

Developing Our Baptism Daily: Repentance and the Liturgy

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Date: 14 February 2016

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[0 : 00] Well, thank you for that introduction, and thanks for having me back with you this morning. It's a privilege to be here. I always look forward to it. It gets me out of the library over at Regent, gets me out of my studies, and helps me speak to a different audience than just my professors, who are paid to read my work. So thank you for being here.

It really is appreciated. Talking this morning about baptism, and I think it's a fitting topic for Lent when we get to recall our baptism.

We're going to have a lot of time for Q&A, hopefully, this morning, so I'm looking forward to that. But let me just jump right in. Martin Luther, in his large catechism, called baptism the greatest jewel.

The Westminster larger catechism called for baptism to be, quote, improved all our life long. Dr. Packer and I were talking briefly, this is just a Puritan focus, to improve our baptisms, develop our baptisms.

The Westminster catechism said, the needful but much neglected duty of improving our baptism is performed by us all our life long, especially in the time of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of it to others, by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby.

[1 : 26] Martin Luther again said, In baptism, therefore, every Christian has enough to study and practice all his or her life. Christians always have enough to do to believe firmly what baptism promises and brings.

Victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sin, God's grace, the entire Christ, and the Holy Spirit with his gifts. In short, the blessings of baptism are so boundless that if our timid nature considers them, it may well doubt whether they could all be true.

George Herbert wrote, that a pastor should advise people to often call their baptism to mind. And so I wonder, and it's something that I'm in my own life wondering, how do we call baptism to mind?

It's something that I was telling Sam briefly this morning, and something that I'm working on calling to mind in my own life. And so let me just open that up briefly. How do people in the room call to mind their baptism?

Is it something that we find easy to dwell on, to think of? How does baptism come to mind for folks?

[2 : 42] Does the scope of your question kind of include, or is it mostly maybe about our conversion? Is that what you think about baptism? At least in part, for sure.

Yeah. Thinking about our conversion. Absolutely. Yeah. What if the Puritans think on talking about conversion, telling their story?

Absolutely. Yeah. It's good, because it keeps us on the road, right? It does. That's right. Yeah. There, folks, how does baptism enter your mind in a given month?

I think about it with the Roman Catholics, why they, we, as Reform, we learn through, they learn through the sacraments and pictures and what's behind the sacraments.

So it'll be more how the Catholics do it. The baptism, what's behind the baptism, looking into it and seeing into it. And what could be learned, maybe my book I use here is these, the Anchor Yale Study Bibles.

[3 : 46] Sometimes I might look up stuff in there that goes on and on. It might be valid, believe me, in this case. Absolutely. Yeah.

Others? Yeah. Well, I remember my baptism very clearly because I wasn't a baby. Okay. I was 13.

I was in grade 8. It was Mother's Day. Hmm. And I think most of us, there were about 8 of us being baptized that day. And for all of us, it had been sort of a natural progression because we had been very fortunate to have been raised in church family and lived in Christian homes.

So the day comes when you really must make a decision about the faith of your fathers becoming your own faith. So it wasn't, you know, a big dramatic event.

It was part of an actual presentation. And I was dressed up all in white and led into a warmed up baptismal tank with a minister who was wearing hip waders.

[5 : 00] Yes. He didn't get wet, but I did. Yes. And when I came out of the water, the choir was singing, the Lord bless you and keep thee, the Lord be gracious unto thee.

Lift up his countenance upon me and give thee peace, which was just really very nice. That's wonderful. Yeah. Is that something that comes to mind for you at certain points?

Not a lot. Yeah. No. I wouldn't think so. Yeah. It was probably the beginning of my taking responsibility for my own faith. Absolutely.

In a way that I hadn't felt charged to do before. Yeah. That's great. Thank you. Others? I don't know what happens to people that are baptized as babies.

I mean, they obviously have no memory of that. Great question. Yeah. Yeah. Well, for me, I... Go ahead. I was going to say, I was baptized as a baby, but when I was in my 30s, I think, I was living up north and I ended up deciding that I wanted to be baptized, take the step of being baptized by immersion.

[6 : 11] And so along with the friend's mother, who was probably in her 60s, 70s at that point, we got baptized in high-y-late nurse-mothers.

It was very cold. And it was a... It was a good experience. There were people on the shore playing guitar and a song.

I had decided to call it Jesus, which is about... I think written in context of someone who was living in India and could die for it being a Christian.

It was a deeper commitment, but I certainly remember being joined in Sunday school and not worrying about baptism when I was a child.

I did that type of baby, but I think definitely having... I think 22 of my children were actually there as opposed to my parents the second one, second baptism.

[7 : 08] That's great. My baptism was also as a baby. Presbyterian Church down in Seattle area, and so Presbyterians are quite willing to and want to baptize babies.

For me, I think, thinking of taking responsibility came especially as I picked back up church membership in my 20s. And to become a member, of course, you have to be baptized.

And so in a way, I was picking up my baptism intentionally. I think the baptism had obviously been to some degree powerful in my life, and including me in the people of God and in God's family.

But there was an intentionality as I became a member in my 20s that really built on my baptism. Even though I don't, of course, recall it. Don't have the memory of getting wet or choir singing.

Not too wet. No, not too wet as a baby, but still wet enough for some tears probably. So depending on the baby. Depending on the baby. Well, there's a number of stories that each of us have of our baptism as an event itself.

[8 : 19] But I think it's also helpful for us to reflect briefly on the nature of baptism. And we'll do that theologically. One catechism describes baptism as, quote, the sacrament by which God adopts us as his children and makes us members of Christ's body, the church, and inheritors of the kingdom of God.

Explaining this further, the catechism continues, the inward and spiritual grace in baptism is union with Christ. We heard Harvey mention this, union with Christ in his death and resurrection, birth into God's family, the church, forgiveness of sins, and new life in the Holy Spirit.

So at its core, baptism brings the new believer, whether a baby or adult or anywhere in between, brings the new believer into union with Christ and the church.

We see this union clearly in biblical texts such as Romans 6, verses 3 and 4. Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We were buried, therefore, with him by baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

[9 : 33] So through baptism, the old person is put to death in Christ's death, and the new person is raised to new life in Christ's resurrection. And in Christ's death and resurrection, it too is our death and our resurrection.

Union with Christ and his church through faith and repentance is at its center. These are rich mysteries exemplified by our baptism. In the past century, baptism has seen a liturgical resurgence, not least through the Roman Catholic RCIA, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, often culminating in the Easter Saturday Vigil.

Some of us have been to a Saturday night vigil. It's a marvelous event. It's part of my joy in speaking about baptism this morning. It helps me remember my Anglican church in Washington, D.C., where I worship.

And we had just a festival of a Saturday night vigil out there. There's a number of churches that came together for it, service of darkness and light, darkness into light in certain ways.

And it was a night complete with baptisms, people who had been walking through Lent for those 40 days preparing for baptism. And it was also service of renewing our baptismal vows for the rest of the congregation.

[10 : 53] A really vibrant night celebrating Easter. So baptism has seen this liturgical resurgence since the late 60s, early 70s. Liturgical theologians such as Alexander Smeman, I'll reference a little bit, he's an Orthodox liturgical theologian, have argued convincingly for the centrality of baptism in our lives.

In Luther's conception, we are to return daily, he said, to our baptism. Daily. This morning, I'm going to talk after a brief break about two ways that the Anglican liturgy helps us return to our baptism.

And those two ways are through weekly Eucharist or bi-weekly Eucharist for some of us. And also the daily offices of morning and evening prayer. And so we'll look at baptism and how baptism is shaped and shapes those offices, those liturgies.

I will argue that Anglican liturgy and worship provide richly, in fact, for developing our baptism. There's much for us to think on here. Karl Barth said it well, the relevance of holy baptism is this, that we may, our whole life long, think upon the fact that we are baptized.

And that's what we get to do together this morning. I'm looking forward to it. But first, before I get to the body of my presentation, I just want to take a brief coffee break. Feel free to stand up, say hello to your neighbor, and we'll get back together in just a couple minutes.

[12 : 17] One of our privileges as a baptized body is prayer, and we'll be talking about that this morning. And so I think it's fitting for Olaf to pause us and call us to prayer here.

So we have a message from Anne, which says that this is Phil's daughter, that Dad is closer to heaven each day.

and I've now lost the message. The fact is, yeah, well, this is not my familiar...

Thank you very much. Start again.

Dad is closer to heaven every day, but taking turns to stay with him. He wakes very little, but is still recognizing us and seems content to have us near.

[13 : 19] He is on regular, though low-joseph for pain, but this seems to be working and he's mostly sleeping comfortable. So we will pray briefly, and thank you for the meeting.

Thank you. Our Father God, we pray for Phil and his family, and we thank you for the evidence of his faith in you and his sense of security.

and thank you for the fantastic model that he has been for us through his life. And we just ask that in his death you will draw near to him and be as real as he has been during Phil's life.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, thanks for coming back together.

As we look at baptism in the liturgy, we'll first talk about the Eucharistic liturgy. Some of us are coming from it this morning at the 7.30 a.m. service, and then we'll talk about morning and evening prayer, the daily offices.

[14 : 55] At the very end, maybe we'll speak briefly about Lent, but I hope to open it up to us sharing with each other about Lent as well as we begin Lent. So turning to the Eucharistic liturgy, let's first think of Thomas Cranmer.

He authored our communion rites and went through three iterations to get to the final communion rite. First in 1548, he published a communion rite, and then 1549, another iteration.

And then his final version of the Eucharistic rite that really has shaped the Anglican tradition came in 1552. And so if we think of his time period, just a few decades earlier, the Reformation had begun.

I've already mentioned Martin Luther a couple times. And in light of the Reformation, we should consider Cranmer's focus on the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith.

We must note, in justification by faith, the centrality of repentance to that, and we'll see that in the liturgies. We've likely experienced that Cranmer's liturgies and our liturgies actually emphasize repentance.

[16 : 05] And in some ways, Cranmer added to that that focus on repentance. So we'll first look at repentance in the Eucharistic liturgy. Interestingly, Luther had recast the medieval notion of penance related, of course, to repentance.

Medieval penance had become an elaborate affair, very controversial. And against this, Luther showed the connection of penance actually with baptism. Very interesting move in the 1500s there.

Luther explained this connection in his large catechism. He wrote, here you see that baptism, both by its power, and its signification, comprehends also the third sacrament, which was formerly called penance.

Penance really is nothing else than baptism, Luther said. He continued, what is repentance but an earnest attack on the old creature, the old Adam in some words, and an entering into a new life?

If you live in repentance, therefore, Luther said, you are walking in baptism. Baptism not only announces this new life, but also produces, begins, and exercises it.

[17 : 15] Repentance, therefore, is nothing else than a return and an approach to baptism, to resume and practice what had earlier been begun, but abandoned. So in repentance, if you hear Luther correctly, in repentance, we return to our baptism.

And in the Eucharist, in the Eucharistic service, we kneel at the very beginning. We kneel in humility, praying for purity, and we kneel at other times in the service as well, acknowledging that we have gone astray from our baptismal commitments.

We hear, then, God's words of absolution over us, and we are restored to, again, love God and love our neighbor. And in fact, as one scholar has noted, receiving the Eucharist and participating in the Eucharist itself can be understood as absolution.

Pardon for sin. Interestingly, justification by faith, this core Reformation doctrine, was liturgically embodied by Cranmer in his Eucharistic service.

Scholar Gregory Dix noted that it is the only effective attempt ever made to give liturgical expression to the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith alone. Our own Dr. Packer, also has affirmed this key insight.

[18 : 31] I really enjoyed one article of his where he comments, Cranmer's view of justification by faith as central to Christianity controlled his work on the liturgy. In each of the main services that Cranmer wrote and edited, the basic structural pattern is one of sin to grace to faith.

It's a sin-to-grace-to-faith sequence, out of which all praise is made to rise. And this is simply the gospel of justification in liturgical form. In the Eucharistic service, we see the sin-grace-faith movement three times.

And if these assessments are correct by both Dr. Packer and Gregory Dix, then as Cranmer crafted his service around justification by faith, the service also is rich in baptismal imagery.

In looking at Cranmer's view of the sacraments, scholars have paid more attention to his understanding of the Eucharist. They've not focused as much on baptism in Cranmer's thinking.

One scholar notes simply that Cranmer's understanding of baptism has received scant attention from scholars. However, some interpreters such as G.W. Bromley have spoken about Cranmer on baptism.

[19 : 47] Bromley writes, even in its secondary capacity, baptism had, for Cranmer, a position of preeminence, affecting not only the interpretation of the sister sacrament, the Eucharist, but touching the very heart of saving truth in the doctrine of justification.

Now, I must admit as I go through this presentation that Cranmer's baptismal spirituality in the liturgy, in the Eucharist, may have been somewhat unintentional.

I'm not convinced that he was intentionally echoing baptism. Yet, he almost certainly crafted the service consciously around justification by faith, as has been mentioned. So, I want to take a few moments to look more closely at various elements of the Eucharistic service and how these elements renew and develop our baptism.

To begin, early church scholars have reminded us that in catechesis, in that training of the faith for new converts, the early church gave the creed and the Lord's Prayer to catechumens, those that were being prepared for baptism.

The catechumenate, as I mentioned briefly earlier, has been renewed in recent decades. We have catechists teaching here in our church as well as even just this coming weekend. I know that there's a women's catechism class being taught.

[21 : 11] And both the creed and the Lord's Prayer were handed over to these new believers en route to their baptism. So when we say the creed together on a Sunday morning or during the week, and when we say the Lord's Prayer as a community, these elements might remind us also of our baptism.

Scholar Hughes Old adds confession to these items and aptly comments, whenever we confess our sins in prayers of confession or profess our faith by saying the Apostles' Creed, we are living out our baptism.

Here we might think of Acts 2, verse 38. It reads simply, repent and be baptized, connecting repentance and baptism indelibly.

Also within the creed, we have specific language that reminds us of our baptism. In the Nicene Creed, we specifically quote, we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.

In the Lord's Prayer, we pray for forgiveness of our trespasses. And this repentance and forgiveness may help us to recall our baptism. Furthermore, all the prayers of the Church are baptismal in nature.

[22 : 23] We can't pray aside from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is only in our union with Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, that we can pray our Father. In our prayers, we join our Lord Jesus Christ in His heavenly intercession.

Going back to the early church, one scholar, Alan Crider, notes, interestingly, that catechumens often left after the readings and the sermon. They left before the church prayed together.

It was only for those baptized converts. Prayer was. I think that's really interesting. Thus, when we pray together as the church, like we do during the week, like we do on Sundays, even individually, we pray as the baptized community.

And following our prayers in the liturgy, in the service, we come to the peace. It's a little bit different in the 730 service. We do it at the beginning of the service, which is quite fine. The peace, interestingly, may primarily be for baptized believers who are coming to the table.

Liturgical scholar Marion Hatchett comments that in the early church, the peace could not be exchanged with the uninitiated. Only the newly baptized or the baptized were welcomed with the kiss of peace.

[23 : 42] And in early liturgies, the peace formed the conclusion of the liturgy of the word after the dismissal of the catechumens and the prayers of the faithful. Thus, the peace, also, when we share it together as a community, along with the creed and the Lord's prayer, may remind us of our baptism.

Furthermore, when we come to the peace, there may be confession and reconciliation that sometimes needs to take place in advance. I think one of the most memorable comments on this, the confession that we need to do with each other before coming to the peace, is from Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his book *Life Together*, which I know many of us are quite fond of.

Bonhoeffer in *Life Together* speaks of how on Saturdays, the community at Finkenwald, that small seminary community, would be found in mutual confession with one another as they prepared to come to the table together that next day on Sunday.

It's a marvelous picture, and I wonder what that might look like for us today. I think it helps us potentially reclaim our baptismal unity with one another in Christ's body as we confess our sins to one another.

Following the peace, before the confession of sin, we are exhorted to, quote, intend to lead the new life, following the commandments of God and walking from henceforth in his holy ways.

[25 : 11] Intending to lead the new life, this language calls to mind Romans 6, which I briefly mentioned earlier. Verse 4 again, we were buried therefore with him, with Christ, by baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

It's in union with Christ through our baptism that we are freed to follow the commandments of God. And our baptismal liturgies recognize this. Baptism, as well as the Spirit, enable us to walk in holiness of life, or potentially better, the Spirit through baptism and directly enables us to walk in holiness of life.

In the confession of sin itself, I just talked about the exhortation to confession of sin, but now the confession of sin itself, we pray, quote, grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life.

That's a pretty familiar language for many of us. And again, this reference to newness of life is referencing, it's directly quoting, in fact, Romans 6, verse 4, about baptism.

Quite interesting. And this prayer of confession to sin also recalls us to baptismal service. That's one of our, one of the outgrowths of our baptism is to serve the Lord, to serve him fully.

[26 : 35] And this prayer recalls us to baptismal service, to serve and please thee, we say, and to holy living, which is also part of our baptism. At every turn here in the service, in the Eucharistic liturgy, we are confessing our sin and we're hearing God's grace and we're responding in faith.

It goes back to that sin, grace, faith sequence that Dr. Packer had helped us have mentioned. We confess the ways each week that we have not fought the old self, that we have not kept our baptismal commitments.

And in response, we are cleansed by the Spirit to serve and again to praise. At the conclusion of every service, we have a benediction. The gathered church, all of us believers, are sent back into the world.

We're sent back into the world on mission. And our mission in the world was foreshadowed earlier in each service during the offering, we can think of, using our finances for mission, during the prayers as we pray for the church and for the world.

But on mission, the church remains the baptized community. As we live out our vocation on mission, we live out our baptisms. And it was Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann who I've mentioned who strongly emphasized this point, that baptism, as we're baptized and pick up our baptisms, we are sent on mission.

[28 : 01] Baptism is for mission. Additionally, throughout the entire service, the very act of worship is in fact baptismal. I like worship scholar Hughes Old's comments on this.

He writes, baptism is the presupposition and basis of all Christian worship. Not only does baptism call us to holiness of life, it also consecrates us to the priestly service of prayer and praise.

In baptism, we are set apart for God's service, and at the center of that service is the service of worship. We are baptized into Christ's priestly body, and in St. Peter's words, we are a holy and royal priesthood, not least as a result of our baptism.

So each of these elements of the service on a Sunday, the creed, the Lord's prayer, prayer in general, confession, the benediction, and worship overall can remind us of our baptism.

And more than just reminding us, I would say that God uses these elements and others to renew our baptism. But there's one more key element that we should speak of in the Eucharistic service, and that's the Eucharist itself.

[29 : 11] To put it simply, the Eucharist is the fulfillment of baptism. Catholic scholar Aidan Kavanaugh succinctly connects these two, Eucharist and baptism. He writes, quote, In baptism, the Eucharist begins, and in the Eucharist, baptism is sustained.

From this premier sacramental union flows all the Church's life. So our baptism is fulfilled in the Eucharist and through the Eucharist. We're incorporated into Christ's body again each Sunday, into his death, into his resurrection.

And this connection has been well noted by Anglicans, especially certain of the liturgical consultations. So it's worth mentioning, one, 1985 in Boston, this was a liturgical consultation of a number of different Anglican communion, or a number of different representatives from the Anglican communion, where they recognized the close relationship of baptism and the Eucharist, and they emphasized this.

1985 in Boston. For most Anglican churches, of course, we're admitted to the Eucharist through baptism. It's not just an open table, per se, but we actually do come to the table through our baptism.

And every celebration of the Eucharist thus recalls our baptism. And then another liturgical consultation in Toronto in 1991 was especially clear. Actually, this liturgical consultation was devoted to baptism.

[30 : 42] And their final statement from Toronto read, quote, Eucharist is the ongoing sign of the identity which is established through baptism. Or in other words, the regular renewal of the life of the baptized is in the Eucharist, along with confession and absolution, which are part of that.

And this Eucharistic fulfillment of baptism is really the central reality of our Sunday service on Eucharistic Sundays. We come together each week as people who have heard numerous ways throughout the week of defining ourselves, whether it's through media, whether it's through people that we relate to.

And not only that, not only these numerous ways that we've heard to define ourselves, but we've also fallen into sin. We've lost track of our mission throughout the week. And it's in, I think, that Sunday Eucharist and in that service that we especially hear God calling us again, his people.

He renews our identity as such. It really is a baptismal identity that we are his people. And he closes us again in our Lord Jesus Christ, in his death, and in his resurrection in the Eucharist.

I want to transition to just a little bit more briefly talking about the daily offices of morning and evening prayer. Because I think that we can also view these baptismally.

[32 : 07] We see this both, like the Eucharistic service, we see this both in their structure, going from sin to grace to faith, but also their various components. So let's look briefly at this.

First, the structure of morning and evening prayer, like the Eucharist, is one of sin grace faith. And Dr. Packer has described this well. He says, morning and evening prayer were made to start penitentially.

They started with confession of sin, followed by the proclaiming of God's pardon, and the Lord's prayer, used as a plea for forgiveness and newness of life. Out of which comes psalmody, praising God for salvation, followed by further exercises of faith and profession, including the creed, prayer, and the hearing of God's word.

I think that's really helpful. In 1552, Cranmer made a significant move with the daily offices. He placed the confession of sin at the beginning of both morning and evening prayer.

And I think that's a rich inheritance. The confession of sin, opening in repentance, significantly recalls our baptism. As we think of repentance and baptism, and of course, some of us were babies and would repent later and pick up our baptism.

[33 : 25] But repentance, in general, every time, renews our baptism. And as baptized people, we are cleansed to again praise the Lord and to hear his word and to join our Lord Jesus Christ in prayer.

I like Karl Barth's quote here. He says, Every morning, we ought to begin where we may begin with the confession, I believe in the forgiveness of sins. Every morning, we get to confess that again.

I believe in the forgiveness of sins. In the brief hour of our death, Karl Barth says, we still have nothing else to say than, I believe in the forgiveness of sins. And I believe Cranmer helps us to do this, especially with his focus on repentance.

And many components of morning and evening prayer, like the Eucharistic service, are baptismal. In our opening confession of sin in the daily offices, we ask God that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life.

This echoes the baptismal resurrection of life in union with Christ's resurrection. As in the Eucharistic service, in the daily offices, we also have the creed. And we have the Lord's prayer and prayer for the world.

[34 : 36] Interestingly, in both morning and evening prayer, the creed that we use is our baptismal one, the Apostles' Creed, versus the Nicene Creed that we use in our Eucharistic liturgy. So when we say the Apostles' Creed together, I think we get to recall our baptism and how that was taught to us in whatever way it was taught to us.

Interestingly, Martin Luther, to quote him again, in his small catechism, he instructed people to say the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed each morning upon arising and upon going to bed in the evening as well.

For Luther, this was accompanied by making the sign of the cross, which for many is a baptismal sign. For the Anglican tradition, these practices, the creed and the Lord's Prayer, have been incorporated into our morning and evening prayer ever since the 1549 prayer book that Cranmer brought together.

And as mentioned earlier, both of these were given to catechumens in preparation for their baptism and can remind us of our baptism. In the Apostles' Creed, we confess belief in the communion of saints.

I believe in the communion of saints. Also the forgiveness of sins. Both statements, forgiveness and communion of saints, are profoundly baptismal if we think about it.

[35 : 53] And at the conclusion of morning prayer, we pray, quote, and that we may show forth, that we show forth thy praise not only with our lips but in our lives by giving up ourselves to thy service and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And this prayer, this conclusion, is also baptismal as we are baptized to praise, to serve, and to live in holiness and righteousness. We've seen how these baptismal realities, repentance, forgiveness, faith, prayer, the communion of saints is echoed throughout the Eucharistic liturgy as well as the daily offices.

And I'm convinced that the Lord uses these to restore us to himself, to send us into the world again each week, each day, in communion with him and with his church.

Again, through these liturgies, among other things, we are cleansed, we're renewed, and we again recognize our place as part of God's people. We again renounce the competing desires that we may have given into hours before, days before.

We renounce these competing desires that have distracted us from our baptismal commitments. And we again to commit ourselves to pursuing and desiring his kingdom above all. If our baptism into Christ is renewed by ongoing repentance, as I think Cranmer's focus on repentance in the liturgies is really helpful for us, it's worth briefly just talking about a couple aspects of Lent and drawing that connection for us as Lent focuses again on our repentance.

[37 : 32] One of my favorite theologians that I've already mentioned a couple times is the Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann. And I've got a couple of his books here this morning.

For the Life of the World is one of my favorites that I was glad to hear that Becky had just picked up at the Regent bookstore this week. And another of my favorites is Of Water and the Spirit. And it's a book entirely on baptism from his Orthodox tradition.

and really unpacking the significance of baptism for our lives. But what I want to quote from this morning is his really helpful book called Great Lent.

And I've got a couple of quotes for us that draw out this connection of baptism and Lent. Because I want for us to, in our Q&A; shortly, to just be able to talk about Lent and how we find that practice again this year.

This annual practice to be helpful for us. Shmemmon, in his book Great Lent, says that we can say without any exaggeration he's a little pessimistic here, but he says we can say without any exaggeration that although Lent is still observed, quote unquote, he says, it has lost much of its impact on our lives.

[38 : 50] Lent has. Lent, unfortunately, for Shmemmon, has ceased to be that bath of repentance and renewal which it is meant to be in the liturgical and spiritual teaching of the church.

Shmemmon asks, referencing the catechumenate and the preparation of new believers, he asks, are we not all, in a sense, still catechumates, being prepared for baptism and to enter the church?

Or rather, are we not to return to this state every year? Do we not again and again fall away from the great mystery of which we have been made participants? Do we not need in our life, which is one permanent alienation from Christ and his kingdom, this annual journey of Lent back to the very roots of our Christian faith?

And Shmemmon continues, this is the help extended to us by the church, the school of repentance, which alone will make it possible to receive Easter not as mere permission to eat, to drink, and to relax, but indeed as the end of the old in us, as our entrance into the new.

For each year, Lent and Easter are, once again, the rediscovery and the recovery by us of what we were made through our own baptismal death and our resurrection.

[40 : 12] I think Shmemmon is helpful here. I think, truly, as preparing this talk, I think Lent is the perfect time for this talk as we begin on this first Sunday of Lent. It's the perfect time for us, in the words of the Westminster Confession, or Westminster Catechism, to develop and improve our baptism in that Puritan mindset.

It was Martin Luther who called for believers to wear their baptism as a daily garment. And we've seen this morning how the Anglican liturgies can help us with this.

Now, if the Anglican liturgies aren't enough for us, there's one other way that I want to mention that helps remind and bring to mind our baptism.

And that's from one of my favorite professors over at Regent Gordon Smith. He says that all water itself, all water, can remind us of our baptism. He expresses this vividly when he writes, quote, there's a sense in which water is always for the Christians something that they value, cherish, and appreciate as a sign of their baptismal identity.

Every rain shower, I think this is helpful for us in Vancouver, every rain shower, every walk along the seaside is a reminder of the wonder of water as the sacramental element in which Christians were initiated into their Christian faith and identity.

[41 : 40] So we have every reason in Vancouver to remember our baptism. Thank you. I hope I've left a good amount of time for Q&A.;

It looks like I have. I'd love to talk about baptism and Lent and anything that relates to those, especially as we share just of Lenten practices that we pick up this year or past years.

And I see Harvey that's even preempting my question. So let me call on Harvey. I always, when we get finally to Easter, I always, I don't know why, I always get so moved by the sentences, especially Christ, our Passover, the sacrifice, rest, therefore let us keep the feast.

I wonder if baptism should be more thought of in terms of the Red Sea where Israel was baptized into the mystery of salvation and that adds biblical resonance into the spiritual of Lenten.

I miss that sometimes. Are there liturgies, I've got a question here, are there liturgies that incorporate more of that? I can say, or has that generally been left out?

[42 : 53] The resonance, biblically, of the Red Sea and the passing through. There have been some wonderful new liturgies in the past 20 to 30 years, especially in our Anglican communion that have been shaped and so I would want to look at, specifically I'd want to look at the Kenyan liturgy and see if that's part of the Eucharistic liturgy in Kenya.

It might be. I would also need to look at our new, probably some of us are aware that our denomination, Akna, both in Canada and the U.S., is working on new liturgies, working on a new book of common prayer, essentially, and so they've released some of those.

I would want to look at their longer Eucharistic liturgy and see if there's any reference there, but I think you're quite right to, I agree with where you're headed on that because it is really this profound image in the Red Sea.

I think of it also as we, I think of it often as we kneel in the service and are raised again to new life.

I think that's absolutely an echo of passing through the waters of the sea and being brought out of bondage. So I would want to see if there are liturgies along those lines.

[44 : 18] It's a great question. Thank you for making clear the defining element of baptism, and Harvey has compared it with the defining thing that happened to the Israelites, which hasn't ever occurred to me, but Harvey does go deeper into things, as you know.

But I was, I have been in advocacy where the baptismal font was always on the Jericho porch or the Jerusalem porch or something. You pass this on your way in, and there was even a baptismal, maybe you remember this, there's a baptismal font at the door in the rotunda of St. John's Jealousy, but we never used that for baptism babies.

We always had a special bowl out of the front. So the definition, part was kind of lost. But I was actually in a service in the cathedral in Malta, where the baby did not come into the church with his parents until it was baptized.

So the entire congregation turned around and based the baptismal font at the back, the baby was baptized, and then persisted on the aisle with his parents and the priest. It's a wonderful image.

It makes an impression, definitely. Well, and I love also the very act of the priest then taking the baby into his or her arms, likely his in our context, because then there is this way in which processing around the church, it really is, the baby is entered into God's family, and it's not just brought by the baby's parents, but it is fully a member of the church through that baptism.

[46 : 12] But the exclusion idea is also there. That's right. So my question to you would be about separating this from the fellowship of the church. We get a little fuzzy about that.

We want to welcome people. We don't want to separate them at the beginning. We want to encourage them to learn what we're all about, and hopefully to commit themselves to Christ.

But we don't actually emphasize that separateness, do we? Could you comment on whether that is a good idea or not? Well, that's an easy question, so thank you for that.

I think, well, I think, I really like the image of the font being at the entrance, because I think that, as it was in St.

John's fantasy, I think that we do, as believers, enter into the church, as I said, through baptism. And so for those that might be visiting with us, they are also approaching the font each week, and they've not yet entered into the fullness of the church, right?

[47 : 26] By no means have they, but they are presented with that opportunity, should you wish to repent and be baptized, in the language of Acts 2, we would love to do that for you. And so I think we should, if I could say it this way, we should be intentional with people as we sit with others in conversation, and if people are on that path of seeking, we should let them know what that path includes, that we would love, should that opportunity arise in their life, that they would like to repent and be baptized, that that's something we would love to do.

I think that people, the question sometimes has been belonging and believing, and which comes first, and I think people can belong and then believe. I absolutely think that that's true. So I think people should be part of small groups sometimes, people should be part of much of the church, even if they have not fully taken that step.

And yet there is, I think, a reason to keep, I mentioned this earlier, but I think there is reason to keep certain angles or certain aspects of the church, especially the Eucharist, that are really only accessible to us through baptism, through the cleansing of our sins, through the work of Jesus Christ appropriated for us.

So I want to have it both ways, and I think that we should be really up front. I loved seeing, I study over at Regent with Ben Short, and his missional community back in the fall had one of their new members that was baptized in the evening service.

And it was pretty early in his faith journey, but that was what his next step was, and it was just a wonderful moment for that small group to be standing up there with their friend who was baptized.

[49 : 09] And so I think people knowing that that is a step, along with repentance, that is very accessible and available to them, I think that's important for seekers. Up here in the front, and then we'll go back.

I just wanted to go back and add a footnote to Harvey. Yeah. One of the points of the Red Sea is that they did not come in contact with the water.

If we go back to Genesis, the waters were divided from the waters. And if we go to Revelation, the sea is no more.

So I think we need to keep all of that in mind as well. Tell us, can you expand on that a little bit? Expand on where you go with that.

For the Israelites, the sea was a fearsome thing. They were not a sea people. And in Psalms, you find it, and in Job, a place of terror and mystery.

[50 : 21] The Hebrew word for deep in Genesis is to home. And has a cognate with a sea monster, at least in some readings.

So it says a lot that when we come to the new heaven and the new earth, that the sea is no more.

It doesn't mean that there isn't water. And I'm sure that pure water is valued in a way that salt water is not. That helps.

And I think you're making me also just think of how the, that there is a fearsomeness to even, to even baptism.

There is true work. Baptism by immersion. Baptism, okay, baptism by immersion. Okay. Yeah, for me, given my baptism as a baby, not by immersion, I think that baptism is, there is a strength in baptism.

[51 : 35] And so you're just making me think of that with the, kind of the potential fear of certain angles of water, whether it's the sea or whatnot. not. You know, and that's why Luther, especially, I mentioned him throughout my talk, but Luther, in times of temptation, and we heard the Westminster mention of that as well, that especially in times of temptation, that we call the mind our baptism.

And so you have Luther famously writing, I am baptized, at multiple points during his temptations, and saying, no, I will not go there because I am baptized, and I will not listen to that accusation.

And so there's this, there's strength in baptism. We have been washed, we have been cleansed. As much as we, throughout our days and our weeks, lose sight of that, there's real work that Christ has done for us, and that I think we see in the sign and symbol of baptism.

And that's partly why I'm working with this, is because I personally want to call it more to mind. and to realize the strength of Christ's work and his baptism of us.

Another question, I saw in the back, yeah. Thank you. Well, thank you for making all these connections. I mean, I never thought of all these things before, any connection with baptism.

[53 : 00] And it just occurred to me that maybe, is that why Catholics do the holy water and cross themselves as they gain? It's absolutely a reminder and echo.

It may be more than that, but that's part of it. Yeah. Yeah. Thank you. Yeah. I just want to say regarding Catholicism, when I worked at St. Paul's Hospital, as a nurse, we were told, no matter what our denomination, we were expected to baptize a baby.

If there was a miscarriage or anything, we were to just make a sign across the water and well, but that was really important. And I thought, and then also Catholic friends have had their babies baptized very early on compared to some others.

It's sort of seen, it's interesting that it's a really, any baby is baptized whereas communion is very much restricted to being a Roman Catholic.

But other baptisms are recognized, like a friend of mine got married later and she didn't have to redo her baptismal while she had to do other things. It's just really interesting the distinction that's made in the habit.

[54 : 16] It's a really interesting distinction. For me, there's a beauty in the fact that many of our Christian denominations recognize each other's baptisms.

That's a grace. It really is. I mean, there's enough disunity if we look around, but to actually recognize each other's baptisms because they are in the name of, if they are in God's triune name and we recognize that it is a divine act.

It's not just a human act, but it's a divine act in our lives. Yeah? I have a friend that's on his way out. I'm plugging him today. And I'm not sure that he's baptized, so if I go to see him, is it all right to re-baptize him?

I would, of course, ask, depending on how coherent. Nobody's there to ask. That is an interesting question. So our Anglican rites give us emergency baptism language, and so I would definitely commend that to you.

I can direct you to it in the BCP. And that's very much justified, and I think that it's very simple language, and then we report it to the local parish, so that if, and this is not just in this circumstance, but if somebody is in the hospital, for instance, and they make a recovery, then there will be some sort of service that's not a re- Non-Christian.

[55 : 52] Non-Christian. He's a gay friend. I would want to ask about where, I don't know how coherent he is.

I think he's not coherent, yeah. That's a discussion I think that a couple folks in the room could speak to as well. For me, baptism is within the context of faith, and so it's drawing on what faith that person has, and so I want to be respectful of somebody's faith journey, I would want to defer a little bit to a couple other folks in the room on this, because I would really want it to be congruent with where that person is on their journey, right?

Harvey in the back. Peter Leithard, I find, they're bridging these two strange traditions, but he says, I think it's wonderful. All baptisms are in for the baptism. Great quote.

Really good quote. Yeah. Yeah. Let me go in the front and then right here. Okay. I noticed that nowhere in your talk did you mention confirmation.

Now, like Sheila, I came from a church that baptized people when they were older and not as babies, and I grew up in a place where pretty well at least all the girls in my school class belonged to churches who were baptized as babies, and what I saw was that around the age of 12, they would take catechism classes, and they would be confirmed, and it was almost like kind of a graduation, because it meant most of them didn't go to church after that.

[57 : 30] Now, I know that's not the purpose of confirmation, but I would like to know where you put confirmation in this whole question. Yeah, that's a great question. I was just talking about that at the break.

Here's how I put it, and I'll say two things on it, but I call confirmation baptismal, because I think that confirmation sits largely within baptism, and let me defend that just a little bit.

I think that in the recent decades, we've, as Anglicans, we've moved a little bit away from the focus on confirmation that happened.

There was more of a focus on confirmation 40 years ago. I think that's a little bit safe to say, and confirmation, I think maybe had too much of a place.

I think it was a little bit in error 40 years ago when it had more of a place than baptism, because I think that baptism truly, baptism obviously was instituted by Christ.

[58 : 35] It's one of our two sacraments, baptism and Eucharist, implemented by him. And so confirmation, if we look at part of that as being a reception of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit's work in our lives, that really is a baptismal reality.

And so if there's a point at which we pick up some of our baptismal dedication, our baptismal vows, I think that that sort of act can be a recommitment of our baptism.

So I do like the Easter vigil. I mentioned that earlier, but I like how the Easter vigil offers us this opportunity to recommit ourselves each year, or some churches might do it on Easter, to recommit ourselves to our baptismal vows.

And that's how I see confirmation. It's a recommitment to the truth of baptism and to living that out in our lives and to entering more fully into the Spirit's work in our lives.

But there's nothing in confirmation from my perspective that is distinctly separate from baptism.

[59 : 46] And so that's why you see, I mentioned the new Akna liturgy. Baptism and confirmation are actually together in that liturgy, and I think that's worth noting. And I think that's probably right, is that baptism and confirmation are not separated because they are meant to be together, that we repent, we're baptized, and we receive the Holy Spirit and his work in our lives.

And that's one unit. It's not separated. And certainly not that we would then leave church after that. I think that's exactly the wrong way to live out our baptism.

Thank you for asking that. You're just an answer my question. Okay. Okay, good. Good, thank you. Well, when you speak about baptism, I remember reading the United, I'm from a United Church kind of background, the United Church expressed it the exact same way, very important that baptism determines and makes a person a Christian.

I always thought, well, you have to receive Christ spiritually, be saved and born again to become a Christian. But you're speaking, yeah, it says about that as water around the spirit.

So I, it knows how you put so much importance on baptism, but that's what the United Church did too. With ministers, the minister must be baptized first, so they do the same importance on baptism as you did.

[61 : 14] Yeah. Thank you. Well, I should wrap up here probably. Let me close with just a call to us again with Lent. Becky is a fan of saying that it's, can you tell us what the phrase is for Lent that you reference often?

This is the bright sadness. Bright sadness. Bright sadness. Yeah. And I think as we enter into this time of bright sadness with Lent, it's my hope that we would use Lent and the call of Lent to repentance and to self-examination, to prayer, my hope is that we would enter into that with this note of kind of a joy in renewing our baptism through these days of Lent.

In some churches, of course, with the catechumenate, they're actually preparing people as we speak for their baptism in 40 days. And so maybe we can picture some of those folks that are moving towards baptism as we also, renewing our baptism through this season.

Thank you again for having me. It is always a pleasure. Thanks.