

Justification; Valde Palola, Kuopio, 19September2009

The topic for each for this evening was advertised in the Paivämies as the sacraments of the church. I have, nevertheless, taken the liberty to limit the topic in such a way that I left out the sacrament of Holy Communion. On the other hand, I will discuss baptism, beginning with the starting point of our faith, justification. Thus, justification is the title of this presentation. I have integrated Baptism into this study, even though it does not necessarily come out in that name.

I have divided this introduction into several parts. First, the introduction. Second, the basis of justification is in God's righteousness. Third, the obedience of Christ is imputed to a person. Fourth, grace earned by Christ has overcome the wrath, as a result of inherited sin. Fifth, the gift of righteousness of faith negates sin and the curse of the law. Sixth, the promise of baptism is owned alone by faith. Seventh, Christ exhorts to seek the kingdom of God. Finally, the conclusion. The title of the introduction is justification, which can be expressed with the Latin phrases Favor Dei and Donum Dei, God's favor and God's gift.

The justification of a sinner is God's favor and the gift of grace for a fallen person. For all of this, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, has atoned for the sins of all mankind and redeemed them from sin and the power of death with His suffering, death and resurrection. With His perfect obedience, he liberated man from the curse of the Law and earned [prepared] that

righteousness, which is acceptable before God. God imputes this [credited it to the account] for righteousness to a sinner by grace, through faith, by the merits of Christ. It means that God declares that a person is free from sin and death, accepted as His child and an heir of eternal life. The doctrine of justification is revealed in the Bible and in the Lutheran confessional books in the following way. Paul writes to the Romans: "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." [Rom. 5:1-2] In the Augsburg Confession, it is stated about justification: "Also they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for 2] Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. 3] This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4."ⁱ

The fundamental reason for justification is in God's righteousness. The starting point for atonement is in God's righteousness. The fallen person is made righteous in this one and only pure righteousness. Paul writes: "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself." [2 Cor. 5:18] This interpretation of God's righteousness was the key for Martin Luther in understanding true righteousness of faith. Luther had been studying Paul's letter to the Romans, the first chapter. There Paul states that the gospel is the power of God. It brings

salvation to those who believe. “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” [Rom. 1:16, 17] For Luther, it opened up the righteousness of God in light of the perspective of faith. Previously, [God’s righteousness] only meant God’s condemning justice, or God is a strict and just God who will condemn a person because of sin. From the teaching of Paul, he [began] to understand that God’s righteousness contained His incomprehensible love for a sinner. Luther stated: “I exalted this sweetest word of mine, "the justice of God," with as much love as before I had hated it with hate. This phrase of Paul was for me the very gate of paradise. Afterward I read Augustine's "On the Spirit and the Letter," in which I found what I had not dared hope for. I discovered that he too interpreted "the justice of God" in a similar way, namely, as that with which God clothes us when he justifies us. Although Augustine had said it imperfectly and did not explain in detail how God imputes justice to us, still it pleased me that he taught the justice of God by which we are justified.”ⁱⁱ

According to Luther, the righteousness of God approaches a sinner through Christ. God, in His righteousness, hates sin, but He loves the sinner at the same time. God atoned for [the sins of] all people in Christ. For this reason, God’s righteous anger no longer touches a sinner, because Christ, true God and true man, bore all [sins and punishment] on people’s behalf. In place of wrath, God approaches a person in love, because of the merits of Christ. Luther states: “God cannot change His nature,

in other words, he must hate sin and the sinner. He must act in this manner because of compulsion, otherwise he would be wrong and would love sin. How can it be so that both of these paradoxes exist? I have sin. I have earned God's wrath and anger. Nevertheless, the Father loves me. This conflict is solved only through the mediator, Christ." [Luther in his commentary on Galatians]. The fundamental reason for justification is in God righteous nature. Love for the sinner is the starting point for the atonement of Christ and His work of redemption. God is His righteousness has shown His grace, or favor, toward fallen man, and prepared in Christ Jesus a righteousness, which is acceptable to God. This is a completely foreign or alien righteousness, a perfect and holy righteousness, which is prepared outside of man. It is grace, which God accounts as righteousness for a person, by faith, because of the merits of Christ.

The entire obedience of Christ is reckoned to a person's account. The doctrine of righteousness of faith was Luther's basis for his theological thought [understanding]. In this way, all theological questions can be solved correctly on the basis of the doctrine of justification that is kept pure. According to Luther, Christendom will remain pure only in this way. By this means, it is only possible to battle against sects. In the Formula of Concord [one of the Lutheran confessional books], Doctor Luther wrote: "If this only article remains pure on the battlefield, the Christian Church also remains pure, and in godly harmony and without any sects; but if it does not

remain pure, it is not possible that any error or fanatical spirit can be resisted.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Soon after the death of Luther, many Reformation teachers began to present differing understandings about the doctrine of the justification by faith. Some wanted to add good works as an addition to the merits of Christ in justification. On the other hand, some taught that the endeavor [of faith] has no part in the matter of righteousness. The background to these debatable interpretations was the question of Christ’s two-fold nature [true man and true God] in regards to justification. Some taught that the righteousness of faith, which the apostle calls God’s righteousness, is God’s righteous essence. According to this, Christ lives by faith in a believer in his divine essence and nature. In other words, righteousness owned by faith means the same as Christ, who dwells [in a believer] as the Son of God. In comparison to this divinity [of Christ] in a person, sins are like a drop in the sea. In this belief, faith is trust in the obedience of Christ in such a way that [faith] can be preserved in a believer, even though he would neglect the endeavor [of faith] and the battle against sin. This is the second error. In Christianity, we are accustomed to called this the doctrine of freedom of the flesh.

Others taught that the basis of a Christian’s righteousness is only Christ’s human nature. Faith, received by grace, beholds Christ’s obedience in its human nature. This faith has an effect on good works. Righteousness of faith is not only the merits of

Christ imputed to [a believer] but also is included pronounced of justification. New obedience and sanctification are also part of the life of a believer, as part of justification. The doctrine of works came out here. Using the Latin phrase – fides caritate formata – faith that is formed by love. This is faith by works. The writers of the Augsburg Confession rejected both of these ideas [thoughts] as false doctrine. They [writers of the Augsburg Confession] thought that Christ as an undivided person in both natures is the reason and basis for justification of a sinner. The obedience of Christ as God and man, the obedience of his total person, is imputed to a person by faith.

It says further in the Formula of Concord: “Christ is our Righteousness neither according to the divine nature alone nor according to the human nature alone, but that it is the entire Christ according to both natures, in His obedience alone,” has redeemed us from our sins, justified and saved us.

Righteousness of faith is the same as the forgiveness of sins and atonement with God. We are accepted as a child of God alone through the obedience of Christ. Alone by faith, of grace, this obedience is imputed to a believer as righteousness. This obedience delivers them [believers] from all sin [iniquity].

According to the confessional writings, the person of Christ is joined in human and divine natures, and is necessary for salvation. The human nature of Christ was not alone able to show obedience, without the divine nature, which was needed to appease God because of sin. An example of this was the disobedience of human nature of Adam towards the word of

God. It is good for us to remember this. Adam fell from the sinless state into sin. On the contrary, the divine nature, without the human nature, would not have been able to be an atoner between God and man. The fall into sin occurred in the human nature, or in the flesh. Therefore, it needed to be atoned for in the flesh. The entire work of the person Christ was necessary for the salvation of man. Only by this means was it possible to bring a person who was under sin and death into God's grace, or His favor.

Next, the grace earned by Christ and negated [conquered] the wrath that has come as a result of original sin. When Adam fell into sin, he came under God's wrath and subject to eternal death. This also meant that all people were subject to sin and death. In His righteousness, God pardoned man and showed His grace, or favor, toward him in Jesus Christ. This grace has overcome the wrath that resulted from Original Sin. It meant that man is a partaker of the gift of life and has a place as a child of God by faith. Luther compares Adam and Christ to each other, as apostle Paul, when characterizing grace and its nature. He compares them as opposites to each other. The deed of each of them has a decisive role in the position of man. Adam brought sin, death and the curse of the Law to man. Christ, to the contrary, brought grace, life and the forgiveness of sins as a grace-gift in place of the curse of the law. Paul writes of this to the Romans: "Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's

disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous." [Rom. 5:18, 19]

Luther explains this in his **lecture on the epistle to the Romans**: "The relationship between the conception and inheritance of the two Adams have a resemblance to each other. But they are also very different. The first Adam was purely human. The second Adam was both God and man. The first Adam was of the earth; the second Adam was from heaven. The first Adam brought sin, death and the curse of the law to his posterity; the second Adam brought grace in the place of sin, life in place of death, and forgiveness in place of the curse of the law." This was Luther's explanation in his commentary to the epistle of Romans. According to Luther, the inheritance of Adam and Christ were opposite to each other. The inheritance of Adam was that every person is born in original sin and automatically commits sin. As Adam, every person has merited God's wrath and eternal death. The inheritance of Christ is grace and life. [By the merits of Christ] a person is acceptable to God, in spite of original sin. For the sake of Christ's grace, a person can own righteousness and the gift of the Holy Spirit by faith. He is free from the wrath of God. According to Luther, this is the gift of the gospel for man.

Luther states: "As Adam is the original fountain for all sin, wretchedness and death, and he left it as an inheritance for us, so the sin follows sin. Likewise, Christ is the original fountain for

grace, truth and life, so that we receive grace, life and perfect truth. This can be called grace of grace, so that for the sake of Christ we receive the Holy Spirit and become righteous.” In Luther’s response to **Latomus** he says: “We have two gifts of the gospel against two evils of the law. The gift overcomes sin; grace overcomes wrath. As a result that wrath and grace are outside of us, they are shed into all people. A person who is under wrath is totally under wrath. A person who is under grace is totally under grace. The opposite inheritances of Adam and Christ – wrath and grace – touch every person already in conception. They are shed into all people. As a result of the grace of Christ, wrath does not mean spiritual death to the child who is conceived in the womb, because grace has overcome that wrath and brought righteousness of life.” According to Luther, wrath as a result of original sin means that a person will experience spiritual death because of his faults, without the righteousness of faith. In the book, “The Lord and King of the Bible” [Raamatun Herra ja Kuningas, edited by Pekka Kinnunen], which contains Luther’s prefaces and marginal comments, it states in reference to Ezekiel 18: “Every person must die because of their own sins, because original sin has been removed by Christ, and no one will perish, unless they reject [sin], or in other words does not wish to believe. Luther assures us in this way.

The next section is the gift of righteousness of faith, which is the opposite [counterpart] to sin and the curse of the law. By the grace of Christ, all people are worthy for faith and

righteousness from conception. Grace, however, has not removed the reality of sin in a person. It means, thus, that without the gift of grace, or the righteousness of faith, every person, as a partaker of original sin, would be slain by the law by their deeds. God grants the righteousness of faith, as a gift of grace, through the word of His promise. A person can own this righteousness by faith in the covenant of the grace of baptism. The grace covenant of baptism is an ordinance of Christ. For this reason, it is necessary to bring little children into the covenant of the grace of baptism. This is the greatest and most holy moment in a person's life. God can, thus, assure a child that Christ has overcome sin, death and the power of the devil on his behalf. Having been baptized, the child is a partaker of this victory and can begin the endeavor of faith in the kingdom of God.

Luther compares the victory of Christ over sin and the devil to the battle of Gideon against the Amalekites. The 300-man army gained the victory over the enemy, which could be characterized as a flock of grasshoppers. There were as many camels on the plains as were grains of sand on the sea shore. It is stated thus in Judges 7:18. The sword and power of Gideon did not bring about the victory against the enemy, but it was because of the work and might of the Lord. Also, the spiritual victory over sin and the devil is by the power of God. When Gideon struck the enemies, and they fled, he commanded the other Israelite tribes to chase [the enemies] and overtake the wading spots in the Jordan, and destroy them completely.

According to Luther, this signifies that the Christian is to act in accordance to this example, in other words, in the grace of baptism they are to mortify sin and oppose the enemy.

In his **House Postil** sermon on **Christmas Day**, Luther states: “When Christ our Savior has overcome sin, death and the devil, and chased them away, we are to chase the devils in the same way. In other words, we are to mortify sin, oppose the devil, and be obedient to God with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. In this way, the Midianites are chased and overcome at the River Jordan. It is where the blessed baptism and forgiveness of sins has begun, of which we are partakers. In this way, our enemies are conquered. According to Apostle Paul, baptism signifies that we have been buried with Christ unto death. In baptism, our old portion, corrupted by original sin, has been crucified with Christ. According to the example of Christ, baptism signifies the resurrection from the dead. Paul means that a person who dies in this manner, he has been liberated from the power of sin. Paul writes of this in Romans 6:4-7. A person has been dressed in a protective garment, the righteousness of Christ, against sin and the curse of the law. It means new life in Jesus Christ. A person corrupted by original sin has been slain because of sin. In its place, the new man appears, which desires to endeavor trusting in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. On his behalf, Christ overcome the devil and the power of sin, and chased them away. The grace of baptism means the victory over the devil and the power of sin for a Christian. They [these powers] no longer rule over him [the believer]. The law of God

no longer condemns him because of his faults. Christ has fulfilled the law on his behalf. The perfect obedience of Christ is imputed to him by faith for righteousness.

It must be noted that the content [power] of baptism is not completely fulfilled in this life. Although baptism signifies the mortification of the corrupt person, because of original sin, and the life of a person born of God, sin yet remains in a Christian after baptism. It remains during one's entire life. However, a Christian has the promise of the forgiveness of sins every moment. This is owned by faith. As a sinner, he can take refuge in the merits of Christ. From this perspective, the mystery of the righteousness of faith is revealed [opened up]. A Christian has two parts. He is simultaneously righteous and a sinner, holy and evil (simul Justus et peccator). Because of the righteousness of faith, he is worthy [acceptable] for eternal life at every moment. Like Peter, Luther compares baptism to the flood, where the sinful flesh is drowned. In the likeness of this example, sin is drowned with the power of the gospel in the grace of baptism. This will continue till the end of the world. As the word of the Holy Spirit, or Sanctification, it means that the person who is baptized will mortify sin through repentance and believing the gospel with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, baptism also signifies the second coming of Christ. The righteous ones, according to the example of Christ, can rise from the dead without sin and live with Him forever. Peter writes of this: "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves

you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” [1 Peter 3:21] Luther explains the verse in this way: Saint Peter understood the flood to be an example of baptism, for baptism is a spiritual flood. As Noah and eight people were spared from the flood, so we will be saved in baptism. In baptism, more people perish than in the flood, for the former reaches to the end of the world, and yet continues. Likewise, as all perished, except for eight people, who were spared from the water, so likewise will all perish in baptism which is of the flesh.^{iv}

In baptism, we die to the world, to flesh and blood, as Paul writes in the sixth chapter of Romans. All those who are baptized in Christ, are baptized in this death. So, we are buried with him in baptism unto death. Compare these with each other.

In the flood, all the people perished, who were flesh and blood. In baptism, all sin and misfortune perishes, where people swim. In this way, the flood is a picture of baptism. Psalms 29 refers to this: “The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever.” [Psalms 29:10] Luther writes in his commentary to Genesis. “The Triune God comes in His word of promise to the redeemed person and receives him into his gracious covenant. The person who is redeemed from sin and the devil, can be dressed in Christ by faith. For him, it is the grace gift of Christ, or righteousness of faith. According to the

picture of baptism, he [the child] can begin his endeavor of faith in the kingdom of God as a disciple. With the power of the Holy Spirit, he can mortify sin and own the forgiveness of faults at every moment by faith. Baptism continues in his life every moment until death. It will be fulfilled completely in resurrection, when sin and death will be totally conquered for the baptized one. He will then be like Christ.^v

Commented [JL1]:

The promise of baptism is owned by faith. According to Luther, the efficacy of baptism is on faith that receives the promise. The promise of baptism alone does not liberate anyone from sin or the curse of the law. It is necessary to have faith. Faith and the promise must be present at the same time, and working with each other. Luther writes of this in **Babylonian Captivity of the Church**: “and let us understand that wherever there is a divine promise, there faith is required; and that both of these are so necessary that neither can be of any effect without the other. We can neither believe unless we have a promise, nor is the promise effectual unless it is believed; while if these two act reciprocally, they produce a real and sure efficacy in the sacraments. Hence to seek efficacy in the sacrament independently of the promise and of faith is to strive in vain and to fall into condemnation. Thus, Christ says: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:16.) Thus, He shows that in the sacrament faith is so necessary that it can save us even without the sacrament; and on this account when He says: ‘He that believeth not,’ He does not add: ‘and is not baptized.’”^{vi} In this

way, Luther shows that faith is necessary to be with sacrament, because it is possible to be saved even without the sacrament. Therefore, Jesus did not add – he who does not believe and is not baptized. The child also receives the promise of the sacrament by faith. The words of Jesus are a testimony of this. In Matthew, Jesus set a small child as the example of a believer. In Luke, the question was of a small nursing child. Jesus stated that of such is the kingdom of God. No one should prevent the [little children] from coming to Jesus. This is spoke of in Luke 18:18-30.

The conservative Laestadian preacher and teacher, Heikki Jussila, has written in this way: “We ask, who was correct, the ones who brought the children [to Jesus] or the ones who tried to prevent them from coming? Since faith is not a human work, power or effect, which can be understood with human reason, or even helped by it [human reason], we give all glory to him [God], who it belongs to. It is His deed and strength, who has placed His power therein, that it works great deeds. Let us give thanks to God that he has ordained that we were brought at an early age to be blessed by Jesus, for there was not unbelief that would prevent it or reject it. As a child does not have unbelief that would oppose, they are worthy to receive baptism and its power and effect, which contains a promise: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”^{vii} (Heikki Jussila, Elaman Ihme, Yksi Kaste).

As Luther, Jussila bases the faith of a child on the example of John the Baptist. Jussila states that we have all been children of God as little children on the basis of Christ's work of redemption. God, through His promise, has created everything. John the Baptist received the Holy Spirit in his mother's womb. When Elizabeth, the mother of John, heard the greeting of Mary, the mother of Jesus, John jumped for joy in his mother's womb. Jussila writes. If the power and effect of the word and spirit reach into the womb, why not for those who have just been born as well. Dear ones, bring the children to Jesus by means of word of prayer and the blessing of baptism. A child believes, states Luther, even though it does not speak or have any carnal understanding. Luther states that the child hears the word of promise – a small nursing child hears the word of promise. The child does not hear with its reason or understanding. The child has spiritual hearing, according to Luther, which is even better than that of an adult. Luther makes this statement in his Church Postil sermon on the gospel for the third Sunday after Epiphany.^{viii}

In defense of the faith of a child, Luther refers to the following Scripture portions. Luther says: "There are Scripture passages that tell us that children may and can believe, though they do not speak or understand. Psalms 72 [106:37-38] describes how the Jews offered their son and daughters to idols, shedding innocent blood. If, as the text says, it was innocent blood, then the children have to be considered pure and holy – this they could not be without spirit and faith. Likewise, the innocent

children who Herod had murdered were not over two years of age. Admittedly they could not speak or understand. Yet they were holy and blessed. Christ himself says in Matt. 19:14, 'For it is such as these [children] that the kingdom of heaven belongs.' And St. John was a child in his mother's womb, but, as I believe, could have faith [See Luke 1:41]^{ix} [A Letter of Martin Luther to two pastors on rebaptism, 1528,

<https://books.google.com/books?id=tDIHDQAAQBAJ&pg=PA279&lpg=PA279&dq=luther+letter+to+two+pastors&source=bl&ots=skKu4VwaRx&sig=0rnD2hQNA-kks-sLmhmvCYmj4pE&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiUusiTIIXUAhWlyoMKHbtYDh8Q6AEIPTAH#v=onepage&q=luther%20letter%20to%20two%20pastors&f=false>

These pastors perhaps supported rebaptism. The promise of baptism is owned only by faith. The sacrament of baptism is not effective in and of itself -- Ex opere operato -- to free one from the devil and the power of sin. Faith needs to be present, which receives the promise of the word. As stated, a little child believes this promise, and it thus dressed in Christ. Because of the grace of God -- God's favor -- the child is worthy for faith [a believer] from conception and birth. Faith is God's grace gift to the child. God gives birth [of faith] through the word of promise. Paul writes: 'for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.' [Gal. 3:26, 27]

Jesus exhorts to seek the kingdom of God. According to the command of Christ, the Christian should seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Jesus gave this instruction to His disciples, so that the temporal matters would not become too important, and, in this way, would be an obstacle of faith. On the other hand, its purpose was to warn of the enemy of soul's work in the world and in every Christian. Even as a righteous person, the enemy of souls does his work in the corrupt flesh, in order to entice him away from this righteousness. For this reason, the Christian must continually seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The kingdom of God and its righteousness has come to the world in Christ. The starting point is this that God has shown His grace, or favor, toward fallen man. It is the gift of grace for a person. It is good to remember that the justified person no longer lives his own life. On the part of the new man, the person who is born of God is a member of God's kingdom and subject to God. He has died to sin. He also battles against sin. In this battle, he feels his two portions, and wants to be strengthened by the power of God's word. For this reason, he asks for strength of the gospel and from the sacrament of communion. The apostle Paul writes: 'But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.'

[Rom. 8:10-12] Luther writes: “that through the Word and the power of the Holy Ghost Thy kingdom may prevail among us, and the kingdom of the devil be put down, that he may have no right or power over us, until at last it shall be utterly destroyed, and sin, death, and hell shall be exterminated, that we may live forever in perfect righteousness and blessedness.”^x

Conclusion. As a conclusion, I have written some thesis statements.

1. Every person is born subject to sin and wrath, as a result of original sin. Every person commits sin, being in original sin, and merits wrath and eternal death because of their transgressions, just as Adam.
2. God in His righteousness has declared a sinner righteous, because of the grace of Christ. This grace has won over [conquered] the wrath and eternal death, which has come upon man, because of sin. This means that every person born in this world is a partaker of Christ grace of redemption and eternal life. By the grace of Christ, God does not impute the guilt of original sin to any person born in this world.
3. God justifies a person born in original sin by faith through the merits of Christ. Justifying faith is a gift and the grace of God. God gives birth [to faith] by the word of promise. Faith receives the promise of baptism. Then follows the endeavor in the righteousness of life. It is fellowship in God’s kingdom and partaking of the forgiveness of sins. It

is also a battle against sin and the devil with the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. No works of man have an effect on justification. Nothing can be added to it, before or after. Justification is a one-time happening (it happens all at once). Accounted as righteous and imputation of righteousness is one and the same thing.
5. This is the crown jewel. Salvation for a sin-fallen person unto eternal life is alone of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Discussion questions:

I have considered some discussion topics. Our topic this evening is a very doctrinal one in nature. There are many youth here this evening at the Kuopio Ry. The thought [of the board or service committee] has been, I'm sure, that it is good for the youth to also discuss doctrinal matters. The discussion of doctrinal matters is not just for the elders, but also for the youth. It would be important that the youth could, at their own place of watching in their own turn, pass these discussions on to the next generation. Thus, it is important to discuss the doctrine of Christ. We are gathered around the most central and important topic, when we are gathered around a topic as we have this evening – namely, justification. We are also discussing the theology of the sacraments and its place and importance according to the doctrine of Christianity.

Therefore, I have considered some questions [topics] that could be discussed, or they could be left out of consideration [if desired]. There is freedom in Christianity.

1. First, we could discuss original sin and its origin and effect. What is original sin?
2. We could discuss the baptism ceremony. What does it mean? I am thinking about when I am called to do a baptism. Sometimes the parent asks in jest if I could come and give a name to their child [the Finnish practice of announcing the name of the child at the baptism]. But I would say, remember that a baptism is not only a name-giving ceremony. It is much greater and more significant than that. As I said in the introduction, it is the most important and festive moment in the child's life, when it is baptized and is brought into the grace covenant with God.
3. What is the baptism ceremony, and what does it mean?
3. What is the grace of baptism? We could discuss this. I spoke much of this in the introduction.
4. What is new birth? I hardly touched on this in the introduction.
5. What is repentance? What does it mean, when it says that repentance is the returning to the grace of baptism?
6. We could talk about the righteousness of faith, the most important matter. What does it mean that we have righteousness of faith as a gift, by the merits of Christ?

I want to mention one interpretation of the significance of the righteousness of faith by one elder believer. An old grandmother was asked what righteousness of faith meant to her. I don't know, she replied. But when she travels as a believer and beholds herself, she finds herself to be a sinner, evil and defiled. There is not even found in hell a person who is more of a sinner and evil than her. But when she places her gaze upon Christ, by whose merits she has had her sins forgiven, she understands that there is no one even in heaven more holy than she is. This is the mystery of the righteousness of faith. A person is simultaneously a sinner, yet righteous. Simul Justus et peccator. Thank you.

ⁱ [Augsburg Confession: Article IV: Of Justification] <http://bookofconcord.org/augsburgconfession.php>

ⁱⁱ [Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther's Latin Works (1545)]
<https://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/luther/preflat-eng.txt>

ⁱⁱⁱ [The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, WA XXXII, 255 <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/solid-declaration-formula-concord/>]

^{iv} [V. 20. It continues,--when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. Thus does St. Peter bring us into the Scriptures, that we may study therein; and gives us an illustration out of them, from the ark of Noah, and interprets this same figure. For it is pleasant to have one bring forward illustrations from such figures, as St. Paul also does when he is speaking, Gal. iv., of the two sons of Abraham, and the two women; and Christ, in John v., of the serpent which Moses had erected in the wilderness. Such comparisons, when well drawn, are delightful; wherefore St. Peter introduces this here, that we may be able to comprehend faith under a pleasing image.

But he would also tell us, that as it happened when Noah was preparing the ark, so it takes place now. As he took refuge in the ark which swam upon the waters, so, it is to be observed, must you also be saved in baptism. Just as that water swallowed up all that was then living, of man and beast,--so baptism also swallows up all that is of the flesh

and corrupt nature, and makes spiritual men. But we rest in the ark, which means the Lord Christ, or the christian Church, or the Gospel that Christ preached, or the body of Christ, on which we rest by faith, and are saved as Noah in the ark. You also perceive how the image comprises in brief what belongs to faith and to the cross, to life and death. Where there are only those that follow Christ, there is surely a christian Church, where all that springs from Adam, and whatever is evil, is removed.

V. 21. The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth now save us; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God. But you are not kept and saved by merely washing away the filth of the flesh, that the body be clean, as was the practice of the Jews; such purification has no further value. But the answer of a good conscience toward God,—that is, that you feel your conscience to be rightfully at peace within you, that it stands in harmony with God, and can say, "He has promised to me that which He will fulfil, for He cannot lie." If you shall rely upon and cleave to His word, then shall you be preserved. Faith, alone, is the band whereby we shall be held; no outward work which you can do will suffice.

Through the resurrection of Christ Jesus. This St. Peter adjoins, in order to explain that faith which rests on the fact that Christ died, descended to hell, and has risen again from the dead. Had He continued subject to death, it would not have advantaged us; but since He has risen and sits at the right hand of God, and suffers this to be proclaimed to us so that we may believe on Him, we have a union with God, and a sure promise, whereby we shall be saved as Noah in the ark. Thus has St. Peter given to the ark a spiritual significance throughout, within which is not flesh and blood, but a good conscience toward God,—and that is faith." Luther commentary on 1 Peter 3:20-21]

<https://archive.org/details/theepistlesofstp29678gut>

^ 75. Peter turns this very story of the flood into a most beautiful allegory, saying that baptism is symbolized by the flood, and saves us. For, in it not only the filth of the flesh is washed away, but conscience makes good answer toward God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is enthroned at the right hand of God and has destroyed death in order to make us heirs of eternal life; who, moreover, is gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him, 1 Pet 3, 21-22. This is, indeed, a theological allegory, in accordance with faith, and full of solace. ... 82. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul says (1 Cor 10, 2) that the Israelites "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." If you regard only the outward circumstance and the words, even Pharaoh was baptized, but he perished with his men, while Israel passed through safe and unharmed. Noah and his sons were saved in this baptism of the flood, while all the rest of the world, being outside of the ark, perished thereby. Such a way of speaking is appropriate and forcible. "Baptism" and "death" are interchangeable in Scripture. Paul says (Rom 6, 3): "All we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death," and Jesus says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Lk

12, 50). And to his disciples he said, "Ye shall ... be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with" (Mt 20, 23).

83. In this sense the Red Sea was a baptism indeed. It represented to Pharaoh death and God's anger. Yet though Israel was baptized with the same baptism, they passed through it unharmed. So the flood is truly death and the wrath of God, and yet, the faithful are saved in the midst of the flood. Death engulfs and swallows all mankind; for, the wrath of God smites both the good and the bad, the pious and the wicked, without distinction. The flood was sent upon Noah the same as upon the rest of the world. The Red Sea that engulfed Pharaoh was the same as that through which Israel passed unharmed. But in both cases the believers are saved while the wicked perish. That is the point of difference. The ark was Noah's salvation, and it was but an expression of the promise and Word of God. In these he had life, but the wicked, who believed not the Word, were left to perish.

84. This is the difference which the Holy Spirit desired to bring out, so that the righteous, warned by this example, might believe and hope for salvation through the mercy of God in the very midst of death. They consider baptism as bound together with the promise of life, as Noah did the ark. Therefore, though the wise man and the fool must suffer the same death--for Peter and Paul die, not otherwise than Nero and other wicked persons die--yet the righteous believe that in death they will be saved unto eternal life. And this hope is not vain, for they have Christ, who receives their souls, and will, on the last day, raise up also the bodies of his believers unto eternal life.

85. This class of allegory is of great service, and tends to comfort the heart when you consider the contrast in the ultimate outcome. The testimony of the material eye would seem to confirm the statement of Solomon (Ec 2, 16) that the wise man dieth as the fool, that the righteous man dieth as though he were not the beloved of God. But the eyes of the soul must view this point of difference, that Israel enters into the Red Sea and is saved, while Pharaoh, pressing upon the heels of Israel, is overwhelmed by the waves and perishes. It is the same death, then, which takes away the righteous and the wicked, and almost always the end of the former is ignominious, while that of the latter is attended by elements of splendor and power; but in the eyes of God, while the death of sinners is deplorable, that of his saints is precious, for it is consecrated by Christ, through whom it becomes the beginning of eternal life.

86. As the flood and the Red Sea were instruments to save Noah and Israel from death, so to us, death is but the instrument to give us life, if we remain in faith. When the children of Israel were in utmost peril, suddenly the sea parted and rose on the right side and on the left, like an iron wall, so that Israel passed through without danger. Why was it? In order that so death might be made to serve life. Divine power overcomes the assaults of Satan. Thus it was in Paradise. Satan purposed to slay all mankind by his venom. But what happens? By reason of the truly happy guilt of our first parents, as the Church sings, it comes to pass that the Son of God became

incarnate to free us from evil.

87. This allegory, then, beautifully teaches, strengthens and consoles us, enabling us to fear neither death nor sin, but to despise all perils, giving thanks to God that he has so called and dealt with us that even death, the universal destroyer, is compelled to be a servant of life, just as the flood, an occasion of destruction to the rest of the world, was one of salvation for Noah; and the Red Sea, when Pharaoh met his doom, served to save the children of Israel.

88. What has been here expressed, finds application to the subject of temptation in general, so that we learn to despise dangers and be hopeful even where no hope seems to remain. When death or any other danger is imminent, we should rise to meet it, saying: Behold, here is my Red Sea; here is my flood, my baptism and my death. Here my life--as the philosopher said of the sea-farers--is removed from death barely by a hand's breadth. But fear not; this danger is as a handful of water opposed to the flood of grace which is mine through the Word. Therefore death will not destroy me, but will lift me and bear me to life. Death is so utterly incapable of destroying the Christian, that it constitutes the very escape from death. For bodily death ushers in the emancipation of the spirit and the resurrection of the flesh. Thus, Noah in the flood was not borne by the earth, nor by trees, nor by mountains, but by the very flood which destroyed the total remainder of the human race.

89. Well may the prophets often extol those wonderful works of God--the passage through the Red Sea, the exodus from Egypt, and the like. For the sea, which by its nature can only devour and destroy, is forced to part and rise and protect the Israelites, lest they be overwhelmed by its tides. That which in its very nature is wrath, becomes grace to the believer; that which in reality is death, becomes life. Therefore, whatever calamity comes--and this life has it in infinite measure--to threaten our property and our lives, it will all become salvation and joy if we only are in the ark; that is, if by faith we lay hold of the promise made in Christ. Then even death, by which we are removed, must be turned into life, and the hell, which swallows us, into a way to heaven.

90. Therefore Peter says (1 Pet 3, 21) that we are saved by the water in baptism, which was prefigured by the flood. The water which streams about us, or the plunge into it, is death, and yet from this death or plunge, life results by virtue of the ark of safety--the Word of promise to which we cling. The inspired Scriptures set forth this allegory, which is not only free from weaknesses but of service in every way, and worthy of our careful attention, since it offers wonderful consolation even in the utmost perils. (Luther's Genesis Commentary, Lenker, chapter six) <https://archive.org/details/commentaryongene27978gut>

^{vi} [http://pdf.amazingdiscoveries.org/eBooks/BABYLONIAN_CAPTIVITY_OF_THE_CHURCH.pdf]

^{vii} (Heikki Jussila, Elaman Ihme, Yksi Kaste).

^{viii} 36. But let us examine their reason why they do not think children believe.

They say, because they have not attained to reason they cannot hear God's Word; but where God's Word is not heard there can be no faith. Romans 10:17: "Belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." Tell me is this Christian to judge of God's works by our thinking, and say, Children have not attained to reason, therefore they cannot believe? How if through this very reason you have already departed from faith, and the children come to faith through their unreason? Dear friend, what good does reason do for faith and the Word of God? Is it not reason which resists in the highest degree faith and the Word of God, so that nobody can come to faith by means of reason? Reason will not endure God's Word unless it is first blinded and disgraced. Man must first die to reason and become, as it were, a fool, and even as unreasonable and unintelligent as a little child, if he is to become a believer and receive the grace of God; as Christ says in Matthew 18:3: "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." How often does Christ hold before us that we must become children and fools, and condemn reason?

37. Tell me also, what kind of reason had the little children whom Christ embraced and blessed, and upon whom he bestowed the kingdom of heaven? Were they not still without reason? Why does he command to bring them to him and then bless them? Where did they get the faith which makes them children of the kingdom of heaven? Nay, just because they are without reason and foolish, they are better prepared to believe than adults and those possessed of reason, because reason is always in the way and with its large head is not willing to push through the narrow door. One must not look upon reason or its works when faith and God's work are under consideration. Here God alone works and reason is dead, blind and, compared to this work, an unreasonable block, in order that the Scripture may stand, which says: "God is wonderful in his saints;" and: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways," Isaiah 55:9.

38. But since they stick so fast in reason, we must assail them with their own wisdom. Tell me, why do you baptize a man when he has come to the age of reason? You answer: He hears God's Word and believes. I ask:

How do you know that? You answer: He professes it with his mouth.

What shall I say? How, if he lies and deceives? You cannot see his heart.

Very well, then you baptize for no other reason than for what the man shows himself to be externally, and you are uncertain of his faith, and must believe that if he has not more within in his heart than you perceive without, neither his hearing, nor his profession, nor his faith will help him; for it may all be a delusion and no true faith. Who then are you, that you say external hearing and profession are necessary to baptism; where these are wanting one must not baptize? You yourself must confess that such hearing and profession are uncertain, and not enough for one to receive baptism. Now upon what do you baptize? How will you justify your actions when you thus bungle baptism and bring it into doubt? Is it not the fact that you must come and say that it is not becoming for you to know or do more than that he whom you are to baptize be brought to you and ask baptism from you; and you must believe or commit the matter to God, whether he inwardly truly believes or not? In this way you are excused and baptize aright. Why then will you not do the same for the children, whom Christ commands to be brought to him and promises to bless? But you wish first to have the outward hearing and profession, which you yourself acknowledge is uncertain and not sufficient for baptism on the part of the one to be baptized. And you let go the sure word of Christ: in which he bids the little children to be brought unto him, on account of your uncertain external hearing.

39. Moreover tell me, where is the reason of a Christian while he is asleep, since his faith and the grace of God never leave him? If faith can thus continue without the aid of reason, so that the latter is not conscious of it, why should it not also begin in children before reason knows anything about it? In the same way I would like to say of every hour in which a Christian lives and is busy and occupied, that he is not conscious of his faith and reason, and yet his faith does not on that account cease. God's works are mysterious and wonderful, where and when he wills: and again manifest enough, where and when he wills. Judgment upon them is too high and too deep for us.

40. Since it is commanded here, not to forbid little children to come unto him in order to receive his blessing, and it is not demanded of us to know the exact state of faith within, and the external hearing and profession are not

sufficient for the one baptized, we are to be content that it is enough for us, the baptizers, to hear the profession of the one to be baptized, who comes to us of himself. And this for the reason that we may not administer the sacrament against our conscience, as giving it to those in whom no fruit is to be hoped for. But if they assure our conscience of their desire and profession, so that we can administer it as a sacrament that imparts grace, we are excused. If his faith is not true, let that rest with God; we have not given the sacrament as a useless thing, but with the consciousness that it is beneficial.

41. All this I say in order that one may not baptize recklessly, as they do who even administer it with the deliberate knowledge that it will be of no effect or benefit to the person receiving it. For therein the baptizers sin. because they knowingly use God's sacrament and Word in vain, or at least have the consciousness that it is neither intended nor able to effect anything; which is an altogether unworthy use of the sacrament and a temptation and blasphemy of God. For that is not administering the sacrament, but making a mockery of it. But if the person baptized denies and does not believe, you have done right anyhow, and have administered the true sacrament with the good consciousness that it ought to be beneficial.

42. However, those who do not come of themselves, but are brought, as Christ bids us to bring little children, the faith of these commit to him who bids them to be brought, and baptize them by his command, and say: Lord, thou dost bring them and command to baptize them. Thou wilt answer for them. On this I rely. I dare not drive them away nor forbid them. If they have not heard the Word, by which faith comes, as adults; hear it, they nevertheless hear it like little children. Adults take it up with their ears and reason, often without faith; but they hear it with their ears, without reason and with faith. And faith is nearer in proportion as reason is less, and he is stronger who brings them than the will of adults who come of themselves.

http://www.godrules.net/library/luther/129luther_b5.htm

^{ix} A Letter of Martin Luther to two pastors on rebaptism, 1528, <https://books.google.com/books?id=tDIHDQAAQBAJ&pg=PA279&lpq=PA279&dq=luther+letter+to+two+pastors&source=bl&ots=skKu4VwaRx&sig=0rnD2hQNA-kks-sLmhmvCYmj4pE&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewiUusiTIIXUAhWlvoMKHbtYDh8Q6AEIPTAH#v=onepage&q=luther%20letter%20to%20two%20pastors&f=false>

^x Luther's Large Catechism, Lord's Prayer, Thy Kingdom Come, <http://bookofconcord.org/lc-5-ourfather.php> (not sure it this is the exact quote. It is similar, however)