**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**

**Watertown, WI**

 **“Holy Baptism”**

Pastor Aaron Reseburg

March 26, 2025

*1 Peter 3:18-22*

In the name of Jesus, Amen

Whenever I teach kids or people about faith, I try to get them to connect faith with the things that they put their trust in every day. For example, the floor. They trust that if they take a step on the floor of their classroom, they will not fall through the floor. We talk about all the reasons why they trust the floor; they see other people walk there, they have walked there before, and it looks solid.

I contrast the floor of their classroom with the floor in my grandpa’s barn. My grandpa has a large old barn. Growing up, my cousins and I would play all over the barn. However, when you went up to the second story, you had to be very careful where you stepped at certain points. Part of the floor was very trustworthy, and you could even play basketball on it. Part of it was not trustworthy; there were gaps in the boards, and you couldn’t trust it all. You had to know where to step, and the easiest way to know where to step was to follow grandpa.

The world is a lot like that section of my grandpa’s barn. It’s hard to know who and what to trust. There seem to be gaps and holes all around us. You make a mistake, put your trust in the wrong person, and you risk falling through the floor.

The world is uncertain; life is uncertain. Stock markets rise and fall. Nations rise and fall. Weather fluctuates. You lose your job. People come and go. People lie and let you down. People just decide they don’t like you, and there isn’t much you can do about it. The world is uncertain.

In the face of an uncertain world, it’s hard to know who and what you are supposed to trust. It’s hard to know where to step, and if you put your weight on the wrong board, you might fall through.

In an uncertain world, baptism gives us a place to rest. It gives us a foundation to stand on.

It may be an uncertain world, but in your baptisms, God has given you certainty. He has given you the certainty that you have faith and your salvation is secured, it’s certain. I hope that you already knew that. I hope that you already believed that your baptism is proof of your salvation.

Know that there are some Christians who do not believe that. In an uncertain world, they look for certainty in themselves. When asked the question “how do you know if you are saved” or “how do you know that you have faith,” they are instructed to look inside themselves and look in their heart to see if they really believe. If they find belief in their heart, they are told to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Once they have “decided” to follow Jesus, they are baptized with what they call a “Believer’s Baptism.”

Dear Christians, you and I are just as uncertain as the world around us. We have times in our lives where our faith is mighty and strong, times where we feel close to God. Then, there are times where our faith is small and weak, when God feels far away from us. When we feel like we are on the edge of disbelief.

This is the great comfort that comes with the certainty of baptism. When you feel like your faith is weak and that God is far away, remember that you are baptized, and remember what God’s Word says about your baptism. Like in our reading for today, “Baptism now saves you.”

In your baptisms, your sins were washed away; you were given faith. It isn’t the size or the strength of your faith that saves you, it is faith. When asked the question, “how do you know that you are saved,” your response isn’t about anything that you have done. Your response is I was baptized. In your baptism, God claimed you as His child.

No one can take that away from you. There is no sin that can separate you from God unless you let it. When your faith is low and you feel like God is far away, it is not too late. God is not far away. In your baptism, God has brought you into Himself and He has given you His Holy Spirit. In an uncertain world, your baptism is firm foundation, it is a safe board to stand on.

Nothing can separate you from God. Nothing can undo what He did to you in your baptisms. In your baptism, God has given you a gift. You don’t earn gifts, and you definitely don’t buy them. You may, of course, throw a gift away, though. You can throw away your faith and turn away from God. You may decide that your baptism isn’t as firm of a foundation as you once thought it was.

But the good news is that God’s promise remains. You may have thrown away your baptism, but all you need to do is to once again believe in God’s promises that He made in your baptism, and the gift is yours again.

Don’t misunderstand me; God gives faith through more than just baptism. He certainly gives faith through the Word. There are many Christians who have believe the lies of Believer’s Baptisms. Some have died believing in Christ but never having been baptized; their salvation is just as certain as yours and mine. The difference is that they have missed out on the comfort and the peace that comes with the certainty that God has done it all for them, and most of the time in spite of them.

In an uncertain world, turn to the certainty of your baptism. When your faith is strong or weak, remember that God has chosen you to be His dearly loved child in your baptism. There, He has taken away your sins and given you faith. In your baptism, He has given you His own Holy Spirit.

In the name of Jesus, Amen