



May 21, 2023

**Abounding Grace: Belonging
New Birth**

Titus 3:5

For Discussion and Reflection

1. Read and discuss the Westminster Confession of Faith 28:1. Notice the specific items that baptism presents to you. What does this communicate to you about God's grace?
2. In the Old Testament, circumcision functioned similarly to baptism, presenting God's work to remove our sinful hearts. Moses uses this rite to point to the heart change God requires, saying, "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn," Deut. 10:16. (c.f. Deut. 30:6, Jeremiah 4:4, Romans 2:29, Colossians 2:10-11). After reading these texts, who can accomplish this work for us? What role does the Spirit have in this work? How does this compare with our text, Titus 3:5?
3. In Deuteronomy 30:6, Ezekiel 36:25-27, Jeremiah 31:31-34, and Titus 3:4-7, there is one primary actor. Who is it? What encouragement and hope does that give you as you consider your salvation?
4. After looking at Romans 6:1-14, what is Paul's focus? Is he trying to compare the mode of the rite of baptism with what Jesus did or to emphasize that union with Christ means we have died to sin and come alive in Christ? How does the mode of immersion illustrate Jesus' crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and our "walking" in new life? Does Paul's focus encourage a mode or a principle?
5. Consider how Paul describes our spiritual state in Ephesians 2:1-3, Titus 3:1-3? How does that compare to Jesus' statement that one must be "born from above" in John 3:3?
6. Today I argued, the New Covenant that Jesus mentions when he institutes the Lord's Table (communion), Matthew 26:26-28, or that the author of Hebrews mentions (9:15) is not a covenant that is new in the way that we think of new. Instead, it is the fulfillment of the covenant of redemption between the Father and Son and the basis for the covenant of grace God offered Adam/Eve, and Abraham, and the salvation promised in Deut. 30:6, Ez. 36:25-27, Jer. 31:31-34. What are your thoughts about that?
7. How would the argument in #5 affect how we view salvation of the saints in the Old Testament? Is their salvation fundamentally different or similar to our salvation?
8. How does the new life work of the Spirit, symbolized in baptism, communicate our belonging to God?
9. When you witness a baptism, the person is not being regenerated (because the rite has no formal power) but they are being sealed with the sign of regeneration promised to God's people and necessary for our salvation. What mode best symbolizes the work of the Spirit according to Paul?
10. Based on what we studied today, what does God want you to learn about his grace?