

Holy Baptism: 3rd The Power of Baptism

How can water do such great things?

Certainly not just water, but the Word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this Word of God in the water. For without God's Word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the Word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus chapter three:

“He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the Hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying” (Titus 3:5-8).

The second question in the Explanation is, *Why do the Scriptures call Baptism the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit?* The answer, based on Romans 6:6 and Titus 3:5-8, is, *In Baptism, the Holy Spirit works faith and so creates in us new spiritual life with the power to overcome sin.* This understanding of Baptism is vital to our understanding of justification, the key doctrine of the Christian church, or as Martin Luther called it, the Pillar of the church. This understanding of Baptism shows that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Grace because the Holy Spirit is the one who works renewal in us. Faith because that's what He gives us. And Christ because He is the one who died for us. That is the power of Baptism.