

Session 5: A Proclaiming People
1 Peter 3:13-22

Gather

Check-in

- Last week you were asked to spend some time considering the importance of your baptism and how we, as a congregation, lift up the baptismal life in all its fullness.

Pray

Make us eager, O God, to tell the story of your love and grace. Make us ready to share our faith with others, and prepare us to speak to injustice in this world. Make us impatient for the coming kingdom. Be with us and let our discussions run deep and our respect for each other run wide. Be with us and help us understand your love for us more fully, and desire more of the knowledge and comfort that comes from reading your word. Amen.

Open Scripture

Read 1 Peter 3:13-22 from different versions of the Bible.

- How does this passage make you feel?
- What words or images stand out to you?
- What does this passage motivate you to do?

Join the Conversation

Historical Context

“Jesus Christ” was the first Christian creed or statement of belief about Jesus and his identity. It assigned the Hebrew title of Messiah or the anointed one (Christos in Greek) to Jesus of Nazareth. Other creedal statements followed. Bits and pieces of early church “Christ hymns” and Old Testament prophecies evolved into statements of belief, and epistle writers like Paul and the author of 1 Peter drew from this material.

- Look at 1 Peter 3:18–22. Underline the phrases that may have been part of early Christian creeds. What is said about Jesus?
- Compare this passage with the Apostles’ Creed. Which verses are similar?

Apostles' Creed	1 Peter 3:13-22
<p>I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.</p>	

Literary Context

The author hinges the body of his epistle on the meaning and purpose of the suffering the people are experiencing at the hands of their pagan society and culture. With Christ as their model, the people may suffer for doing good, and they should be ready to “defend” themselves by proclaiming their “hope.”

- This letter reminds me of what someone might say in a graduation speech. Think about the times we are living in. What part of this passage, or 1 Peter as a whole, might be appropriate for a commencement speaker to include?

Lutheran Context

As we read through Martin Luther's explanation of baptism, pay attention to what aspects of baptism are emphasized in this passage from 1 Peter.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

I

What is baptism?

Baptism is not simply plain water. Instead, it is water used according to God's command and connected with God's word.

What then is this word of God?

Where our Lord Christ says in Matthew 28, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

II

What gifts or benefits does baptism grant?

It brings about forgiveness of sins, redeems from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe it, as the words and promise of God declare.

What are these words and promise of God?

Where our Lord Christ says in Mark 16, "The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned."

III

How can water do such great things?

Clearly the water does not do it, but the word of God, which is with and alongside the water, and faith, which trusts this word of God in the water. For without the word of God the water is plain water and not a baptism, but with the word of God it is a baptism, that is, a grace-filled water of life and a "bath of the new birth in the Holy Spirit," as St. Paul says to Titus in chapter 3, "through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is sure."

IV

What then is the significance of such a baptism with water?

It signifies that the old person in us with all sins and evil desires is to be drowned and die through daily sorrow for sin and through repentance, and on the other hand that daily a new person is to come forth and rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul says in Romans 6, "We were buried with Christ through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."

Devotional Context

The author of 1 Peter gives the churches some thoughtful pastoral care and advice. He is concerned not only for their physical well-being, but also their spiritual health—the condition of their faith. The result is almost prayer-like.

- Read the text for today once more and write down words or phrases that demonstrate this care for the churches' well-being. What do you think our congregation needs to hear these days?

Wrap-up

This is the last session provided by the *Together in Faith* study materials. Would you like to meet again next week? The last passage for the Easter season is 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11, which will be the basis for the sermon on Sunday, May 24.

Pray

Loving God, we come to you broken and sinful, with nothing to offer in return for your love. We give thanks that you have made us whole and blameless in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord. Amen.

May God bless and keep you as you continue to explore Scripture!