

# Everyday FAITH Family Page

H2Oh!

## Law/Gospel

From the moment of birth, my heart is inclined toward evil and unbelief. I deserve to be drowned in the flood of God's wrath. **Out of His pure goodness and mercy, God rescues me from sin, death, and the devil, washing away my sins for the sake of His Son, Jesus, who suffered, died, and rose again for me.**

## Bible Words

The Lord will rescue me . . . and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom.  
2 Timothy 4:18

## Fun Facts

Genesis 6:14 says Noah built the ark from "gopher wood," an unknown material today. The Bible only uses this Hebrew word here, and its meaning is obscure. Because of this, many Bible translations simply keep the original word, writing it as "gopher" (e.g., ESV, King James). Others versions translate the word as pine or cypress (e.g., New International Version). Early Church Fathers Ambrose and Augustine thought either wood may have been intended. The Greek Septuagint translates the word as "squared beams."

SOURCE: [creationwiki.org/Gopher\\_wood](http://creationwiki.org/Gopher_wood)

## H2Oh! Everywhere: Noah

Genesis 6:9–9:17

The worldwide flood is both one of the most scandalous accounts in the Scriptures and most beautiful Gospel presentations at the same time.

The Bible reports that God became angry with people because of their unbelief, but still showed compassion toward believers and His creation. Grieved that judgment was necessary, God would rather have not created humanity than destroy it (Genesis 6:6–7). The Lord saved Noah and his family because they believed and trusted in Him (Hebrews 11:7). Noah was a righteous man (Genesis 6:9), which the Scriptures always ascribe to faith, never good or righteous deeds (Genesis 15:6; Galatians 3:7–9).

After Noah and his family entered the ark, God shut the door, taking responsibility for the flood. He alone has authority to execute judgment against the unbelieving world.

The New Testament uses the saving of Noah's eight family members to point to God's rescue through Baptism. In Baptism, God saves us and grants us forgiveness of sin and a clean conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:18–21). The flood shows that because of sin, we all deserve wrath, death, and destruction. The ark shows that we receive eternal life on account of God's mercy, earned for us by Christ on the cross and transmitted through the waters of Baptism.

## Other Worldwide Flood Accounts

The ancient epics of Gilgamesh and Atrahasis both tell of a worldwide flood where the gods decided to destroy the world because people were so noisy they couldn't sleep. They saved one family to worship them.

Some people think Scripture plagiarized these Near Eastern accounts, making the biblical flood fictional with no historical or theological value. Two things make this unlikely. First, these accounts might have copied the biblical account. Second, the other accounts show self-serving gods that cared nothing for humanity, contrary to the Bible's teaching.

## Prayer

*Lord God, help us remember that we are Your baptized children, saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

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In moments of fear, I forget the loving care that God has for His children and think that I am completely alone. **In mercy, God comes to me in the times that I think He is farthest away and through His Son, Jesus, delivers me from all those things that would seek to do me harm.**

## Bible Words

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.  
Psalm 46:1

## Connections

In the wilderness, God led the Israelites with a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. The angel of God in the pillar moved between the people and the Egyptian army at the Red Sea. The pillar kept the army in the dark but provided light that allowed the Israelites to escape (Exodus 14:19–20). Later, God spoke to the people from the cloud (Exodus 16:10–11) and wrapped Mount Sinai in a cloud when He gave the Law (Exodus 19:16–20). God spoke from a cloud at Jesus' transfiguration (Luke 9:28–36). Jesus promised to return to earth in clouds with great power and glory (Mark 13:26–27).

## Walking through H2Oh! Crossing the Red Sea

Exodus 14

In an epic showdown, the Lord sent Moses to demand that Pharaoh let the Israelite slaves leave Egypt. Pharaoh, considered a god himself, refused. He only relented when the Lord showed He is the one true God by sending ten plagues against Egypt.

Pharaoh soon regretted his decision and sent his army in pursuit. Trapped between the Egyptians and the Red Sea, the Israelites panicked. Moses said God would fight for them. Their task was simple: stay silent.

God parted the water of the Red Sea and His people walked safely to the other side on dry ground. When the Egyptians followed, God let the water fall back into place, drowning soldiers, horses, and chariots. Once again, God used water as an instrument of judgment and mercy.

The New Testament uses these events to point us to Christ and Baptism (1 Corinthians 10:1–4). God baptized or washed the Israelites in the sea, destroyed Pharaoh's army, delivered the people from trouble, and gave them new life. In Baptism, we are buried and raised with Jesus. Claimed as His own people in Baptism, God delivers us from our enemies—sin, death, and the devil—and gives us new life. (Questions 319–22, Luther's Small Catechism © 2017 CPH).

## Pharaoh's Hard Heart

The Bible says God hardened Pharaoh's heart. These texts trouble us because we know God wants the salvation of all people (1 Timothy 2:4). So, how do we make sense of God hardening Pharaoh's heart?

God spoke His Word of life to Pharaoh through Moses. Pharaoh had opportunities to repent, but didn't. He continued in unbelief. Pharaoh wanted life apart from God's mercy, and he got it. God handed Pharaoh over to the evil desires of his heart.

## Prayer

*Lord God, open our hearts to hear Your Word, repent of our sin, and receive Your mercy, the forgiveness of sins. Amen.*

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## Law/Gospel

When I suffer, I am tempted to believe that the God who has saved me is actually against me. I should be condemned when I accuse God of abandonment.

**God does not condemn me. Instead, God loves and cares for me, forgiving my unbelief and providing me with what I don't deserve, all for the sake of His Son, Jesus, who died and rose again for me.**

## Bible Words

[Cast] all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.  
1 Peter 5:7

## Fun Facts

God delivered manna to Israel with the morning dew. When the dew dissipated, a fine, flake-like frost stayed on the ground. "Manna" comes from the question asked when the people first saw it, "What is it?" (Hebrew: *man hu*). Manna was "like coriander seed, white" and tasted like wafers made with honey (Exodus 16:31). God said to gather only the amount needed each day, but to gather twice as much the day before the Sabbath. He did not send manna that day so that they could rest. If they gathered too much, it bred worms and stank by morning, except on the Sabbath (Exodus 16:20).

## Miraculous H2Oh! Water from the Rock

Exodus 17:1-7

In miracle after miracle, the Lord saved the Israelites from slavery and Egyptian retribution. He led the people toward Canaan. He provided water and daily deliveries of manna and quail as food in the desert. He made bitter water sweet. Every step showed His love and care for them.

Still, when difficulties arose, the Israelites fell back into unbelief. In today's narrative, thirst revealed their true colors as sinners. The people quarreled with Moses at Rephidim over water. Suffering tempted them to forget God's gracious provision and curse Him instead. They believed God did not love them and had abandoned them.

But, once again, God showed His forgiving love and care for them. The Lord told Moses to strike a rock with his staff and water flowed from it. Our Lord provided the water they needed, the literal source of life. The New Testament says that Christ was the Rock that gave water to the Israelites (1 Corinthians 10:1-4). While this isn't obvious when reading Exodus 17, it brings the narrative into focus.

## So What?

For the Israelites, and for us, unbelief lurks right around the corner. To help us, we need both Law and Gospel. The Law shows us our sin and our need to repent. The Gospel shows us God's love, mercy, and forgiveness in the death and resurrection of Jesus, our Savior.

If suffering causes us to doubt God's love for us, we need to repent and receive God's grace. Even though we do not deserve it, God grants it, just as He gave the Israelites water from the rock.

This text reminds us in a simple and clear way that there is never a point in our Christian lives when Jesus becomes unimportant. He is never a footnote. He is the water from the rock that we need every moment of every day. Without the spiritual sustenance that we receive through the forgiveness Jesus won for us on the cross, we would never survive.

## Prayer

*Jesus, our Rock, forgive our sins by Your grace and help us to trust You for all our needs. Amen.*

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Because of sin, the world is often wicked and hostile, and I experience suffering because of it. **But even during these times, God is with me, pouring out His love for me in Christ and graciously providing for my needs.**

## Bible Words

[God says,] "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God."

Isaiah 41:10

## The Big Picture

The kingdom of Israel divided after the reign of David's son Solomon.

- The Davidic line, which culminated in the birth of Jesus, continued with one tribe in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
- The ten tribes of Israel's Northern Kingdom kings were not connected to David. Most of these kings worshiped idols.
- The Levite tribe, assigned to be priests and temple workers lived in designated areas among the other tribes.

## H2Oh! Survival: Elijah at the Brook Cherith

1 Kings 17:1–6

God called Elijah to be His prophet during the reign of King Ahab in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. "Ahab did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him" (1 Kings 16:33).

Ahab learned to worship idols and the true God at the same time from his father Omni. (No, not good.) Omni gave Ahab in marriage to Jezebel, the daughter of the Sidon king. This political alliance delivered peace and economic prosperity, but Jezebel brought hundreds of false prophets to Israel. Ahab even built a Baal temple.

The Lord sent Elijah to confront and show Ahab his sin. Elijah delivered God's intent to send a drought so severe that even dew would not appear. The king did not like the message, but he did not repent.

God sent Elijah into hiding by the brook Cherith (17:3). While Israel suffered because God poured out His wrath on Ahab, God protected and cared for Elijah. God showed mercy by sending Elijah ravens to deliver bread and meat each morning and evening. God continued to give Elijah mercy and protection, even when he complained and doubted.

## God Gives Us Daily Bread Too

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us to rely on our heavenly Father for daily bread. Jesus said, "Do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:31–33).

Through His blood shed on the cross, Jesus provides us with the forgiveness of sins that sustain and nourish us for this life and the next.

## Prayer

*Our Father, who art in heaven, give us daily bread, forgive our sins, and bind us to you. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

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## Law/Gospel

False gods cannot and will not save because they do not exist. Those who put their trust in these false gods will always be disappointed. **The one true God answers the prayers of His people and acts on their behalf. He makes Himself known through His Son, Jesus, so that I will trust Him for all good things.**

## Bible Words

[God says,] "Call to Me and I will answer you."  
Jeremiah 33:3

## The Big Picture

- When husbands died, widows in biblical times often experienced poverty and debt. Those with children to help work the family land fared better.
- People easily identified widows, so scholars think they wore something to signal status.
- Land in Israel was strongly tied to tribal land rights. Widows held family land in trust until sons became of age or daughters married within the tribe.
- If the widow was childless, the law required the closest male relative of the widow's spouse to marry her and provide an heir for her husband's land. This was called levirate marriage.

## Fire and H2Oh! Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

1 Kings 18:20–46

**D**uring the great drought, Queen Jezebel killed as many of the Lord's prophets as she could find. God sent Elijah to live with a widow in the country of Sidon. God provided the household with bottomless containers of oil and flour.

Soon afterward, Elijah challenged Ahab, 450 prophets of Baal, and 400 prophets of Asherah to meet on Mount Carmel. Baal's prophets arrived, but the Asherah prophets stayed away.

As many Israelites watched, Elijah proposed the false prophets sacrifice a bull on an altar and pray for their god to light it with fire. Elijah would do the same. Forced to agree or appear weak, the prophets got to work, crying out to Baal from morning to sunset. They cut themselves and limped to get Baal's attention. Elijah mocked their efforts, saying Baal must be thinking, going to the bathroom, traveling, or asleep. Baal did not answer. Obviously, he was a sham.

Late in the day, Elijah finally acted. He built an altar with twelve stones, one for each of Israel's twelve tribes. He slaughtered the bull and placed it on the altar. He dug a trench around the altar and ordered the entire area soaked with water three times. Then Elijah said a short prayer, asking the Lord to show the people that He is the one true God.

Fire from the Lord consumed the burnt offering, wood, stones, and dust. It licked up the water in the trench. Seeing this, the people fell on their faces and confessed the Lord as the true God. Soon after, a great rainstorm relieved the dreaded drought.

## Getting Our God's Attention

The Baal prophets cut themselves to get their god's attention, but we do not need theatrics to compel our God. Our Lord promises to hear and answer our prayer. He cares for us, gives all good gifts, and protects us. Even more, Jesus shed His blood so that we might receive eternal life and the forgiveness of sins. Through Him, God makes us His children in Baptism, where we die, are buried, and rise to new life in Christ.

## Prayer

*Lord, give us faith in Christ Jesus, our Savior. Hear us, dear Lord, and answer our prayers in Jesus' name. Amen.*

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When I suffer, my first inclination is to trust my strength, wealth, or reputation. This tempts me to doubt God's unequivocal word of promise.

**But, despite my doubts, God's Word is powerful and always does what it says, pointing me to Jesus, the Word made flesh, who heals my diseases and cleanses me from the sickness of my sin.**

## Bible Words

Bless the LORD . . . who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases.  
Psalm 103:2-3

## Leprosy Facts

A long-lasting bacterial infection causes leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease. Contagious, leprosy was so feared that those with leprosy were separated from their communities and forced to live alone or with others who had the affliction. Today, doctors cure leprosy with long-term doses of antibiotics. The number of chronic cases decreased to 189,000 in 2012, down from 5.2 million in the 1980s.

SOURCE: *Leprosy*, Wikipedia.com

## Cleansing H2Oh! Naaman Healed

2 Kings 5:1-14

God gave Naaman, the army commander of Israel's northern rival of Syria, many military victories, but he developed leprosy, an incurable disease. In its worst forms, leprosy killed nerves and disfigured bodies.

An Israelite slave girl told Naaman's wife that Israel's prophet Elisha could cure Naaman. His wife convinced Naaman, who asked his king for permission to visit the prophet. The king agreed and sent along large amounts of silver, gold, and clothing as thank-you gifts for Israel's king.

Jehoram, Israel's king, did not receive Naaman gladly. He couldn't heal Naaman and thought he intended to start a war. Elisha heard about the Syrian's visit and sent a messenger to tell the king to send him there.

When Naaman's group arrived, Elisha sent a messenger to tell him to wash seven times in the Jordan River to be healed, a promise delivered through physical means.

Naaman felt offended and responded angrily. Elisha didn't even meet him personally! Surely Syrian rivers were better than Israel's! Naaman tried to leave, but his servants convinced him to do as Elisha said. When he did, his flesh was restored to that of a young child. He was healed!

## Our Healing

God delivers amazing gifts to us through physical means too. We receive forgiveness of sins through weak human words, water, bread, or wine empowered by Christ and His redemptive work on the cross.

The Word of God combined with the water of Baptism heals us from sin-sickness and delivers forgiveness of sins and eternal life for Jesus' sake. Just as a Gentile received healing from the true God, Jesus offers salvation to all who believe in Him.

## Prayer

*Lord, thank You for giving faith, forgiveness, new life, and salvation to us through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ Jesus, our Savior. Amen.*

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I love mercy when I benefit from it, but if I think someone is evil, I don't want God's mercy to extend to that person.

**Fortunately, God's desire to make His mercy known wins the day, and though I don't deserve it, God shows the same mercy to me that He shows to others.**

## Bible Words

For You, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love. Psalm 86:5

## Oh, Nineveh!

- Nineveh, ancient Assyria's capital, lay east of the Tigris River in northern present-day Iraq.
- Nineveh flourished in 700 BC under Assyrian emperor Sennacherib. He invaded Judah during Hezekiah's reign. Lachish reliefs record the plunder Judah paid.
- In 2015, ISIS looted and smashed archaeological treasures in Mosul (built over Nineveh's ruins) from the Mosul museum and the Tomb of the Prophet Jonah as well as a 2,700-year-old wall.

## Fishy

The Hebrew word translated as "fish" in Jonah 1:17 can refer to any sea creature.

## H2Oh! Ride: Jonah

### Jonah 1–3

When God told Jonah to preach repentance to the people in Nineveh, he hopped a boat in the opposite direction. Jonah did not want to preach to the Assyrians. He wanted these evil, bloodthirsty people to die, not repent. He didn't want God to show mercy. He wanted them to burn.

When Jonah finally preached God's Word, the Ninevites turned away from evil. God forgave them and spared them and their cattle. Rather than rejoice in the success of his work, Jonah felt angry. He sat outside the city and waited for God's destruction.

## Fish Bait

Running from God, Jonah boarded a ship from Joppa to Tarshish. The Lord sent a mighty storm. Sailors cried out to their gods and took defensive measures. The men cast lots to find whose actions caused the storm and identified Jonah. Admitting his rift with God, Jonah told the men to throw him overboard. When they hurled Jonah into the sea, the storm stopped.

The Lord sent a great fish to swallow Jonah. He spent three days and nights in the fish's belly, praying. This three-day "entombment" foreshadowed Christ's death and resurrection. Jesus said, "For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40).

## God's Powerful Word

God's Word convicts, showing that we are born in sin and cannot please God or save ourselves. The Word drives us to repent (admit and turn away from sin) so that we can receive by faith the forgiveness for our sins and salvation won for us by Jesus' death and resurrection.

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith" (Romans 3:23–25).

## Prayer

*Jesus, by Your Word, give us faith to receive Your forgiveness of sin and eternal life. Amen.*

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H2Oh!

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God is always faithful, appointing men to preach His Word to the world. But the world hates the Word that God sends these men to preach. **God is not deterred. He knows I need to hear the Gospel. He sends that Word to me in mercy, even though I am not worthy of hearing it, so that I will hear and believe that His Son, Jesus, is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.**

## Bible Words

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.  
Acts 16:31

## From the Catechism

***What does it mean that our Lord Jesus is called the Christ?***

In the Old Testament, God set certain people apart as prophets, priests, and kings by anointing them with oil. The title *Christ* or *Messiah* means “Anointed One.” In the New Testament, Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit to be our Prophet, Priest, and King.

SOURCE: Question 182, *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation*, © 2017 CPH.

## Revealing H2Oh! John the Baptist

Luke 3:1–20; John 1:19–34

**N**ew Testament Judeans anticipated and watched for the long-promised Messiah. Prophets foretold the Messiah’s arrival and work. They even said that a forerunner, the prophet Elijah, would proceed Him (Malachi 4:5; Isaiah 40:3–5). Yet, when both arrived, many people didn’t recognize them.

John the Baptist, a never yielding preacher of truth, boldly proclaimed God’s Word. He prepared the way for Jesus by calling people to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. He was the promised Elijah, identified by Jesus Himself (Matthew 11:13–14).

Matthew even recorded that John wore camel’s hair clothing and a leather belt (Matthew 3:4) to remind hearers of Elijah’s hair garment and leather belt (2 Kings 1:8).

Pointing to Jesus, John said “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! . . . For this purpose I came baptizing with water, that He might be revealed to Israel. . . . This is the Son of God” (John 1:29, 31, 34).

Jesus, the Passover Lamb, was sacrificed for the sins of God’s people. He carried the sins of the world to the cross, where He suffered for them and won salvation for those who believe in Him.

## The Scriptures Point to Jesus

Every biblical prophet pointed to Christ. In fact, all of the Scriptures point to Jesus. Jesus said to the Jews, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life and it is they that bear witness about Me” (John 5:39).

On Easter, Jesus explained His fulfillment of the Scriptures to the disciples on the road to Emmaus and to those in the closed room that evening (Luke 24:27, 32, 44–48). He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45). May He do the same for each of us.

## Prayer

*Jesus, open our eyes, minds, and hearts to see, understand, and live Your Word. In Your name we pray. Amen.*

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H2Oh!

## Law/Gospel

When I find myself in need, prayer is usually the last thing that I think to do. **God, on the other hand, loves to hear my prayers, and He always takes care of my needs in a better and greater way than I could possibly imagine. He surprises me with His lavish love, especially in His Son, Jesus, who showed He is true God, able to care for all my needs, including forgiving my sins.**

## Bible Words

We know that the Son of God has come. . . . He is the true God and eternal life.

1 John 5:20

## Fun Facts

Seven signs in John's Gospel show Jesus is the Messiah.

- Turning water into wine, 2:1–11
- Healing an official's son, 4:46–54
- Healing a man at Bethesda, 5:1–18
- Feeding the 5,000, 6:5–14
- Walking on water, 6:16–24
- Healing the man born blind, 9:1–7
- Raising Lazarus from the dead, 11:1–45

"These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31).

## Changing H2Oh! Wedding at Cana

John 2:1–11

The Gospel of John calls the turning of water into wine at Cana the first of Jesus' signs by which He manifested His glory (2:11).

A problem arose at a wedding: the wine ran out. Jesus' mother told Him about it and then told the servants to do whatever He said. Jesus acted without drawing attention to Himself. He provided well over one hundred gallons of wine, but only the servants and His disciples knew.

Jesus expressed concern that His hour had "not yet come" (v. 4). In other words, He did not want to rush the cross. He had a three-year ministry of proclamation and healing to perform before that. Yet, responding to a need and His mother's request, Jesus fixed the problem.

Jesus is the great giver of all things, and when He gives, He gives more than we can imagine. At that time, no one could imagine Jesus would die on the cross to pay for the sins of the world, but He did. And then He rose from the dead, showing His glory as true God and our Savior.

## Biblical Weddings

Biblical weddings included multiple-day feasts where hosts provided food and drink for guests. During the ceremony, a rabbi thanked God as He spoke blessings over several cups of wine drunk by the couple. People drank more wine during meals that followed.

Wine symbolized life for the Israelites. It began as grape juice, soured as it fermented, and then turned into a wonderful, joyous gift. A full cup of wine symbolized God's overflowing love and blessing, as the Psalmist said. "My cup overflows" (Psalm 23:5).

## Prayer

*Dear Lord, guide and protect us on the road of life and bring us safely to our heavenly home. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

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Even though God has provided for all of our spiritual needs through His Holy Word, I prefer to hold on to the lies told by the devil, the world, and my sinful flesh. These lies give me no firm footing in the storms of this life. **In mercy, God continues to speak the Word, which grounds me in Christ, my firm foundation, so that I can receive from Him all that I need for life and salvation.**

## Bible Words

[The Lord] is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.  
Psalm 62:6

## From the Catechism

*If Christ has already won full forgiveness and salvation for us, why do we need Baptism?*

Christ has indeed atoned for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:22), reconciling the world to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:18–19). Through Baptism, He gives to us personally the forgiveness of sins that He acquired for all humanity. As such, Baptism is a Means of Grace (Titus 3:5–7).

See 1 Corinthians 6:11.

Question 309, *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* © 2017 CPH.

## H2Oh! Safety: Built on the Rock

Matthew 7:24–27; Luke 6:47–49

The theme of Christ as a Rock runs throughout the Scriptures. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said a wise person builds a house on rock, a solid foundation. When storms come, the house cannot be shaken.

At first look, it appears as if safety is determined by our actions: if we do what Jesus says, we'll be safe, even when things get bad; if we don't, our houses will be destroyed by the floods and winds of life.

However, the text itself rebukes these thoughts. Spiritual health and safety are not based on our works but on Christ. Martin Luther said, "As a man is, whether believer or unbeliever, so also is his work—good if it was done in faith, wicked if it was done in unbelief. But the converse is not true, that the work makes the man either a believer or an unbeliever. As works do not make a man a believer, so also they do not make him righteous. But as faith makes a man a believer and righteous, so faith does good works" (AE 31:361).

The house built on the rock is stable because it is built on the foundation of faith, which trusts Christ for salvation. When people know Jesus is with them, suffering cannot drag them into despair. Without the foundation that comes through faith in Christ, it is impossible to endure the struggles of life.

## A Good Flood

Ironically, Baptism, another sort of flood, establishes the firm foundation in Christ. Through Baptism, God drowns our old Adam and gives us faith in Christ, which builds our house on the Rock.

## Prayer

*Holy Spirit, build our faith in Christ, as a sure and safe foundation for life, now and forever. In His name we pray. Amen.*

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H<sub>2</sub>Oh!

## Law/Gospel

I fail to recognize the depth of my sin and think I can cleanse myself. **Because of His love for me, Jesus is willing to stoop down and take on the role of a servant, washing away that which is most disgusting and perverse in me.**

## Bible Words

Serve the LORD with gladness!  
Psalm 100:2

## Servant for Our Sake

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5–11

## Servant H<sub>2</sub>Oh! Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

John 13:1–17

**W**alking dusty roads in Bible times made people's feet very dirty. Hosts usually supplied a servant to wash the feet of their guests, but Jesus did this task at the Passover meal on Thursday evening of Holy Week. With love, Jesus took off His outer garments, tied a towel around His waist, poured water into a basin, and washed filthy feet (vv. 1–4).

Peter refused to participate. Jesus said if He did not wash him, Peter would have "no share" with Him (v. 8). Peter acquiesced, asking Jesus to wash all of him, feet, hands, and head.

Only God can wash away our sin. We cannot make ourselves clean. Jesus came to wash away our sin. He accomplished this through His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. He delivers these benefits through His Word and the waters of Holy Baptism.

Jesus knew Judas would betray Him, and all the others would deny and abandon Him, but He still washed their feet, showing His love for all sinners. Even so, Jesus said not all of His disciples were clean (vv. 10–11). Only by faith, a gift from God, do we receive the benefits Christ won on Good Friday, forgiveness of sin and eternal life.

## Feetwashing Today

Jesus willingly took on the very form of a slave and performed an act of humble obedience. As His followers, no act of loving service is beneath us. Whether changing a baby's diaper, mowing the lawn, or helping a parent or friend with dirty job, we serve Jesus and our neighbor in Christ's name.

## Prayer

*Dear Lord, thank You for giving us faith in Christ, our Savior. Keep us in this one true faith unto life everlasting. In His name we pray. Amen.*

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H2Oh!

# Everyday FAITH Family Page

## Law/Gospel

In my sin, I often close my heart and mind to the saving Word of the Gospel that is preached to me. **In mercy, God still sees to it that His Holy Word is proclaimed so that, through it, the Holy Spirit might grant faith and open my heart to receive the forgiveness Christ has won for me.**

## Bible Words

Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.  
Acts 2:38

## The Big Picture

Paul and Silas sailed to Neapolis, a seaport where travelers often landed to connect to the Via Egnatia, the 696-mile military road built from the Adriatic to the Aegean Sea in the second-century BC. From Neapolis, Paul and Silas traveled ten miles inland to Philippi, considered the gate between Europe and Asia. Here, the Gospel was first preached in Europe.

## Prayer

*Lord Jesus, thank You for claiming us in Baptism and making us Your children. Amen.*

## Meeting at the H2Oh! Lydia Is Baptized

Acts 16:11–15

**P**aul and Silas traveled to Philippi, a prominent Roman city filled with many retired soldiers, during their second missionary tour.

Paul usually went to the local synagogue first to tell the Jews that their Messiah had arrived, but Philippi did not have a synagogue. (The Law only required one if more than ten Jews lived there.) So the disciples went to the riverside on the Sabbath, looking for a place to pray.

The missionaries met and began talking with some women, including Lydia from Thyatira, a worshiper of God who sold purple goods. “The Lord opened her heart” to hear the message about God’s love and forgiveness in Christ Jesus (Acts 16:14). Lydia and her whole household were baptized. She insisted the disciples stay at her home, saving Paul and his friends from paying their own expenses.

The Holy Spirit gave Lydia faith in Jesus through His Word and Baptism, the same ways He delivers faith and spiritual blessings to us.

## From Luther’s Small Catechism: Baptism

### First: What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God’s command and combined with God’s word.

### Which is that word of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matt. 28:19)

### Second: What benefits does Baptism give?

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

### Which are these words and promises of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:16)

*Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* © 1986 CPH.

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# Everyday FAITH Family Page

H2Oh!

## Law/Gospel

When suffering comes, I respond in fear and thanklessness. **In the midst of my unbelief, Jesus, my Savior, comes to me, promises to calm my fears, and provides me with whatever is best.**

## Bible Words

[God says,] "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Hebrews 13:5

## The Big Picture

The Roman Republic began in 509 BC when elected senators replaced kings. An expansion of territory culminated in defeating Carthage in three Punic wars from 264–146 BC and ruling over the Western Mediterranean. (In the Second Punic War, Hannibal and the Carthage army crossed the Pyrenees and Alps mountains to fight in Italy, but ultimately lost.) After that, a series of civil wars and political conflicts destabilized the Republic. The rise of dictator Julius Caesar resulted in a government led by emperors. Caesar was assassinated in 44 BC. When Octavian, Caesar's adopted son, defeated Mark Antony and Cleopatra in 31 BC, he annexed Egypt and received the new title of *Augustus*. This effectively ended the Roman Republic.

SOURCE: *Roman Empire*, Wikipedia.com

## H2Oh! Rescue: Paul's Shipwreck

Acts 27:13–44

Roman soldiers arrested Paul in the Jerusalem temple to save him from an angry mob. When the Romans heard about a Jewish plot to kill Paul, they secretly sent him to the seaside town of Caesarea. There, the Roman governor, Felix, imprisoned Paul, hoping to receive a bribe for his release.

Two years later, after a change in the Roman administrator, Paul appealed to Caesar, a right of every Roman citizen. Porcius Festus, the new administrator, sent Paul to Rome for trial, accompanied by the Roman centurion Julius and several friends.

Their ship sailed east in the late fall, a treacherous time on the Mediterranean Sea with hard winds and severe storms. Paul warned Julius that they would suffer injury and loss, but the centurion did not listen.

When they encountered trouble, the sailors used their skills to continue sailing. Ultimately, they tossed tackle and cargo overboard during a fourteen-day storm. Trying to land on a Malta beach, the ship struck a reef and broke in pieces. Everyone made it safely to shore.

Three months later, the group took a ship that had wintered in Malta on to Rome. Christians welcomed Paul there. Under house arrest, Paul was guarded by a Roman soldier but could receive visitors. He taught many people about Jesus and the salvation He offers to all who believe in Him.

## The Ministry of St. Paul

Through the work of Paul, God established many Christian churches across Asia, Greece, and Europe. We have letters Paul wrote to these churches as epistles in the New Testament. Once an enemy of Christ, Paul boldly served our Savior, who died to pay for our sins and offer new life and forgiveness to all who believe in Him.

## Prayer

*Dear Lord, thank You for courageous and faithful teachers and preachers. Thank You for preserving Your Word in the Bible. Keep us in true faith in our Savior, Jesus. In His name we pray. Amen.*

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H2Oh!

# Everyday FAITH Family Page

## Law/Gospel

The world tries to convince me that my eternal hope is a sham and that this life is all there is. **In the face of the world's lies, Jesus, through John's vision, assures me of the reality of my eternal home: a paradise without darkness or night where I, together with all those who believe in Christ, will reign forever with the Lamb who was slain.**

## Bible Words

And this is the promise that He made to us—eternal life.  
1 John 2:25

## Fun Facts

- John wrote the New Testament Gospel with his name, three epistles, and Revelation.
- Jesus called John and his brother James to follow Him at the Sea of Galilee, leaving behind the family fishing business and their father Zebedee.
- Early Church Fathers also identify John the apostle as John the elder, John of Patmos, and the beloved disciple in the Gospel of John.

## Living H2Oh! The River of Life

Revelation 22:1–5

**M**ore than any other book in the Bible, the Book of Revelation confuses and intrigues Christians. Its apocalyptic images may seem strange or even disturbing, but the picture of heaven, the new Jerusalem, offers much comfort.

The apostle John describes heaven as a real, physical place, a city with streets, gates, and houses. Real, flesh-and-blood people worship God and the Lamb in perfect bodies resurrected on the Last Day.

Two images from the garden of Eden in Genesis repeat in this new city, a river and a tree of life (Genesis 2:9–10). The river flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb and the tree of life grows by the river. Because of what Jesus accomplished on the tree of Calvary, those living in God's holy city receive unimpeded and perpetual access to this life-giving water and immortal food.

Jesus called the water He gives a spring "welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14). In this world, the waters of Baptism give forgiveness of sin and new life (Acts 2:38). The body and blood of Christ received as food in the Lord's Supper give eternal life (John 6:27, 35, 53–58). How much more will these gifts bless those who believe in Jesus in heaven!

## Marked by His Name

In the new Jerusalem, the Lamb's servants are marked as His, with His name on their foreheads. This reminds us of our baptismal liturgy: "Receive the sign of the holy cross both upon your forehead and upon your heart to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified" (*LSB*, p. 268).

In Baptism, we receive the triune name of God, poured on us with water, the water of life. We are marked as belonging to Christ for all eternity.

## Prayer

*Holy Lamb of God, forgive our sins and bring us into the new city of Jerusalem to live with You forever. In Your name we pray. Amen.*

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