



October 2012

Pastor's

—
"As Long as They're Christians"

Do Denominational Differences Really Matter?

Part IV: Specific Arguments For and Against Infant Baptism



Zion Lutheran
Church

110 East Grand Avenue

The most important text to look at is Christ's Great Commission in Mathew 28:19-20, "Go therefore and make disciples of **all the nations, baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."¹ Here Christ says to baptize *all* nations. He does not say to baptize only the adults. When a person says that *all* of his family is at grandmother's house, this means *all* of his family is there—babies too. The clear Word of God must be allowed to stand alone without changing the interpretation to fit in the box of human reason. Those against infant baptism attempt to say that the *teaching* must come before the *baptizing* and thus infants should not be baptized since they cannot be taught. And for adults this is true. Adults should be taught first before baptism. This is the model of both the Old and New Testament. In the Old Testament God commanded Abraham in Genesis 17:10 to circumcise all males in his household, and there is no doubt that Abraham first instructed the adult males about it; however, when his son Isaac was born, he did not circumcise Isaac after he reached the 'age of discretion,' but when he was eight days old (Genesis 21:4)."² The same is true in the New Testament. Adults were to be instructed before baptism, but the children were to be baptized immediately. In Acts chapter two Peter says, "**Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.**"³ Adults were instructed first then baptized for the forgiveness of sins, and then their entire families were also baptized. There are several examples of this in the Bible, yet human reason tries to change the clear Word of God. Even in the example of Nicodemus in John 3, they say that Nicodemus was an old man and that Jesus did not include children. But Jesus speaks very generally and says, "Unless *one* is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." This returns to the same point covered earlier. All are born sinful and all need to be washed clean in order to enter the kingdom of God.

Those who oppose infant baptism finally say that there are no explicit instructions to baptize babies in Scripture. True, that the Bible doesn't say word for

¹ Mathew 28:19-20.

² P. 133 Johan G

³ Acts 2:38-9.

word “baptize infants,” but infants are included in the words *all nations* and *unless one is born*, and need what Baptism gives. If we follow their unreasonable reasoning, scripture also never explicitly says that women should take Holy Communion. There is no verse that says word for word, “Communion is for women too.” Scripture also does not say, “Do not baptize infants.”

As shown, just because there is no command to baptize babies in the way AE’s want it worded, Scripture clearly teaches that baptism is for all because all need baptism. Flesh births flesh and must be reborn of water and the Spirit in order to enter into the Kingdom of God. Baptism is the way God does this. Scripture is full of examples. I Peter 3:21 says, “Baptism now saves us.” Galatians 3:26-7 says, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you who are baptized, you have put on Christ.” I Corinthians 12:13 says, “Through one Spirit we have all been baptized to one Body.” Titus 3:5 says, “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” Mark 16:16 says, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved;” Ephesians 5:25-27 says, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”

While Scripture does not say word for word, “baptize babies,” it clearly teaches that all people are born sinful and that all nations need to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. If we want to talk about what Scripture really doesn’t teach, it is exactly what AE’s teach: 1. that baptism isn’t for all nations, but only adults. 2. Baptism does NOT save, give the gift of the Holy Spirit, wash away sins, or create faith. 3. Faith isn’t God’s Work, but man’s decision to save himself/herself. 4. There are two ways to be saved—one by faith—the other by an age of accountability, meaning all haven’t fallen short of the glory of God - only adults. 5. Baptism is not God’s work, but man’s work of publically obeying and declaring he/she is a committed Christian and that Baptism is only symbolic.

I could go on all day listing their teachings, which truly aren’t in the Bible, but the above is sufficient for now. As you can see, AE’s say they believe *all* the Bible, but they really do not believe it *all*—unless “all” means “some.” To be continued...

Baptized into Christ,

Pastor



Happy Birthday to all the active members who have October Birthdays!!

Isabel Lenz	10/1
Lois Eichinger	10/3
Erna Welke	10/8
Gerald Hoepner	10/10
Karen Clark	10/15
Mark Klemke	10/15
Vicki Bellore	10/17
Elizabeth Welke	10/17
Irene Przybylski	10/19
Arlene Hakes	10/20
Sara Bowe	10/24
Benjamin Ziebarth	10/24
Dianne Schroeder	10/25
Shianne Hunt	10/27
Diane Leland	10/27
Emily Schwetz	10/28
Mary Gettler	10/30
Amanda Ziebarth	10/30



Happy Anniversary to:

Ryan & Kelly Hunt	10/1/2005
Bradley & Carol Sundell	10/1/2005
Greg & Diane Leland	10/4/2005
Shawn & Mandy Schoelzel	10/5/2002
Tom & Sara Bowe	10/17/1992
Herman & Sharon Sahr	10/24/1964
Michael & Coila Ziebarth	10/26/1968

We ask you to remember in our prayers the homebound members:

Irene Kvapil
Isabel Lenz
Juanita Lueck
Myrna Mattison



PRAYER REQUEST

If you would like a prayer on Sunday morning, please contact the secretary during the week. If it is last minute, you can also catch pastor before service.



MISS A BIBLE CLASS OR SERMON?

Audio of the most recent Bible classes and sermons are on our website. Click the "Education" tab for Bible class or the tab for "Sermons."



CD'S OF SERMONS & BIBLE STUDIES

CD's of Sermons and Bible Studies will be made available for those who request them. Contact Brian Schweisthal with any requests. Brian's cell phone is 715-529-8342 and his email address is brians8881@gmail.com.



RADIO & FLOWERS:

If you would like to furnish altar flowers or sponsor a radio broadcast for a special occasion please call the office. **Altar flowers** are **\$30.00** at Gordys if **you pick up** yourself or **\$40.00** if you would like them **delivered** to the church. You also may bring your own flowers. There is a flower chart in the church on the left of the door as you enter from the education wing. Sign your name by the date you would like to furnish flowers. **The radio broadcast is \$76.00.** Call the office if you would like to furnish a broadcast or have any questions about flowers or the broadcast. You may pay in the church office or put in the offering plate & write "for flowers."

Hangin' on His Words

www.aceic.net

And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation." And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers." And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words. Luke 19:41-48 ESV

In the Gospel reading for the 10th Sunday after Trinity we read the familiar account of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem and then cleansing the temple. Almost lost in this reading is the last verse. The chief priests and scribes and "principle men of the people" wanted to destroy Jesus, but they couldn't do it. Why? All the people were hanging on His words.

What words are you hanging on to? The Olympics have just ended. Record numbers hung on the words each night of the prime time telecast. School is set to begin all across our country. Students will be hanging on the words of their teachers and professors in order to learn and earn a good grade. Political races are heating up and we hang on the words of the ads and debates while politicians hang on the words of the pollsters and the "undecided." Fall sports are gearing up. We hang on the words of the sportscasters, the players hang on the words of the coaches and the coaches hang on the words of the Administration and Alumni.

But this is no mere seasonal activity. As a drought ravages much of the Midwest, people are hanging on to the words of the daily forecast, hoping for rain and relief from the oppressive heat. When winter arrives, students will hang on the words of the weatherman, hoping and praying for a snow day. As prices of everything from groceries to utilities to gas at the pump fluctuate, we hang on the latest news as we plan to make ends meet. The new graduate hangs on the words of the one who might offer a job while people in a relationship hang on words of love and commitment. We hang on words all the time; but what words do we hang on to?

In the Lutheran Church we confess that the Word of God is important, so important in fact, that we promise to base all of our teaching and practice on that Word. It is the nature of sin to say one thing and do another. How easy it is to confess the importance of the God's Words while at the same time hanging on the words of culture or popularity instead. We have all set up false idols and pretended that they can somehow speak words of life and contentment. We have spurned the

words of forgiveness and salvation while hanging on the words of the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh.

This is precisely why the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. Into this world of false words and bogus promises entered Jesus, the very Word of Life. He endured mocking and insults as He walked the way of sorrow and suffering that only He could walk, speaking at the perfect time and remaining silent at the perfect time. People thought the Word was silenced forever on Good Friday as He bled and died our death, but three days later Christ Jesus rose victorious over sin and the grave. It is finished! He is risen!

All the benefits of Good Friday and Easter have been poured out to us in the Baptismal font. The Word attached to simple water gives us new life in Christ. The Word attached to bread and wine gives us strength for life's journey as we feast on His body and blood. The Word reveals His will to us in the Holy Bible, the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God.

When problems arise in our lives, what words do we hang on to? Words that give a quick fix or words of the latest fad, or the Words of God? When problems arise in our beloved Synod, what words do we hang on to? Words of temporary unity or even words of constitution and bylaws, or the Words of God?

God's Word calls all of us to repentance. God's Word calls all of us to examine what and why we are hanging on words that offer no forgiveness and nothing of lasting value, at the expense of the words of Christ. God's Word calls us to be honest about the problems and divisions among us and to let God's Word have its way with us. It can be a frightening thing to relinquish personal pride and power and control and hang on the Words of God. Frightening but freeing!

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:31-36 ESV

It is my prayer that we in the LCMS would be united in Christ and truly hanging on His words.

In Christ,

Rev. Clint K. Poppe

Chairman, ACELC

To learn more about the work of the ACELC, please visit www.ancelc.net

Higher Things

DARE TO BE LUTHERAN

Higher Things Youth Conference

Theme: From Above 2013

West Lafayette, IN

Purdue University

July 9-12, 2013

Jesus answered Nicodemus, "...unless one is born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)

You have been born of water. You have been born of the Spirit. You have been born From Above!

You were born of God, born anew, born from above in the Baptismal Font. You are alive now, eternally alive, never to die ever again for you already died in Christ. As surely as He is risen from the dead, you will rise from the dead. In fact, you already have risen from the dead, by faith. Now, you live eternally From Above, in service to others, just as God in Christ has saved you.

Registration opens November 1st, 2012.

Zion Youth and Parents, save the date: July 9-12, 2013. -Pastor



Zion's Women's Society News

The Women's Society met on Thursday, September 13th, for a noon luncheon at Lois Eichinger's home. Eleven members and ten guests were present. Lois served a most delicious meal in her beautifully decorated home. Doreen Szedlak was in charge of devotions. She tested our biblical knowledge with two interesting quizzes. Most of us had a bit of a problem with some of the questions. It was good to learn the correct answers. Thank you so much Lois for your most gracious invitation and all of your hard work. It was a very enjoyable afternoon. Lots of good food, lively conversation and some Bible review also. Our next meeting will be at church on Thursday, October 11, at 1:00 p.m. Please note the time change. It was decided to meet one half hour earlier then previously. Rosa Blake will be the hostess.



The mission of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League is to assist each woman in affirming her relationship with the Triune God so that she is enabled to use her gifts in ministry to the people of the world.

Sunday Bible Class

We continue to study, "Worship and Liturgy" during our Sunday morning class. All Jr. High through 110 year olds are welcome. We will be taking a few short breaks from this topic in October. On October 7, we will be having Mission festival with a guest pastor teaching on missions that day. October 28 is our voters' meeting so we will not have class. During this meeting I will be suggesting overtures for us to make to the LCMS national convention next summer. In order to discuss these overtures, I am dedicating the Bible classes two weeks before to do so on October 14 & 21. See you all there. Pastor

Hmong Lutheran Mission Fundraiser

The members of the Hmong Lutheran Mission are again offering their fabulous EGGROLLS for sale. The cost is \$15.00 per dozen. The egg rolls remain extra fresh in the freezer. They are also excellent for lunches and snacks. Orders must be received by October 13th to assure deliver. The egg rolls will be available and delivered by October 27th. This allows everyone sufficient time to make their orders. Orders may be made by calling 715-834-4028. All proceeds from the sale are designated toward the Mission budget for 2012. Your support is sincerely appreciated.

Q:Pastor, should I make my child come to church or let him/her decide?

*What is the 3rd Commandment? Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it Holy. What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise **preaching** and His Word, but hold It sacred and **gladly hear and learn It.***

This is a question that I have heard asked many times. This is really asking the wrong question. Based on all the good things God does for us in the Divine Service, your kids should be begging to come, and you should be chomping at the bit to come. But, I understand that we are sinners too. We want to come to church gladly on the one hand, and don't on the other. I also understand that parents are concerned that if they force their children to attend church/Bible class that they will resent them and church when they are adults and not attend. As sinners and saints, we need the Law and Gospel. So, what to do with our kids?

A: God has placed the responsibility of teaching the faith to children on their parents. [5] *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.* [6] *And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.* [7] *You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.* [8] *You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.* [9] *You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:5-9 ESV).* Martin Luther also reflects this Biblical teaching in his *Small Catechism*, as each part begins with, "As the head of the household shall teach his children." Yes, God is clear that He wants parents to make sure their children are taught His Word privately in the home and publicly in the congregational gathering around His Word and Sacraments. Since God commands that we bring our kids to church to hear and learn God's Word; if we don't, or let them decide, we are disobeying God, Who has given us the huge responsibility and authority to teach our kids the faith. This is a huge responsibility. Parents must teach the faith in the home in word and deed. Parents must bring their children to church as long as the child is under their authority in order to teach the faith to them.

This starts with the parents. Teaching the faith to the next generation also happens by modeling what it means to live like a Christian. Christians want to gather together to hear and learn God's Word in preaching and Bible class. Christians want to have their faith strengthened and sins forgiven by the Great Physician, Who gives these gifts to His children by His Word. There is no such thing as having faith and being a Christian apart from receiving the gifts of the Great Physician. The faith that He creates in us by the Word with water, Baptism, must continually be fed. God has promised to do this feeding with His Word in the public gathering of His people--*Where two or three are gathered in My name, there I am with them.* God has not promised to be present to strengthen our faith at the football game. When Christians are gathered around God's Word and Sacraments, He really is present to feed us forgiveness, give and strengthen our faith, and give us eternal life.

As parents at Zion, we know that there is no more important part of our week or our entire lives than Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. As parents, we know that we cannot live apart from Jesus. This is what we want to instill in our kids. We teach this to our kids by demonstrating it in our own actions and words. They need to see that coming to church isn't a chore or something we do for God, but a time when God gives His holy people a feast so that we have the food we need for eternal life. They need to see this hunger in their parents. They need to know that hearing preaching isn't optional or negotiable. They need to see in our words and actions that receiving God's gifts on the day that Christians have set aside to gather together, is more important than gathering with the world around work, entertainment, or athletic success. They need to see that it isn't a take it or leave it time of the week—an optional extra. They need to know that it is eternally worth it to be a Christian and hear God's Word, even if it means suffering temporarily in a world hostile to Christ and those in Him. They need to see that it is way more important than you making them eat their veggies or taking them to the physical doctor to save their temporal lives.

Think of the urgency you would have if you knew your child was dying physically whether he knew it or not. Would you let him skip treatment or skip the medicine to go to a football game? Would you let your child go to work to earn some spending money instead of going to the doctor to have lifesaving surgery? Of course not. This is the urgency and importance we need to teach our kids—church is the hospital for our sick and wounded souls that we all, parents and kids alike, need desperately often or our faith will eventually die. Why? *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ (Romans 10:17)*. Faith comes by abiding in The Vine by hearing the sermon and eating the Lord's Supper. *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.* Letting our kids skip church not only weakens their faith now, but it teaches them that taking God's gracious invitation to feast on preaching and His Word isn't that important and that other things are. They are then more likely as adults to have this same approach and church will be low on the priority list. So, yes, bring your kids to church to receive the medicine of immortality. This is what we all need from cradle to finish line.⁴

Now, keep in mind that we are all sinners and saints. Even as parents our flesh will not want to come to church. Our flesh is always opposed to the good we want to do as Christians. This is true of our kids too. Our kids' flesh will want to sin and break the 3rd Commandment by skipping church. Our kids' flesh will want to break the 6th Commandment with pre-marital sex. Our kids' flesh will want to disobey the 4th Commandment by not honoring and obeying the police officer, teachers at school, or us parents in the home. Our kids' flesh will want to physically hurt or harm a classmate. But, as loving parents we don't let our kids do things that their flesh wants to do because we know it is bad for them—temporally and eternally. We use our God given authority as parents to insure with our words and actions that our kids obey the police officer, don't

⁴ If we are unable to attend the public service, God's pastors bring His life giving medicine of Word and Sacraments to the hospital or home. God's gracious presents depends on His Word and Sacraments not a building.

assault their neighbor, obey us in the home, and come to church.⁵ We don't let them decide for themselves.

Because we love them and we know what is good for them, we make sure they get enough sleep on Saturday night so they can get up and go to the doctor to save their lives--so they can hear and pay attention to God's Word and so live forever. We want our kids to hear God's Law that shows them that they are sinning against God when they grumble against coming to church. We want them to hear that this is a serious sin not to gladly want to hear preaching and God's Word. But, we also want them to hear that it is for sinners that Christ died—Law *and* Gospel. Where do they hear this life giving message? They hear it through God's ordained means--in preaching and His Word.

In short, yes, 'make' your kids come to church with you to feast; don't let them skip this gracious meal. Now, have we and will we as parents fail at teaching the faith as God requires? Yes. For this, we all need forgiveness. This is also why we as parents run to church on Sunday mornings confessing that we are poor miserable parents, and Jesus is really present every time to forgive our sins and strengthen our faith. The Lord's Table is set and the feast is ready. Come, feast, and live—this is for you and your children. Amen.

In Christ,
A forgiven parent, Pastor Stark

⁵ Of course the reason why we all want to sin outwardly is due to the fact that our inward hearts are evil. Before God we are just as guilty of sin for wanting to flee preaching or disobey the police officer. We sin in thought, word, and deed. The point is that we as parents don't allow the deed, but bring our families to church for forgiveness of all thoughts, words, and deeds.

