



**The Westminster Abbey Church**

*To Connect People To Jesus Christ And To Each Other.*

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Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This month, as we look into the catechism of the Global Methodist Church I want us to look at the sacraments. There are 2 sacraments that we recognize and practice in the Global Methodist Church; they are Holy Communion and Baptism.

Sacraments are sacred moments in which God does something special for us; the practice of which was instituted by Jesus Christ when we came and walked among us. We see Him being baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River at the very beginning of His earthly ministry and we see the act of Holy Communion instituted at the very end of His ministry, at what we call the “Last Supper”. We practice these sacraments because Jesus commanded that we do so. This month we will examine baptism and next month, we will look at Holy Communion.

Something I would like you to think about is that Jesus had no reason to be baptized by John because John’s baptism was for the repentance and the forgiveness of sin. Jesus had no sin and therefore received baptism for the sole purpose of revealing to the world who He really was, and to set the example for us of what we are commanded to do.

In the context of early Judaism, people performed multiple immersions for the ritual purification of the bodies and participated in multiple animal sacrifices for the removal of guilt, the most dramatic of which occurred annually on the Day of Atonement. The logic of “one baptism” is closely tied to the Christian conviction that there is now but one unrepeatable sacrifice for sin - the death of Jesus - into which we also are plunged in baptism. The church has also stressed that baptism should happen only once because there is only one new birth in a person’s life.

Those who were baptized early - whether as infants, children, or adults - and come to feel that they have failed to take hold of the new life offered to them in baptism do not need to repeat the ritual. It is sufficient for them to remember their baptism (which can be done with water, as an aid to their spirits), to trust Christ’s promise of new life conveyed in their baptism, and to keep moving forward into that new life in which we continue, by the Spirit’s power and our diligent attention to the Spirit, to put all sin behind us.

We must remember that the timing or manner in which we are baptized is not the central importance of baptism; the blessing that is bestowed by God on the infant, child, or adult is of critical importance. It is this very blessing that we should focus on, it can be in the form of prevenient grace (infant) or justifying grace (as a youth or an adult). Either way it is all about God’s gift of grace to us.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Dave

The virtue of this free gift, the merits of Christ’s life and death, are applied to us in baptism. John Wesley