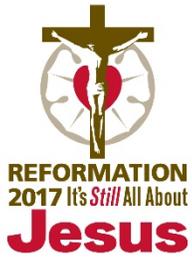


God's FedEx Truck: The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

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Wouldn't you agree that deliveries are important? I don't know about you, but when I have an important package, I want to make sure that it is delivered safely and expediently. The delivery business has always been an important business. Today, it is a very competitive business so different package companies often use a catchy slogan to encourage you to trust them for all your delivery needs.

FedEx gives you their "purple promise," "I will make every FedEx experience outstanding." Well, it just so happens that God is in the delivery business as well, but He doesn't need a catchy phrase to garner our trust. Because of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 1:20), we can count on all of God's promises, including His promise in and through Baptism. Baptism, simple water included in God's command and combined with God's Word, has the power to forgive sins, rescue from death and the devil, and give eternal salvation to all who believe... (SC 4).

However, unlike FedEx, the experience of Baptism isn't all that important. It may seem like a pretty dull and anticlimactic moment to merely say a few words and sprinkle some water on someone's head. It may seem like a pretty stressful and difficult moment trying to baptize a kicking and screaming child who wants nothing to do with that water or pastor! And yet, despite the dull or stressful experience, by the power of the Holy Spirit that child still receives a "washing in the Word" (SA 3.5). Despite our feelings about it, God delivers something outstanding every time in baptism!

Although the title of this article is "God's FedEx Truck: The Sacrament of Holy Baptism," I would be remiss if I didn't give a hat tip to the company my dad has worked at for over 30 years, UPS. I always liked their old phrase, "What can Brown do for you?" And that's really what God's gift of Baptism is about isn't it? God wants to do something for you. Over the years, many people have mixed this teaching up and turned Baptism into something we do for God. But God's Word and our Lutheran Confessions have always been very clear on this matter. "Baptism, however, is not our work, but God's work (for, as was said, you must distinguish Christ's Baptism quite clearly from a bath-keeper's baptism)" (LC 4.35). God is certainly in the delivery business, and thanks be to God for His wonderful package of Baptism!

Further Reading AC 9, 13; Ap 9, 13, 24; SA 3.5; SC 4; LC 4; Taufbüchlein

Abbreviations

AC = Unaltered Augsburg Confession
Ap = Apology of the Augsburg Confession
SC = Small Catechism
LC = Large Catechism
SA = Smalcald Articles (exclusive of the Tractate)
Tr = Tractate on the Power and Primacy of the Pope
Ep = The Formula of Concord, Epitome
SD = The Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration
Cat = Catalogue of Testimonies

NOTE: Articles and sections/paragraphs in the *Book of Concord* are denoted in Arabic numerals, separated by a period. Please note that the first number in citations of SC and LC points to the Chief Part; any numbers following the period point to the specific section/paragraph. Thus SC 1.8 does not point to the 8th Commandment, but to the explanation of the 4th.