

Biblical Topics

Baptism – Power of Baptism

How can water do such great things?

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three: "He 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." Titus 3:5-8

It is not the water in Baptism that washes away our sins. Only the blood of Christ can wash away our sins and save us. It is not the water that has the power. It is God acting through His Word that has the power. We do not trust in the water, but in the promise connected with Baptism.

- Ephesians 5:25-26: ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

The Word of God puts these "great things" into Baptism for us to take by faith. Through His Word God also operates on our hearts and works faith. The Holy Spirit regenerates and renews us and creates a new spiritual life in us.

The above information is taken from: "Luther's Small Catechism" annotated by Edward W. A. Koehler.