

## Wednesday of Oculi, A ✕ D 2009

**Galatians 3:11-29** Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." <sup>12</sup> But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." <sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"- <sup>14</sup> so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. <sup>15</sup> To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. <sup>16</sup> Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. <sup>17</sup> This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. <sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise. <sup>19</sup> Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. <sup>20</sup> Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. <sup>21</sup> Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. <sup>22</sup> But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. <sup>23</sup> Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. <sup>24</sup> So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, <sup>26</sup> for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

*In the name of the Father and of the ✕ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

1        Forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and everlasting salvation? How can water do such great things? 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.

2        Baptism saves you, but being baptized may not save you. How can that be? Baptism is irrevocable. Once God claims you through the waters of Holy Baptism, you are His Child. He marks you with His name, adopts you as His beloved child, gives you His name. But Baptism does not save by itself. It saves because it delivers the faith it requires. Only with faith to receive the benefits Baptism bestows is your baptism beneficial to you.

3        If you grow to despise the faith the Lord delivers, His name, placed upon you at your baptism, stands as a judgment against you. Recall the story of the prodigal son. He cashed in on his inheritance early and decided to live his life his own way, taking himself out of the care of

his father. He squandered his inheritance on sinful living. When things got really bad, he found a job feeding filthy swine. He never ceased to be a son of his father, but he ceased to be a recipient of his father's grace. He retained his last name, but that name was just a reminder of what he had given up.

4 So it is with those who, having been baptized, grow to live life their own way, to take themselves out of the care of their Father, to squander their inheritance on sinful living. You retain the name of God, delivered to you in baptism, but it only serves to show what you've given up. Faith, however, stays in the gracious presence of the Heavenly Father, receives from Him the grace He never ceases to offer. Sometimes people apologize for missing the Divine Service. But I'm not hurt, not offended, by anyone's lack of attendance. You don't go to church so the pastor will feel good about himself, but so that you may receive the life-bestowing, faith-sustaining gifts God offers therein. Faith cannot say no to these gifts. Only unbelief says no to God's gifts. Baptism does indeed work the forgiveness of sins, rescue from death and the devil, and give eternal salvation to all who believe, but, if you reject faith in the God who baptized you, not even baptism will save you. Repent.

5 When the prodigal went home, he expected to find an angry father, whom he would have to placate with years of service. But there's no placating the Heavenly Father. He has already made you His beloved child. "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."

6 The wrath of the Heavenly Father has already been assuaged by the sacrificial death of the only Worthy Son of God, Jesus Christ. You are an heir to life. What does St. Paul say? "But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female,

for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.”

7 For those who have received and who retain the Lord's gift of faith, you may find in Holy Baptism this confidence: God has clothed you with the righteousness of Christ. When He sees you, He doesn't see any sin or any imperfection. He only sees the righteousness of Christ. That's why we don white garments at Holy Baptism as a sign of the righteousness of Jesus imparted to the baptized. And that's why we cover caskets with white funeral palls, as a reminder that those who die in faith will receive the reward for all the righteousness of Christ, when He returns to judge both the living and the dead. With the Word of God and faith which trusts these promised of God, it is a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit.

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

*Soli Deo Gloria*  
Pastor Jeff Hemmer  
Hope, Jerseyville