

Matthew 28:16-20 & Romans 6:3-5

Introduction

The Sacrament of Baptism is a Means of Grace.

The Means of Grace are God's appointed way to apply Christ's work to believers.

In our day, the Holy Spirit primarily works through the Means of Grace, as they are ministered in the church through those whom God has called to be Ministers of Word and Sacraments (**2LBCF 28.2**).

What makes something a sacrament? (**WCF 27.1**).

There are only two sacraments in the New Testament Church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism is a covenantal transaction between God and the believer (**Acts 8:36-38; 9:17-19; 10:47-48; 16:31-34**).

Hence we dare not regard it as of secondary importance or worse unimportant.

Summary

The Bible teaches that the risen Lord Jesus Christ commanded His apostles, and hence the church, to baptize professing disciples in the name of the triune God (Matt 28:19-20); this New Testament ordinance signifying union with Christ, forgiveness of sins and walking in newness of life (Rom 6:3-5).

1. Sovereign Originator

Baptism is ordained by Jesus Christ, as the king and the only law-giver.

The LORD Jesus Christ sovereignly institutes; the only law-giver mandates the ordinance of Baptism (**Matthew 28:19-20**).

We are baptized and we baptize disciples because he tells us to do so.

2. Authoritative Nature

An ordinance is a direction or command of an authoritative nature and a custom or practice established by authority. Baptism is an ordinance in that it is something commanded by Christ, the King. Baptism is also a sacrament in that it is a sacred, holy thing; set apart from the ordinary and mundane.

Christ is pleased, as Lord of all, to institute and require the observance of the ordinance of baptism. Obedience to Christ's sovereign institutions shows true and genuine love for, and loyalty to the will of, Christ the king (**John 14:15**).

3. Proper Subjects

The Scriptures teach that those who actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects of Baptism (**Matt 28:19**). There is no express command for or explicit example of infant baptism in the Bible. Not a matter to unchurch or pronounce other believers unorthodox but it is a matter of vital importance and not a matter of Christian liberty.

4. Symbolic Identification

The party to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (**Matthew 28:19**).

Matthew 28:19 speaks literally of being baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the symbolic identification or unification of the one baptized with the one in whose name he is baptized. Baptism symbolizes joining oneself in covenant to God; becoming his follower or disciple.

5. Three-fold Significance

Baptism expresses the verbal content of the gospel in non-verbal form.

1) Baptism conveys the idea of union or identification with Christ (**Gal 3:27; Rom 6:3-5**). 2) Baptism as a washing with water symbolizes forgiveness of sins and moral purification (**Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16**). 3) Baptism signifies that we are raised in Christ by the glory of God the Father so that we might walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4).

So if you are a Christian and baptized look back and rejoice again in what Christ has done for you, who you are, what it means. Improve your baptism.

If you are a Christian and not baptized you. You ought to be. Christ commands it. Non-Christian; see in this the gospel of what Christ has done for sinners. A visible word of the gospel.