

Baptism and Transmission

In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory. -Ephesians 1:13-14

For over a year now, we have been so focused on one meaning of “transmission” that we may have forgotten that it is part of a big family of meaningful words that includes remission and permission, and verbs like emit and demit. With all the measures we have taken to slow down transmission of the SARS-CoV-19 virus, we have also lost sight of the positive meaning of transmission: because electromagnetic energy can be transmitted so easily between a source and a receiver, we have been able to stay connected for worship, bible study, prayer groups, confirmation classes, and visits through the internet and cell phones! As Saskatchewan moves toward permitting social bubbles of 10 and worship gatherings of 1/3rd capacity, we are re-examining our pandemic policies and practices at Zion to ensure we minimize the risk of virus transmission if we gather to celebrate Easter. As well, we are planning to continue transmitting the Sunday services by live streaming on YouTube and posting to our website. We remember that we are part of God's big family of faith through the Word of the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Our key note Scripture passage printed above is full of “transmission” words: the word of truth is transmitted from a speaker to a hearer, belief is transmitted from a person who believes what they are saying to a person who believes what is said; the Holy Spirit is promised and the promise is accepted; the pledge of our inheritance transmits confidence in redemption; praise transmits God's glory to God's people, and God's people transmit glory to God by their praise. The meaning of baptism is powerfully expressed in these verses: so many blessings are transmitted to us through baptism! These two verses are part of the larger section Ephesians 1:3-14, which begins by using the word “blessing” three times: “Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.” God uses baptism to transmit amazing blessings into our lives!

That means baptism is like the transmission in a car, or the gear exchangers on a bike: it helps exchange energy from power into motion. I think baptism is like a transmission in our lives. God transmits the blameless and holy image of Christ into us and onto our lives through Baptism, and through the very same baptism the power of the Holy Spirit is transmitted into our daily life. Baptism is the means through which God's power of forgiveness through Jesus Christ becomes active in our decisions, our life-choices; daily confession and forgiveness is like the mechanism of a transmission in a big semi: all the power of that huge engine is transmitted into that tiny first gear to get that huge weight in that truck moving, and then a skilled driver slowly moves up through all those gears one at a time until the truck is moving along the highway with ease and a big smile on the driver's face! Through Baptism the Holy Spirit delivers the power of the cross of Christ in exactly the right amount to both the infant and the senior citizen and every age between. No matter what is happening in our lives, we can say: “Thank you God for baptism!”

Let us pray with St. Paul (Ephesians 1:17ff): God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of glory, give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation as we come to know you. Enlighten our hearts that we may know the hope to which you have called us, the riches of our glorious inheritance among the saints, and the immeasurable power working in us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen