

## Of weet julle nie / Or don't you know...

### Romans 6:3-4



“Of weet julle nie / Or don't you know... Dis belangrik om te onthou en te verstaan wat gebeur het toe ons gedoop is, wat die implikasies daarvan vir ons lewe is. Dikwels waarsku die Bybel teen vergeet, nie meer weet wat God aan ons gedoen het nie. Daarom die opdrag: God se verhaal van liefde vir ons moet ons by ons kinders inskerp, ons moet met hulle daarvoor praat by die huis en op pad, as ons gaan slaap en as ons opstaan. Jy moet dit as 'n herinneringsteken vasbind aan jou hande, en dit moet 'n merk op jou voorkop wees. Skryf dit op jou deurkosyne en op jou stadspoorte. Help ons kinders om te onthou dat God vir hulle lief is, en dat Hy dit eenmaal deur die doop kom belowe het, vir elkeen van ons op die naam.

But first, we must remember that baptism is not something we do or the pastor does. It is not something we must first deserve or even believe. It is something God does to us by his grace alone. God takes the initiative in baptism. We, therefore, regard baptism as a sacrament – a gift God undeservedly bestows upon us. The gracious God even gives the baptism promises to little children who do not yet comprehend the whole meaning of it.

Now, when we teach and remind our children of what God gave them at baptism, what shall we tell them? I want to underline four things we need to teach our children about their baptism.

**(1) The first is that we were united with Christ in baptism**

We are baptised into Christ, united with Christ Jesus. Unity with Christ does not mean we become Christ or Christ becomes us. No, “in Christ” means an intimate, deep connection between Christ and us is established, a bond, a relationship, a covenant. This unity is so profound that what happened to Christ actually also happened to us. We have been baptised into his death as if we ourselves were crucified. As if the old sinful self has been drowned in the baptism water. Through baptism, we share in Christ’s death.

Being baptised into Christ also means we share in Christ’s resurrection, the triumph of life over death. This victorious life is given to us. It also means we will share in Christ’s glorification in everlasting life. That is what happens when we are united with Christ through baptism. We share in his death and resurrection – the salvation he accomplished is given to us, for free.

**(2) A second thing happening in baptism is that we are cleansed – the one baptised becomes a new person with a new identity.**

Being baptised implies that we are no longer slaves of sin, no longer captured by sinful desires; no, we are children of God, heirs of Christ’s riches, and members of the kingdom of God. In baptism, we are washed and forgiven and prepared to sit down as welcome guests at the table of the Lord. In baptism, we receive Christ as a new cloth to join the feast of salvation.

This washing by water gives us a new identity as children of God; now, we may call God our Father, Abba – entering a deeply personal relationship. Of course, this also implies that we, from now on, will live according to our status as children of God; we will seek to do the will of God and be good citizens of God’s kingdom. Baptism transforms us from slaves to God’s own children.

**(3) The third treasure we receive in baptism is the Holy Spirit.**

The Holy Spirit is the presence of the Father and the Son, here and now, with and within us. Receiving the Holy Spirit means the Triune God dwells with and accompanies us. The Holy Spirit’s work is to open our eyes to faith, to help us believe God’s promises. The Spirit guides and empowers us; the Spirit consoles and leads us on the paths of God’s will for our lives. The Spirit works the salvation within us and transforms us from being slaves to becoming children of God. The Holy Spirit protects us and gives us life.

Receiving the Holy Spirit at our baptism is like being anointed – we receive a new office, we are called and sent to serve in God’s kingdom. For that task, the Spirit will sanctify us and give us power.

Receiving the Holy Spirit also guarantees that we will one day inherit the kingdom of God and have eternal life.

**(4) The fourth gift bestowed on us at baptism is that we become part of the body of Christ, his church.**

We become welcome members of the family of God’s children and part of the communion of those who believe. In baptism, God binds us to one another in unity and love. In baptism, we all become equals, regarded worthy by God’s grace. Ephesians 4:4 emphasises the profound gift of unity we receive in baptism: “There is one body

and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” This unity is so precious that we are called upon to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” Based on our baptism, we should accept and respect and love and care for one another.

Ons ontvang dus vier gawes by ons doop:

- (1) Ons word met Christus verenig – in Christus se dood en opstanding ingedoopt.
- (2) Ons word skoongewas, ons kry ‘n nuwe identiteit. Nie meer ‘n slaaf nie, maar ‘n kind van God, erfgenaam van al die rykdom van God se beloftes.
- (3) By die doop ontvang ons die Heilige Gees. En die Heilige Gees is niks minder nie as die Drie-enige God wat by ons kom bly, ons lewe kom stuur, ons help om te glo.
- (4) En vierdens word ons deur die doop ingelyf in die kerk, deel van die eenheid en liefde waarmee God self se kinders aan mekaar bind.

When we see how the water is poured on these two children’s foreheads and hear God calling out his Name over them – in the Name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit – we witness something so profound that we can hardly express it in words. God Almighty is coming from heaven and committing to love them. God does that, not because they deserve it but because God is merciful and gracious. What we will see in the water and hear in the words is nothing but the Triune God himself at work. Dear parents, you must constantly remind your children of this amazing truth: God is for us. Gott für uns. God loves our children. That is the promise they receive in baptism.