might be enjoying life without a clue on how he got there. If no one told him the details of his conception and birth, he might believe almost anything or make up his own story (often very humorous for those who know the real story).

Jesus said to Nicodemus, *"You must be born again"* (which has a double meaning in Greek to also say, *"born from above"*). But being "born again" is not talking here about some sort of reincarnation as if we are born again into another body after we die only to begin a life-cycle again as another person. There will be no such reincarnation, no second chance after death. A person dies only once and after that faces the judgment based on their life on earth (Hebrews 9:27).

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**Being "born again" is not something we decide to do, but something done for us**

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Nor is "born again" a new pledge to change or improve our lives. It is not a promise we make to come to Jesus

or invite him into our lives. Being born again is no



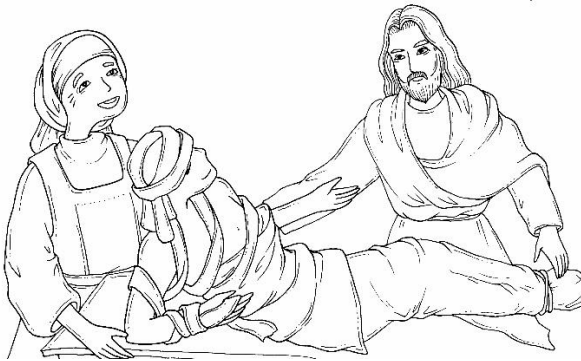
**BORN AGAIN is  
God's work in  
US**

John 1:10-13

1 Peter 1:3-5, 23

more our personal decision or action than a baby deciding to come into existence. Being “born again” is more powerful and long-lasting. It is something done for us and in us by God. Paul explains:

*“But because of his great love for us, **God**, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions... For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:4-9).*



Stop and think about that. We are saved “by grace” – by God’s gift to us not by our merit or worthiness. Our God accepts us purely on the merit of Jesus. Jesus accomplished we could never do. Jesus was born into this world to live a holy and honorable life as a fellow human so his holy life could make up for our lives that dishonor God, our maker. He went to the cross to be crucified in order to shoulder the condemnation we deserved. He took on our shame to give us a place of honor again in God’s eyes and lavishes us with his amazing blessings. This is grace.

*“For you know **the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ**, that though he was rich, yet for your sake*



**Justified and  
accepted by  
GRACE alone**

Acts 15:7-11

Romans 3:20-24

5:1-2, 15-18

*he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).*

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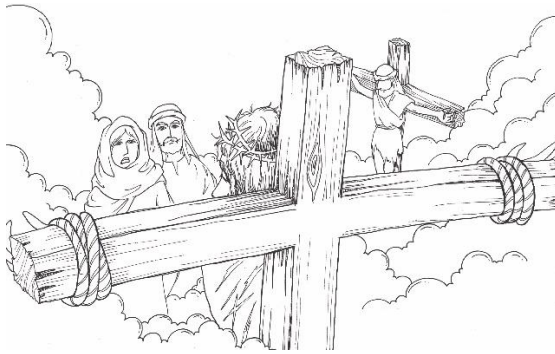
**This is Grace – God’s unconditional love to those who don’t deserve it**

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He did all this purely because of his love! This is grace – God’s

unconditional love to those who don’t deserve it.

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).*



Being “born again” is receiving a new life that believes and depends totally on the grace of God provided to us in Jesus. John simply says,

*“Everyone who believes Jesus is the Christ, is born of God” (1 John 5:1).*

Those who are “born again” put their faith in Jesus. Those who have faith in Jesus are “born again.” Simple as that. All that is a gift from God.

2. Briefly explain how a sinner is saved.



**Saved through FAITH alone**

Acts 16:29-34

Romans 3:22-31;

Galatians 3:6-11

Ephesians 2:4-10

## FAITH – A WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN US

When Jesus told Nicodemus he must be born again, Nicodemus' responded with human logic. How can this be? It doesn't make sense! Paul explains,

*“The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:14).*



To the world, the topics of faith are hard to accept. But Jesus came from heaven to reveal the mysteries of God that can't be discovered by science and philosophy (John 3:12-13). If being "born again" depended on us and what we could figure out, nothing would happen. Jesus told Nicodemus,

*“Flesh gives birth to flesh, but Spirit gives birth to spirit” (John 3:6).*

Paul explains,



### Foolishness of the Cross

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

John 14:17

*“No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3).*

Faith is not a decision we come to by reason. Jesus told Nicodemus that it was like trying to figure out the wind. You may not know its origin or final destination, but you know it is there because its effect. The Holy Spirit works in mysterious ways that we can’t always explain, but those who are born again know his effect – a new life in them that trusts Jesus as their Savior and finds peace, daily power, and hope for the future in him. It is a gift given by the Holy Spirit. He opens our eyes to see and grasp the hidden mysteries of God.

So even though a person may not totally recognize it at the time, it is the Holy Spirit who “converts” us –

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**The Holy Spirit “converts” us – turns us from the darkness of unbelief to the light of faith.**

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that is “turns us around” from the darkness of unbelief to the light of faith. He turns us from being enemies of God to

being his family trusting what Jesus has done for us. It is always connected to what Jesus has done for us.

*“God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:11-12).*

It brings us peace with God and a secure place in the realm of God’s grace and favor.

*“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus*



## **HOLY SPIRIT sent by Jesus**

Mark 1:7-8

John 14:15-20, 25-27

John 16:5-15



## **Mystery of the Christ revealed**

Romans 16:25-27

1 Corinthians 2:6-14

Ephesians 3:2-9

Colossians 1:25-28



*Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand”*  
(Romans 5:1-2).

3. Explain the work of the Holy Spirit in this section. Why is it hard to understand?

## THE SPIRIT AND THE MEANS OF GRACE

How does the Holy Spirit give us life, this new birth? James explains,

*“He chose to give us birth through the word of truth”* (James 1:18).

Although God could work any way he wishes, he puts certain tools into our hands to carry out his work. Think of it this way, when a person wants to dig a hole in the ground, he or she uses a shovel. The shovel is the “means” or instrument used to dig the

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**The Holy Spirit uses the powerful tool of the gospel to reveal his grace to us. We call it the “means of grace”**

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hole. To create and sustain faith, the Holy Spirit uses the simple yet powerful tool (or means) of the gospel about Jesus. Therefore, we call the gospel “the means of grace.” Paul reminds the Christians in his letter to them,

*“God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord*



**Abraham’s faith in God’s promise – credited to him as righteousness**

Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-5

Romans 4:1-25

Galatians 3:1-14



**It was God acting on choosing us - not our choice of him**

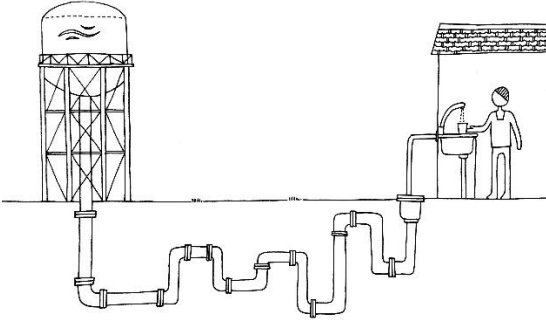
John 6:44; 15:16, 19

Romans 8:28-33

Ephesians 1:4-13

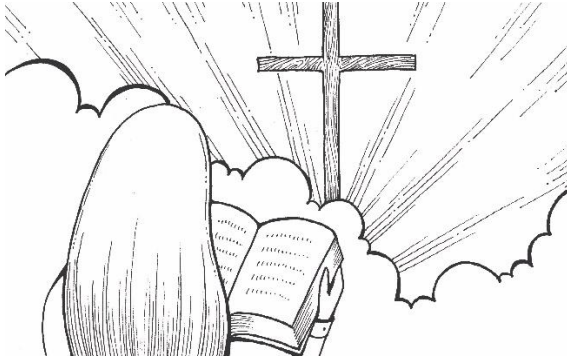
*Jesus Christ"* (2 Thessalonians 2:13,14).

Using another example from everyday life, we might compare the Means of Grace with the water that you drink. The water may be stored far away in a tower, a well, or a reservoir. We would not have access to it without the water pipes which feed the water directly into our homes.



So it is with salvation. What Jesus accomplished in his life, death, and resurrection is the source of forgiveness and life. But he lived 2,000 years ago. Like a water pipe, the gospel is the means by which God delivers what Jesus did for us long ago and brings it right into our lives today – to inform and change our hearts. This why the Apostle Paul so highly valued it and lived to proclaim it. He said,

*“I am not ashamed of the **gospel**, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes”* (Romans 1:16).



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**The gospel is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes**

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How can words have such power? Because Jesus is behind it! Jesus showed the power of his word when he performed miracles. He spoke to several dead people telling them to come alive—and they did! He came upon a few blind people and told them he would give them sight—and he did! With the power of his word he made the paralyzed man walk and healed those covered with leprosy. He drove out demons and fed 5,000 families with 5 small loaves of bread and two fish. So why should anyone be surprised at a miracle in our hearts? The God who created each detail of this world just by speaking the words, “Let there be,” also miraculously creates faith in many hearts through his word. Paul says,

*“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).*



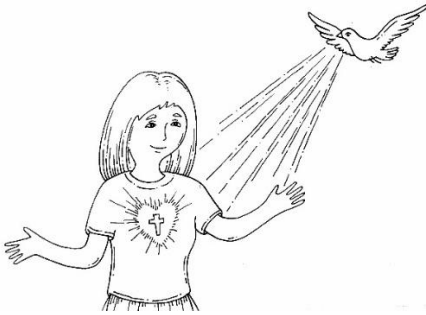
**Power of the GOSPEL**

Isaiah 55:10-12

1 Corinthians 1:17-18; 2:1-5

Ephesians 1:18-21

1 Thessalonians 1:5



When we hear the Word of God, it begins its work:

*“to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”*  
(Acts 26:18).

That gospel in the Bible effectively creates a new life. Peter explained to his Christian readers,

*“For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God...And this is the word that was preached to you”* (1 Peter 1:23,25).

That powerful gospel, comes to us not only in the words of the Bible, but also in the sacraments of

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**The powerful gospel, comes to us not only in the words of the Bible, but also in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

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Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Through the Means of Grace, God gives us faith in the forgiveness of

sins won for us by Jesus. Along with that comes power for living in Jesus and finally eternal life with Jesus in heaven.



**The Holy Spirit –  
the seal and  
guarantee of  
God's ownership  
and care**

2 Corinthians 1:21-22;  
5:5

Romans 8:1-17

Ephesians 1:13-14

4. In your own words, describe the “Means of Grace” and its function in our lives.



## CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE

1. How would you describe God’s grace to someone? What would you say about its effect in your life?
2. How is it misleading to tell people that in order to be saved or born again, you have to “invite Jesus into your heart,” or “turn your life over to Jesus?”
3. The Holy Spirit works in our hearts through the means of grace. How does that comfort and guide you as a Christian? (You may consider your approach to prayer, confession, Bible reading and worship, etc.)
4. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



## **YOUR NEXT STEPS**

### **Study it!**

Read again more carefully the Bible passages in this lesson to understand what God is saying.

### **Memorize it!**

Identify a Bible passage in this lesson that is most meaningful for you and memorize it.

### **Apply it!**

Discuss how you can put this lesson into your life this week.

### **Share it!**

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

*Go on to Lesson Three to see how baptism conveys the power of the gospel in a special way.*

## Chapter Three

# THE COVENANT OF BAPTISM



The little orphaned child's life was full of trouble from the beginning. He was neglected and abused. His birth parents left him hungry and unloved. But one day a young couple came and said they wanted to make him part of their family. They paid the price and signed the papers to adopt him. They washed him up and clothed him in nice clothes. Their house became his home. They gave him everything he needed to be happy and successful. One day he would inherit their wealth because now he was no longer an orphan but an heir.

1. Describe the beauty of the picture of adoption. What makes it so special?

Does God love me? Does he want me? Am I worthy enough for him?

Will he accept me? How could he? How can I know? In this chapter we will look at how God takes his gospel promise and brings it to us in a way that certifies to us that “He loves me and wants me to be with him forever.”

## BAPTISM – COMMANDED BY JESUS

In talking with Nicodemus, Jesus explained,

*“No one can enter the kingdom of God **unless they are born of water and the Spirit**” (John 3:5).*

The Holy Spirit was already at work when crowds came to John the Baptist to receive the *“baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins”* (Luke 3:3). Soon Jesus also went out and baptized people coming to him (John 3:22-23, 26). Then, before Jesus returned to heaven, he instructed his followers to do the same,

*“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing **them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”* (Matthew 28:18-20).

The effect of doing what Jesus commanded was amazing. Peter told the crowd at Pentecost,

*“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off**”* (Acts 2:38-39).

Three thousand came to believe that day! Later, an important official from Ethiopia was on his way home



### The Kingdom of God

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Luke 17:20-21

John 18:33-37

Romans 14:17-19



### 3,000 baptized at Pentecost

Acts 2:36-41



from a trip to Jerusalem. He was reading the Bible but was confused at what Isaiah 53 was talking about. Philip started with that very passage of Scripture and explained to him the good news about Jesus. When they came to a place where there was water, the Ethiopian asked, *“Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?”* So Philip baptized him right there.



In Philippi, a wealthy business lady named Lydia was baptized with the members of her household when the Lord *“opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.”* Paul also shared the Word of the Lord with a despondent jailer. Right there at the prison Paul baptized the jailer and his family with whatever water was available.

Although it may seem like a simple action, baptism is an amazing feature of God’s grace – a gift of love he gives to us. We call baptism a “sacrament.” Sacraments are sacred acts established and commanded by Jesus. Through them he promises to supply the forgiveness that he won for us together with all its blessings. They too are “means of grace.” The same gospel at work in the written Word is at work in the two sacraments – baptism and the Lord’s Supper



### The Ethiopian official asks for baptism

Acts 8:26-39



### Lydia and a jailer at Philippi – and their households – are baptized

Acts 16:13-15; 22-34

(which we look at in the next chapter). The difference is that in the sacraments, God attaches his Word of promise to something we can touch and see – water, bread, wine. And what is that promise?

Do this *“for the forgiveness of your sins”* (Luke 3:3, Acts 2:38, Matthew 26:28).

So baptism is not symbolic of our commitment to God any more than being saved or “born again” happens

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**Baptism is not symbolic of our commitment to God... It is God’s action toward us**

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by our choices, our decisions, or our actions. It all is God’s action and commitment to us.

Our job is just to administer it as he commanded. His promise makes it a sure thing.

2. Summarize what is Baptism according to this section.

## BAPTISM – BEING WASHED AND CLOTHED

The word “baptism” comes from the Greek language and simply means “washing or applying water.”

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**God washes away our guilt with the blood of Jesus and does away with our shame**

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Some apply the water on the head by sprinkling, some by pouring and others by putting the person entirely under water.

Jesus did not tell us how the water is to be applied and doesn’t insist on any one way. Our faith rest not

**Sacrament – a sacred act of God:**

God’s gift



To Us



**Naaman is healed by a seemingly simple action he was asked to do**

2 Kings 5:1-16



**The washing of water and word**

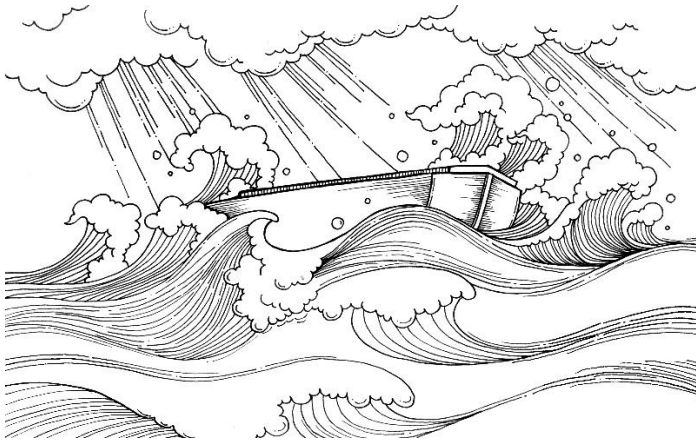
Acts 22:16

Ephesians 5:25-27

Titus 3:3-7

on the way we apply water, or where the water comes from, but rests on God's word of promise.

In one of his letters, Peter illustrates baptism with the waters of the Great Flood. Those waters washed the earth of its wickedness but lifted up the ark with Noah and family so they would float above all the death and ruin.



*“And this water (that saved Noah’s family) symbolizes (pictures for us) baptism that now saves you also – not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God” (1 Peter 3:21).*

Baptism contains God’s pledge that we can confidently come before him with a clear conscience (Hebrews 9:14). As the writer to the Hebrews says,

*“Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22, cf. 9:14).*



**“I will give you a new heart... make you clean”**

Ezekiel 36:25-27

Psalms 51:7-10

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Baptism washes away our sins – all its guilt, shame, punishment, and power (Acts 22:16). But it isn't just the ritual action that saves, but what it connects us with.

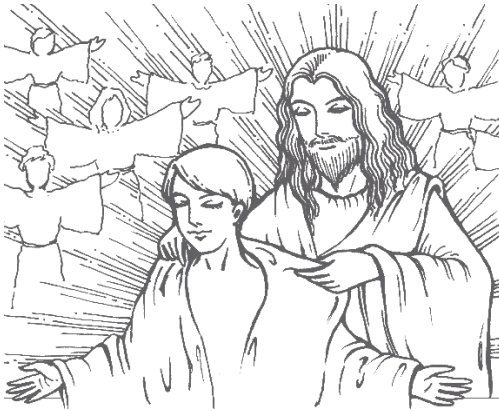
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**Baptism now saves you also... it saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ**

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*"It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven"* (1 Peter 3:21).

*"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life"* (Romans 6:4).



Paul also tells us those who have been baptized have *"clothed themselves with Christ"* (Galatians 3:27).

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**With Jesus' robe of righteousness covering us, we always look radiant in God's sight.**

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Picture yourself trying to enter the elegant banquet of the King with your naturally filthy and ragged clothes of sin. It won't work. In baptism God



**Buried with Christ – Risen with Him**

Romans 6:3-5

Colossians 2:12



**Clothed with Christ**

Isaiah 61:10

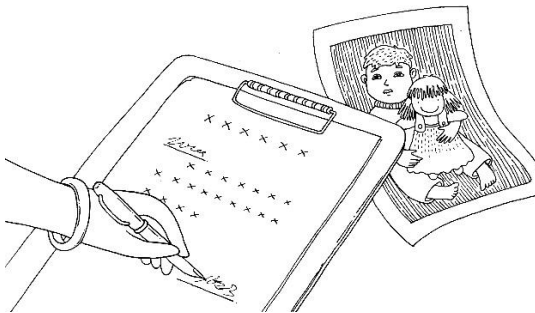
Ephesians 5:25-27

Revelation 7:9-17

clothes us with the perfect life of Jesus to cover our guilt and shame. With Jesus' robe of righteousness covering us, we always look radiant in God's sight – like a bride dressed for a bridegroom.

3. Describe what it means to you to be washed and clothed in baptism.

## BAPTIZED – ADOPTED INTO GOD'S FAMILY



Often it is the signature or seal on a document that makes it official and powerful. Anything else is a forgery. The authority and power of baptism is in the Name that stands behind it.

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**Baptism's power comes from the Name that stands behind it**

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**Name of the Triune God in baptism**

**"I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"**

When Jesus, as our representative, came to John the Baptist to be baptized, the heavens opened up, the Spirit descended on Jesus, and God the Father said,

*"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased"* (Matthew 3:17).

The power and authority of God himself stood behind

those words. And we now baptize as Jesus taught us to – associating the action with the name of the triune God whose authority stands behind it:

*"I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," (Matthew 28:19).*

Because Jesus achieved for us the forgiveness and life that baptism offers, God can also say from heaven to those who are baptized, "You are my child whom I love, with you I am well pleased." Paul explains,

*"God sent his Son...that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out "Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:4-6).*

Like an adoption, God's promise in baptism only

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**But baptism is not just a past event. It is who you are.**

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needs to be made once to give it lasting significance to our daily lives. People often say, "I was

baptized." But baptism is not just a past event. It is who you are – your identity, your relationship with God. And it is not only for you or your type of people. Jesus established baptism to be for all nations. Peter told the crowd at Pentecost,

*"The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off" (Acts 2:39).*

There is no salvation outside of Jesus. So, don't neglect the foreigner nor the children. They also are a valuable part of "all nations" we are to reach. Even children are subject to death because they too are sinners (Romans 5:12, Ephesians 2:3). Children need



**From being slaves and outcasts to being children**

Romans 8:13-15

Galatians 4:4-7

Ephesians 2:17-22



**Baptism – carries a greater role than the rite of circumcision – as a seal of God's covenant**

Genesis 17:1-14

Romans 2:28-29

Romans 4:11-13

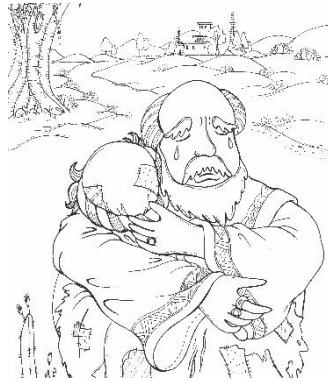
Colossians 2:9-15

the forgiveness of sins and regeneration just as much as teenagers and adults. In fact, we might say that baptism of infants is one of the clearest pictures of pure grace. It has given countless parents the assurance that their little children are safe in God's arms – sealed by his covenant.

But baptism doesn't mean faith is no longer necessary and should be neglected. Mark writes,

*"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned"*  
(Mark 16:16, John 3:18).

Faith lives under the blessings of baptism. But unbelief rejects the gift. So if you find yourself wandering away from God, remember the blessings of your baptism. God is the loving father is waiting for you to return.



The wayward  
son returns to his  
father's waiting  
arms

Luke 15:11-24

Some ask, can little children believe also? Well, Jesus calls them, "*little ones – those who believe in me*" (Matthew 18:6).

Remember that faith is just as much a miracle of the Holy Spirit in adults as it is in infants. In fact, Jesus says the quality of faith in an infant is a model of what faith should be like for adults.

*"Let the little children [babes in arms] come to me. The Kingdom of God belongs to such as these...I tell*

*you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it” (Mark 10:14-15).*

After commanding baptism Jesus instructed:

*“teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28: 20).*

Timothy’s mother and grandmother stand as great examples as they shared their faith with Timothy ever since he was an infant (2 Timothy 1:5).



Paul told Timothy,

*“continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:14-15).*

We also need to continue in what we have learned so faith does not grow weak and die. It should be fed to flourish. In the next chapter, we will look more at



### The Beauty of Praise from the lips of children

Psalm 8:1-2

Psalm 71:5-6

Matthew 21:15-16

2 Timothy 3:14-15



how Jesus still feeds that faith in you.

4. Describe the main messages of this section.



## **CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE**

1. Some people are afraid that they do not understand the Bible enough or are not godly enough before they are baptized. How do you explain to them about the beauty of baptism according to this chapter?
2. Explain where faith is connected with baptism. How can baptism be as a daily source of strength and motivation in your life of faith?
3. Describe why baptism is also important and effective for infants and children. How will that impact your concern for children?
4. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



## **YOUR NEXT STEPS**

### **Study it!**

Read again more carefully the Bible passages in this lesson to understand what God is saying.

### **Memorize it!**

Identify a Bible passage in this lesson that is most meaningful for you and memorize it.

### **Apply it!**

Discuss how you can put this lesson into your life this week.

### **Share it!**

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

*Go on to Lesson Four to discuss the meal Jesus gives to us to keep our faith alive and healthy.*

## Chapter Four

# THE LORD'S SUPPER – SPIRITUAL FOOD



Picture it in your life: A special day of celebration – an intimate meal everyone looks forward to. The family gathers together around the traditional food for the day. It bonds everyone together. It is enhanced by time-honored customs that connect everyone to the celebrations of the past and values that are passed on to the next generation. Before leaving, everyone is thankful to the host who made it all possible.

1. Which special celebration does this bring to mind? Discuss the blessings of gathering around food for celebrations with family.

In this chapter we will discuss the special meal Jesus prepared for us. It was an important event for Jesus that he passed down to us. It brings us around a "table" to assure us of his love again so we can enjoy and find strength in our fellowship with him and each other.

## FAITH MUST BE FED

It may help to think of our Christian faith as a new life in us that needs to be kept alive. When you were born, nobody said, "Well, now that is done!" and left you alone. Your new life had to be taken care of or it would die. You needed meaningful interaction. You had to be fed and sheltered and cared for by someone! It is the same way with the new life of Christian faith. You do not simply get baptized and say, "Well, there we are! I am a Christian now!" and forget about what is next. Faith needs to be fed and cared for too. There needs to be interaction with Jesus. When Jesus told us to baptize he also added,

*... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28: 20).*



A basic way God makes our faith grow is through hearing and following what is written in the Bible. As



### Free Spiritual Food

Isaiah 55:1-3

Psalms 19:7-10



### Jesus the living water and bread of life

John 4:7-14

John 6:27-35, 44-57

Apostle Paul reminds us,

*“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ”*  
(Romans 10:17).

Regular reading of the Bible feeds a healthy spiritual life with God and life that honors him.

2. Explain the reason that we should regularly read or hear the Bible.

## Lord’s Supper connects us to the Cross

The relationship with Christ is fed also with something else: The Lord’s Supper. On that night, before he was betrayed, Jesus was eating the Passover supper with his closest followers, his disciples. It was at Passover meals like those that Jews remembered how God sent Moses to rescue them from slavery in Egypt. The unleavened bread (bread without yeast) brought to mind the first Passover meal that prepared them to go to the promised land.



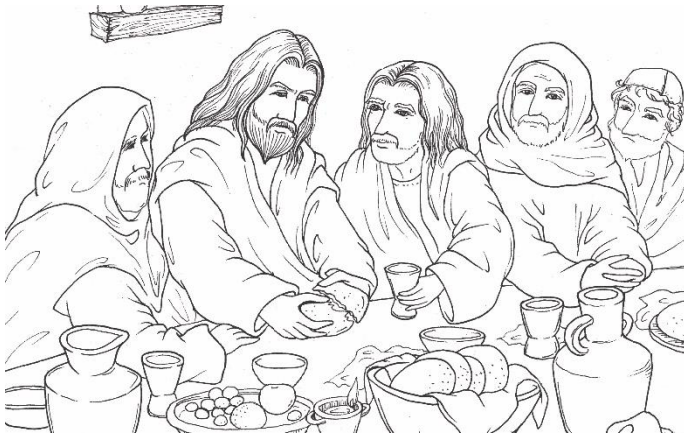
The Account of  
the Passover

Exodus 12:1-30

They remembered the lamb's blood that was painted on the doorposts to save their households from death that others suffered. Later God prescribed regular sacrifices of lambs to remind them that an innocent one would die to save the guilty – a pure and honorable life to cover the shamed ones. That is why it is said,

*“without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness”* (Hebrews 9:22).

Soon Jesus would become the ultimate Lamb sacrificed for the whole world. He wanted that to have a lasting effect on his followers.



So during that meal Jesus took some of the bread, gave it to his disciples and said,

*“Take and eat; This is my body.”* Then he took the wine and said, *“Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins”* (Matthew 26:26-28). Jesus called this *“the new covenant in my blood”* (Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25).



### Importance of blood for forgiveness

Ephesians 1:7-8

Hebrews 9:11-22

1 Peter 1:18-19



### Accounts of the Lord's Supper

Matthew 26:17-30

Mark 14:12-26

Luke 22:7-20

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

So like the Passover, the Lord's Supper revisits the defining event in our salvation history. It takes us back to when Jesus died on the cross to rescue us from the slavery to sin. Throughout time, the bread in the Lord's Supper would remind Christians of Jesus' sinless body nailed to the cross. The wine would link us with His blood which was shed, or poured out in death, to give us "forgiveness of sins" and eternal life. At the Last Supper, Jesus was announcing that the new covenant of forgiveness has arrived. It would be signed with his blood. It was like Jesus was leaving his

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**Jesus said, "Take and eat; This is my body... Drink from it, This is my blood...for the forgiveness of sins"**

---

dying Will (or testament) to be handed down and distributed throughout time and space.

The "old" covenant was specific laws given through Moses. It also was sealed with "*the blood of the covenant*" (Exodus 24:8). But the old covenant brought the curse of judgment when Israel failed to faithfully keep it. They broke their side of the agreement, just as surely as we would. But God had been setting up a

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**It was like Jesus was leaving his dying Will to arrange an inheritance for distributing throughout time and space**

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"new covenant." He already had announced it to Abraham many years before. This new covenant would not be based on our worthiness. It would be 100% dependent on God and his mercy. It would not only give forgiveness of sins but also a new heart to know and follow him.



**The Crucifixion**  
**The new covenant – signed in his blood**

Hebrews 9:11-28



**The New Covenant Promise**

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hebrews 8:6-13

Hebrews 10:8-18

3. Summarize the main messages of this section.

## JESUS IS PRESENT IN THE LORD'S SUPPER

But this is more than just remembering that Jesus shed his blood and died for us. We receive more than common bread and wine in this sacrament. Jesus says,

*"This is my body. This is my blood."*

In a miraculous way that we can't fully comprehend, we actually receive Jesus' body and blood together with the bread and wine. The Apostle Paul explains,

*"Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?"* (1 Corinthians 10:16).

We call this "real presence." Here Jesus comes in a special way to be united with us. He places on our lips his very body that lived and suffered for us and the

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**We actually receive Jesus' body and blood together with the bread and wine**

---

blood shed for us in his death. Jesus, who is no longer visible to our eyes, meets us personally in the bread and wine.

Although Jesus knew the torture and death awaiting him, at the meal he thought of us. He knew what so many people needed for the struggles in life in the centuries ahead. He says, "Take and eat, this is given



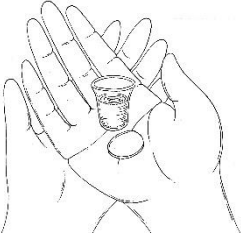
**Faith in a simple action saved – the story of the bronze serpent**

Numbers 21:4-9

John 3:15



**for you** (*fill in your name*)...“drink, it was shed **for you.**”



He comes to you in this visible food so you realize he died for you, yes you! He forgave YOU! Taste it! Believe it!

4. What is unique to the Lord's Supper that is difficult to understand without faith?

## **WARNING LABEL – RESPECT THE MEAL**

Medicine bottles often come with warnings so that we use them properly for our health and not to harm us. Apostle Paul says this sacrament of the Lord's Supper comes with a warning as medicine to our souls:

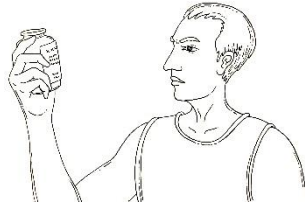
*“So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup” (1 Corinthians 11:27-31).*

Paul's warning was first written to the congregation in Corinth. They treated the Lord's Supper in a worldly way rather than as a communion with Jesus. Their actions and attitudes caused divisions instead of expressing their unity with Christ. The significance

of this supper mattered to Jesus and it should matter to us. Paul reminded them,

*“Anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself” (11:29).*

For that reason we don’t offer it to children until they are properly instructed or to others who do not yet properly understand it and its connection to Jesus.



**Warning label on Lord’s Supper**

1 Corinthians 11:27-31

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**The significance of this supper mattered to Jesus and it should matter to us**

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So does that mean we should wait until we have a clean record before we receive the Lord’s Supper? That is impossible. Besides, if we were so pure and good, we wouldn’t need it. Remember that Jesus frequently ate and drank with those others considered “sinners.” When he was criticized for his actions, he said,

*“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick” (Matthew 9:12).*

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**We come for the medicine of the soul**

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Jesus knows we often come with complex emotions of sorrow, loss, frustration, stress, guilt and shame all mixed with faith. In the Lord’s Supper we come for the medicine of the soul to be refreshed and strengthened to live the life of faith. Jesus said,



**Jesus was criticized because he sat down and eat with “sinners”**

Matthew 9:9-13

Luke 15:1-2

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, I will give you rest”* (Matthew 11:28).

So, how can we prepare ourselves to receive the Lord’s Supper? Clear away the distracting obstacles. Examine your life to see what may be dishonoring your relationship with God and confess those sins to him. If you have some unresolved issues with others, set a plan to repair them. Then look forward to meeting Jesus at the “table” for the forgiveness of sin. Come with the desire to be purified by his blood and renewed with power to live a new life with him.

5. Discuss what God is protecting with the warnings about the Lord’s Supper.

**Questions to  
Prepare for you  
for Communion**

In Appendix

## **A PRESENT AND FUTURE FELLOWSHIP**

Jesus told us,

*“When you come together...Do this in remembrance of me...For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes”*  
(1 Corinthians 11:20, 24-26).

The celebration of the Lord’s supper has been a consistent mark of the Christian Church since the first time it was celebrated. Every time we receive the Lord’s Supper, we declare to each other and to the world that we believe Jesus died for our sins to give us life. What an honor! We are unworthy of his holy presence, but there we are – feasting at his table with him! And this intimate moment (encounter) with Jesus becomes an intimate moment of fellowship

with those who “sit” at the “table” with us. Paul says,

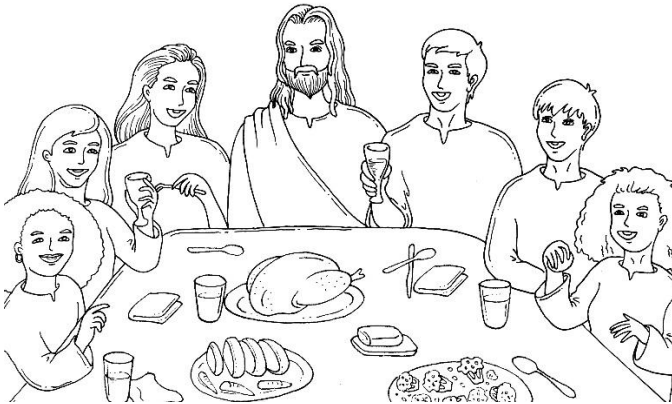
*“Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf” (1 Corinthians 10:17).*

It is a beautiful picture of the genuine unity of faith. How amazing that people so different in background, culture, or financial standing, eat together at the same for the same sweet tasting gospel promise and power

But there is more! Jesus said,

*“I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:29).*

Celebrating the Lord’s Supper also directs our eyes beyond the challenges of the world to the time when we will eat and drink at the banquet feast with Jesus in heaven.



*“Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:9). Jesus said, “I say to you that many will come from the east and*



**Unity of Faith**

Ephesians 4:1-16

*the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 8:11).*

It will be a grand fellowship of people from long ago and people far away.

So come to the meal with anticipation and leave with thankfulness. Receive the assurance that you are loved and accepted by God. And strengthened by the Holy Spirit, go back into the world to live for Christ. Bear much fruit in service to God through acts of kindness and love to others. More on this in the next chapter.

6. Review the different types of fellowship enjoyed in the Lord’s Supper.



**Joined by the  
hosts of heaven**

Hebrews 12:22-24

Revelation 7:9-15



## **CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE**

1. Explain why it is so beneficial for you to know that Christ is really present in the sacrament when you come to commune with him.
  
2. Some people feel they are too sinful to receive the Lord’s Supper. How do you respond to them according to this chapter?

3. Discuss how do you prepare yourself before you receive the Lord's Supper.
4. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



## **YOUR NEXT STEPS**

### **Study it!**

Read again more carefully the Bible passages in this lesson to understand what God is saying.

### **Memorize it!**

Identify a Bible passage in this lesson that is most meaningful for you and memorize it.

### **Apply it!**

Discuss how you can put this lesson into your life this week.

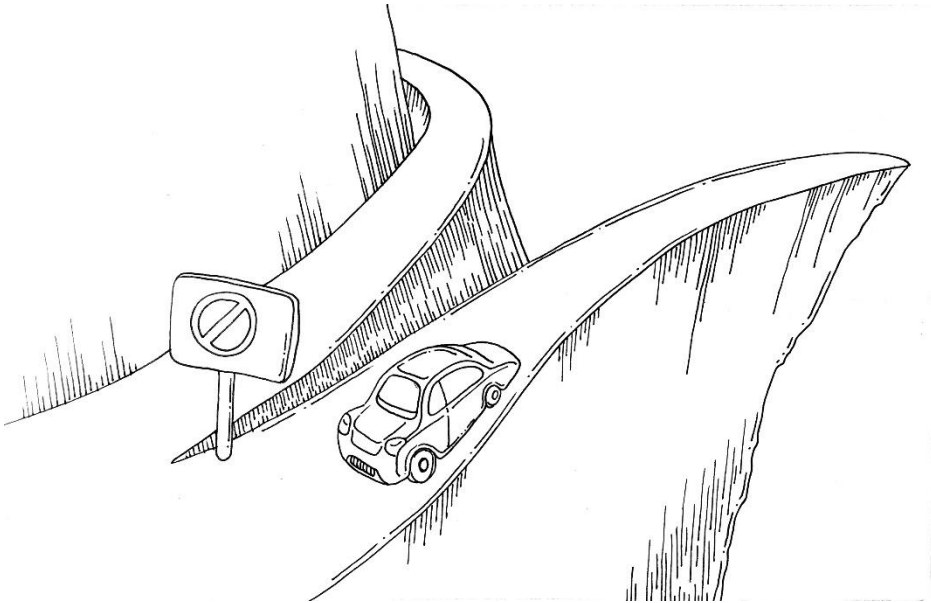
### **Share it!**

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

*Go on to Lesson Five to understand how you live this new life of faith.*

## Chapter Five

# LIVING THE NEW LIFE OF FAITH



Have you ever been on an unfamiliar road and wondered where it was leading you? Or maybe you were daydreaming and just absentmindedly followed the crowd. You didn't notice you were going in a completely wrong direction. Maybe you ended up in a dangerous area. How do you get back on track?

1. Describe a time when you were headed in the wrong direction. How did you know? What did you do?

It may have been confusing to Nicodemus. Jesus told him he must be "born again" to enter the kingdom of God (John 3). It was like saying he

was on the wrong road and needed to go in a radically different direction. Do you wonder how that conversation affected him? Later we read how he boldly stood up for Jesus in front of the chief priests and Pharisees (John 7:50-51). And despite potential shame and alienation, after Jesus died Nicodemus joined Joseph of Arimathea in taking Jesus down from the cross to lay Jesus' lifeless body in the tomb (John 19:38-42). Jesus had been working on Nicodemus and the Holy Spirit working in him.

What does this new birth look like in us? How does it affect and guide your daily life? We will look further into that question in this chapter.

## TRANSFORMED FROM OLD SELF TO NEW

How many times have you looked at your life and

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**If you are born again, there is already a new you inside...Paul calls the life of faith the "new self."**

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wished you could be a new person – a new you? Well, if you are born again into Christ

there is already a "new you" inside. That new life trusts and appreciates Jesus for all he has done to bring us acceptance with God. His love creates a new heart in us – a longing to be like him, live for him, and one day be with him.

*"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).*

Paul calls the life of faith the "new self." Living in it is like changing spiritual clothes:

*"You were taught, with regard to your former way of*



### New Heart

Psalm 51:10-12  
Jeremiah 24:7  
Ezekiel 11:17-20;  
36:23-26



### New Life

Ezekiel 36:27-29  
Colossians 3:10  
Galatians 6:15



life, to **put off your old self**, which is being **corrupted by its deceitful desires**; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to **put on the new self**, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24).

And what do you take off? What do you put on?  
Here are samples and guidance for you:

"**Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature**: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry... You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived" (Colossians 3:5,7).

"Therefore each of you must **put off falsehood** and **speak truthfully** to your neighbor... Anyone who has been stealing must **steal no longer**, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to **share with those in need**" (Ephesians 4:25, 28).

"**Get rid of all bitterness**, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. **Be kind and compassionate** to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Ephesians 4:31-32).

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. **Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity**" (Colossians 3:13, 14).

2. Give some examples of what the new life looks like compared to the sinful life.

**Don't be conformed to the world, but transformed**  
Romans 12:1-2  
1 Corinthians 6:9-11  
Ephesians 2:1-6;  
5:8-11  
Matthew 5-7

## THE POWER TO WIN THE DAILY BATTLE

But don't think the "old self" will remain quiet. It will keep trying to make a comeback. That sinful nature still tries to convince us to conform to the misguided ways of this world. It will be a daily battle inside – a struggle throughout life. Because of our tendency to drift away, God brings us back through regular repentance.

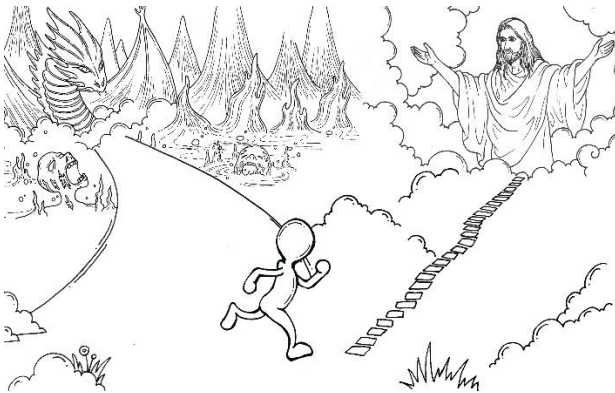
Repentance means "turning." Imagine it like walking down the wrong road of life and needing to be redirected. You see, by nature everyone

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**"Repentance" means turning**

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is on the wide, popular road that leads away from God and to eternal darkness and suffering in hell. But when the Holy Spirit works repentance and faith in us, he is turning us around and putting us on the road that leads to eternal life.



There he gives forgiveness and power to live for him. That is why Paul instructs,



**The Christian's inner struggle**

Romans 7:7-25



**The call to repentance**

Isaiah 30:15

Mark 1:15

Luke 5:32, 15:10

2 Corinthians 7:9-10



**Denying self to gain life for God**

Luke 9:22-26



**Walking by the Spirit**

Galatians 3:3-9

5:13-18; 6:8

*"So I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).*

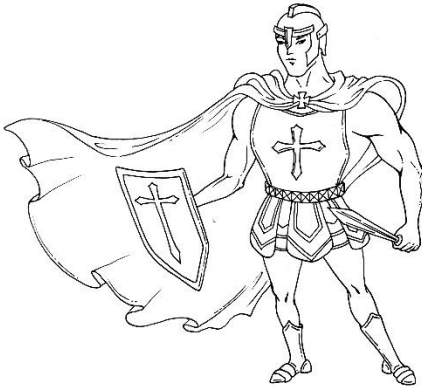
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## Walk by the Spirit

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The power behind our faith in Jesus is the Holy Spirit, not ourselves. How does he do that? With the same tool he used to bring us to faith in the first place: the Means of Grace – the gospel in the Word and sacraments. That is the equipment that the Holy Spirit provides to keep you close to Jesus and help you stand strong. Paul tells us to outfit ourselves with it:

*"**Put on the full armor of God**, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes...so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground... **take up the shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**" (Ephesians 6: 11-13,16-17).*



God's word will be your weapon to win against the devil's schemes. Stay close to it. Your faith in Jesus is the shield against the devil's temptations and



**"Slaves" to Jesus  
not to Satan & sin**

Matthew 20:20-28

Romans 6:11-23

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

discouragements. Remain steadfast in it.

*“For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).*

Our identity with Christ in baptism daily influences our life by connecting us to everything Christ did for us – making it active in our lives too. Paul says,

*“Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Romans 6:3-4).*

When we were baptized, Jesus’ life story becomes our story. We become identified with him. His death to

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**We were buried with Jesus through baptism ...so just as Christ was raised from the dead... we too may live a new life.**

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bear the curse of sin was our death. When we die to sin, it cannot control us any longer. His victory over sin is ours.

His resurrection means not only a new life for us now, but one day we will live with him in heaven.

And coming to the Lord's Supper gives us strength as it connects us with Christ’s own body and blood – the very body and blood that covered the penalty of our sin. When we remember how he suffered to save us, how could we leave the meal with any desire to bring shame or disgrace to his name by the way we live? Instead, it gives joy in forgiveness and a purpose for living in Christ. It points us ahead with anticipation to



**Power through  
Christ in you**

Ephesians 1:17-23

3:14-21

the fact that the best is yet to come, for one day we will be eating the Great Banquet with him in heaven.

3. Discuss where you can find power to live the new life.

## BEARING FRUIT THAT WILL LAST

We started out this study looking at how blind and hostile we are to God and unable to save ourselves. But being “born again” opens our eyes and looks to God. It brings us into the realm of living by faith. For it is by faith alone that we are saved. But faith doesn’t remain by itself. It actively drives how we live.

*“[God] has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ...through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:9).*

Me - a holy life? Is it even possible? The power for living doesn’t come from us, but from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit connects us to Jesus. He promised,

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**The power for living comes from the Holy Spirit who connects us to Jesus.**

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*“If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing...I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last” (John 15:5, 16).*

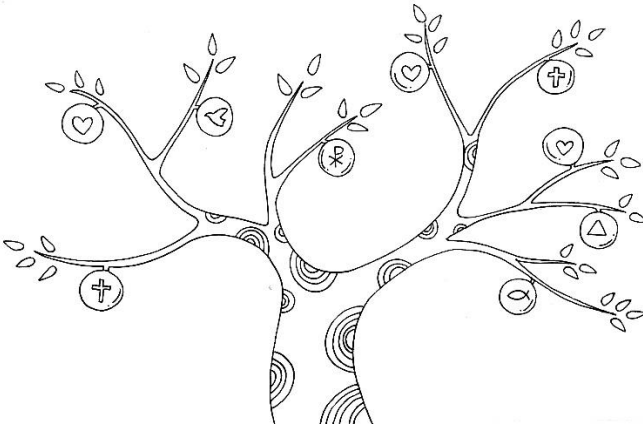
So what does some of that fruit look like? Paul says,



**The actions of the sinful nature vs. The fruit of the Spirit**

Galatians 5:19-25  
1 Corinthians 6:9-11

*“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23).*



Our connection with Jesus transforms our earthly life as we look forward to a perfect life with Jesus in heaven. That is what grace teaches us. Paul says,

*“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:11-14).*

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**When we were baptized into Christ, we became part of the body of Christ – people who live in him**

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But we don't have to do that alone. When we were baptized into Christ, we became part of the



**Christ is the Vine – we are the fruit-bearing branches**

John 15:1-17

Matthew 21:33-43

Luke 3: 8-14



**Evidences that emerge from being “born again”**

John 13:12-17, 34-35

1 John 2:28-29,

1 John 3:9-10, 4:7-19,  
5:1-5



**Practicing humble service together as the body of Christ active in the world**

Romans 12:3-21

Ephesians 4:1-16

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

body of Christ – people who live in him. Together we find strength gathered around the Means of Grace.

That is why the writer to the Hebrews urges us,

*“Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching”* (Hebrews 10:23-25).



That “Day approaching” makes our focus and mission in life all the more urgent because Jesus is the only Way to eternal life. It gives us boldness to spread the message and activity of Christ’s love. No matter where you live, whether in

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**That gospel has been entrusted to you to share regardless of age, race, and background**

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Africa, Asia, North or South America or elsewhere in the world, that same gospel has been entrusted to you to

share regardless of age, race, or background. It starts in your families, your communities, your school, your work, your relationships. That gospel binds us together and empowers us carry out Christ’s mission in the world.

*“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel”* (Philippians 1:27)

Paul saw its effect of the Holy Spirit at work through the Means of Grace centered in the gospel:

*“In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace” (Colossians 1:4-6).*

And so we end where we began. Jesus told Nicodemus *“Unless you are born again, you will not see the Kingdom of God.”* Those who have been born again see the kingdom of God at work in their lives and in the world. And they, together with you, look forward to the kingdom of God reaching its fullness when we join Jesus in the perfection and peace in heaven.

4. Summarize the main message of this section.



**Live a life worthy of  
the calling you  
receives as Children  
of Light**

Matthew 5:13-16

Ephesians 4:1-6;

5:8-11

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

1 Peter 2:9-12





## CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE

1. What aspects of life in the world today fight against or threaten the new life in us?
  
2. How would baptism and Lord's Supper help you when you are:
  - a. When you feel God doesn't love you or forgive you?
  - b. When you are tempted to sin?
  - c. When you wonder what your purpose is in life?
  
3. Make a list of things you could do to show God's love and glory to someone else. Then pick out someone to start with.
  
4. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
  
5. Please pray to God based on this.



## **YOUR NEXT STEPS**

### **Study it!**

Read again more carefully the Bible passages in this lesson to understand what God is saying.

### **Memorize it!**

Identify a Bible passage in this lesson that is most meaningful for you and memorize it.

### **Apply it!**

Discuss how you can put this lesson into your life this week.

### **Share it!**

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

## APPENDIX

### EXPLANATIONS FROM LUTHER'S CATECHISM

#### **Explanation of the Third Article of the Apostle's Creed – on the Holy Spirit:**

"I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life."

#### **The Sacrament of Holy Baptism**

*As the head of the family should teach it in the simplest way  
to those in his household.*

#### **The Institution of Baptism**

**First:** What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is water used by God's - command and connected with God's Word.

*Which is that word of God?*

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

#### **The Blessings of Baptism**

**Second:** What does Baptism do for us?

Baptism works forgiveness of sin, delivers from death and the

devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

*What are these words and promises of God?*

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

## **The Power of Baptism**

**Third:** How can water do such great things?

It is certainly not the water that does such things, but God's Word which is in and with the water and faith which trusts this Word used with the water.

For without God's Word the water is just plain water and not Baptism. But with this Word it is Baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of rebirth by the Holy Spirit.

*Where is this written?*

Saint Paul says in Titus, chapter 3, "[God] saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying."

## **The Meaning of Baptism for Our Daily Life**

**Fourth:** What does baptizing with water mean?

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.

*Where is this written?*

Saint Paul says in Romans, chapter 6, "We were . . . buried with [Christ] through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

## The Sacrament of Holy Communion

*As the head of the family should teach it in the simplest way  
to those in his household.*

### The Institution of Holy Communion

**First:** What is the Sacrament of Holy Communion?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ for us Christians to eat and to drink.

*Where is this written?*

The holy evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the apostle Paul tell us: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

### The Blessings of Holy Communion

**Second:** What blessing do we receive through this eating and drinking?

That is shown us by these words: "Given" and "poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins."

Through these words we receive forgiveness of sins, life, and - salvation in this sacrament.

For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and - salvation.

### The Power of Holy Communion

**Third:** How can eating and drinking do such great things?

It is certainly not the eating and drinking that does such things, but the words "Given" and "poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins."

These words are the main thing in this sacrament, along with the eating and drinking.

And whoever believes these words has what they plainly say, the forgiveness of sins.

## The Reception of Holy Communion

**Fourth:** Who, then, is properly prepared to receive this sacrament?

Fasting and other outward preparations may serve a good purpose, but he is properly prepared who believes these words: "Given" and "poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins." But whoever does not believe these words or doubts them is not prepared, because the words "for you" require nothing but hearts that believe.

## Preparation for the Lord's Supper:

### Questions to prepare yourself for the Lord's Supper.

1. Do you believe that you are a sinner?

*Yes, I believe that I have disobeyed God and am a sinner.*

2. How do you know you are a sinner?

*I know I am a sinner from the Ten Commandments which I have not kept.*

3. Are you sorry for your sins?

*Yes, I am sorry that I sinned against God.*

4. What do you deserve because you sin against God?

*I deserve his anger, death, and everlasting punishment in hell.*

5. Do you hope to be saved?

*Yes, I hope to be saved.*

6. In whom then do you believe and trust?

*I believe and trust in my dear Lord Jesus Christ.*

7. Who is Jesus Christ?

*Jesus is the Son of God and son of Mary, true God and true man.*

8. What has Jesus done for you? Why do you believe and trust in him?

*Jesus died for me on the cross for the forgiveness of my sins.*

9. Do you believe that the true body and blood of Jesus are received in the Lord's Supper?

*Yes, I believe it because Jesus said, "This is my body, and this is my blood."*

10. Why should you go to the Lord's Supper often?

*I should go to the Lord's Supper often for the forgiveness of all of my sins, for the strengthening of my faith in Jesus, and to remember and announce his death.*



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