Opening Prayer: Dear Jesus, we thank You for being our peace and our Great Shepherd who cares for His sheep. Thank You for Your great gift -- Your blood shed on the cross so that we have eternal life. We know You alone equip us with everything that is good so we can serve You and others. Amen

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen (Hebrews 13:20-21).

We are baptized in Christ.

Jesus is our great Shepherd, and, through Holy Baptism, we are His sheep. As His sheep, we are to serve Him and His people. As a shepherd guides and nurtures the sheep, our Lord Jesus guides and equips us for service in His kingdom. In this study, we are reminded of who we are: God’s baptized, equipped, and serving children.

What work has God done for us through our baptism?

Isaiah 43:1 But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

Our Heavenly Father has created, formed, redeemed, and called us by our name. We are His through our baptism.

1 Peter 3:21 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.

Baptism saves us through Christ’s resurrection.

Colossians 2:12 Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

We are buried with Jesus in Baptism and also raised with Him through faith in the powerful working of God.

Romans 6:4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

We are now able to walk a new life.

We are equipped by Christ.

We have been baptized into Christ and have put on Christ. It is Jesus who is working in us. Now we can do the good works He has prepared for us to do ahead of time.

What does the word equip mean to you? The word equip means to “supply with the necessary items for a particular purpose”.

How is God equipping you for His service?

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

God has created, according to this verse, two things. First, us! God has created us and equipped us to do good things. He has also prepared or created opportunities for us to serve Him and His people. Through these works, we are able to show God’s glory.
2 Timothy 3:16-17  
*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

God gives us His Word so we are taught (know what He needs us to know), for reproof (know what we are not supposed to do), for correction (know the good we are to do), and training in righteousness (know how to live as God’s redeemed children).

**We serve others for Christ.**

Now that God has equipped us for His service what are we to do?

**Colossians 3:12-17**  
*Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

As God’s chosen, holy, and beloved ones; our opportunities to act are many. The directions from Colossians 3:12-17 are in *bold print*. What a list of ways we can act as God’s children!

**Ephesians 4:1-3**  
*I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

We have been given direction how we are to live as God’s children and how we are to treat our brothers and sisters in Christ.

In response to God and His Word what task has He given us to do?

**Mark 16:15**  
*And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”*

We, as the Body of Christ, are to spread His Word around the world.

**John 15:4**  
*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.*

We stay with God, by not rejecting God’s gift of grace. Then we can do good for our neighbors — for His glory. This fruit can only be God’s work when we follow God’s guidance.

**Matthew 11:29**  
*Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

We take on God’s work. He teaches us, through His Word, what needs to be done for His people. Our gentle, loving God will give us comfort. This comfort comes in our salvation through grace only He can give. We learn of this grace and forgiveness through Word and Sacrament.

**For further reading:**

**Luke 9:23**  
*And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*
We are to put God’s commands, not our own wants, first in our lives. Even in the trials of life, we can follow our Lord, by hearing and heeding His Word.

**John 13:34-35** *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Christ has left us, in Scripture, His model of love and how we are to love those around us. When we show God’s love in our words and actions, others will notice and know that we are the children of God.

**Ephesians 5:1-2** *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

Christian means to be a “little Christ”. That is what we do when we act like Jesus. We can act as “Jesus with skin on” to those around us. As we do this, we give an offering to the Lord with our words and actions.

We have been redeemed by Jesus! We are so special to God that He has adopted us as His sons and daughters. Jesus lives in us and through us to do His work, whether it be for our Lutheran Women’s Missionary League, at your church, or to those you meet on the street. Jesus has equipped you to serve wherever and whenever He has need of you. As His children, may you continue to work for His Kingdom.

**Closing Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank You for Your gift of Baptism that makes us Your treasured sons and daughters. Thank You for living in us through Your Word and Sacraments. Continue to equip us for every good work. We pray all these things in Your name and for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.