

LIFE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST



MEDITATIONS ON LIVING WITH CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH

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“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Acts 2:42)

DEDICATION

To the glory of God and in grateful memory of Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) Doctor of Theology, pastor, and teacher of the Church whose *Sacred Meditations*—rich in Scripture, reverent in tone, and profound in Christ—inspired the devotions in this volume. May his witness continue to guide the hearts of Christ’s faithful toward humble repentance, firm faith, and joyful life in the Church.

Soli Deo Gloria

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INTRODUCTION

The Christian life is a life lived in Christ, through the Church, and under the cross. It is not a path of personal achievement or isolated spirituality, but one of daily grace—given, received, and shared. In Holy Baptism, God gathers His people into His family; in the Lord’s Supper, they are fed with the body and blood of Christ; and through His Word, He sustains them unto life everlasting. All of this is His doing. And in response, the Christian lives in faith toward God and fervent love toward neighbour.

This devotional series—*Life in the Body of Christ*—was born from prayerful meditation on the gifts of the Church, the life of the believer, and the theology of the cross. It is deeply inspired by the *Sacred Meditations* of Johann Gerhard, one of the great fathers of Lutheran orthodoxy, whose writings continue to stir the heart, enlighten the mind, and comfort the conscience.

Each devotion in this volume explores one aspect of life in the Church, from the Lord’s Supper to daily vocation, from prayer to discipleship, from the mystery of the Divine Service to the gift of the pastoral office. These meditations are not intended as academic essays or emotional reflections, but as pastoral encouragements for real people living real lives anchored in Word and Sacrament, clothed in Christ, and called to walk in Him.

In Christ our Life,

Rev. M.L. Smith

BAPTISM:

A Sacred Washing

“He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.” (Titus 3:5)

Your baptism is not merely a memory: it is your identity. The water poured over you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit was no empty gesture. It was God’s gracious act, a divine washing in which your old self was buried and your new life in Christ began.

Holy Baptism is not just a ritual. It is a means of grace—a sacred act through which God delivers His saving gifts and promises: forgiveness of sins, salvation from death and the devil, and eternal life to all who believe. At the font, your sinful flesh was drowned and you were raised with Christ. His death became your death. His resurrection became your new life.

A New Creation in Christ

Baptism is not your work—it is God’s. It is not simply your declaration of faith, but God’s declaration that you belong to Him. Through water and the Word, He adopted you as His child, sealed you with His name, and clothed you in the righteousness of Christ (Galatians 3:27). You are no longer your own; you have been washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:11).

This washing is once for all, but its power endures. The grace of Baptism is not locked in the past; it flows into every day of your life. When you fall into sin, your baptism calls you to repentance. When you are burdened with guilt, your baptism declares: “You have been made clean.” When you are tempted to doubt your salvation, your baptism cries out: “You are a child of God.”

United with Christ Forever

What took place at the font was a death and a resurrection. You were joined to Christ. Not metaphorically, but truly.

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?” (Romans 6:3).

And if you have died with Him, you will also live with Him. No enemy—not even death—can separate you from the One into whom you have been baptized.

And so, your baptism becomes your daily comfort. You can rise each morning and say, “I am baptized into Christ.” No accusation from the devil, no shame from the past, no fear of the future can undo what God has done. You are His. Signed with His name. Buried with Christ, raised with Christ, and destined to live with Christ forever.

A Life of Daily Dying and Rising

Baptism is not a finish line, it is a beginning. The baptized life is a life of ongoing repentance, each day drowning the old Adam with all his sins and evil desires and rising again by God’s grace to walk in newness of life. It is a life of bearing the cross, clinging to God’s promises, and trusting the One who began a good work in you.

You may not remember your baptism, but Christ does. He has not forgotten the name He placed upon you, nor the promise He made to you. And He who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light will never let you go.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank You that through water and the Word You have made me Your child. Keep me in the grace of my baptism. Drown my sins each day and raise me up to live in Christ. Strengthen me by Your Holy Spirit, that I may walk in faith, serve in love, and cling to the promise that I am Yours forever. Amen.

“I have called you by name, you are Mine.” (Isaiah 43:1)