

It Is Finished! 8. A Cleansing Fountain

Zechariah 13:1-3

April 2, 2026 (Maun. Thurs.)

St. Paul's Lutheran, North Freedom

“On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

“On that day, I will banish the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more,” declares the LORD Almighty. “I will remove both the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land. And if anyone still prophesies, their father and mother, to whom they were born, will say to them, ‘You must die, because you have told lies in the LORD’s name.’ Then their own parents will stab the one who prophesies.” (Zech. 13:1-3, NIV)

In the name of Jesus, the Savior of the world, dear friends:

“Did you wash your hands?” Parents have to remind their children to scrub up after playing outside and to get their hands clean before eating dinner. Signs in a store’s restroom remind employees as well as customers to wash their hands before exiting. Hygienists stress the importance of clean hands to protect our health and others.

God tells us something similar in Psalm 24: “Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one has clean hands and a pure heart” (Ps. 24:3,4a). God is not so much concerned with scrubbing off dirt as he is getting us clean and pure from dirty deeds, filthy words and unclean thoughts and desires. Even when we try hard to get clean with good deeds, God still sees our sin, as Isaiah observed: “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6).

But today’s prophecy in Zechariah tells us that God provides a fountain where we can be cleansed. Let’s take a closer look at this **Cleansing Fountain**.

To get cleansed of sin, we need to look outside ourselves. Perhaps, outwardly, we can look clean when we don’t commit any obvious sinful acts and we stay on the straight and narrow. But God looks at the heart. This is what Jesus called the hypocritical Pharisees, who appeared very righteous: You are “whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean” (Matt. 23:27).

So what are we to do? There is nothing we can do except look at what the Lord Jesus did for us already. “On that day a fountain will be opened,” the Lord says. What day is that? A few verses before our text, the prophet recorded the words of the Messiah: A day of “weeping in Jerusalem” when they look at him, “the one they have pierced.” It is referring to the time of Christ’s passion, his suffering and crucifixion. “That day” includes Holy Thursday, when the Lord gathered with his disciples in the upper room to celebrate the Passover. Jesus, in the role of a servant, washed his disciples’ feet and informed Peter, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me” (John 13:8). Jesus is the cleansing fountain to cleanse us of sin. Our filthy robes of sin have been made “white in the blood of the Lamb,” as described in Revelation 7:14.

On this Holy Thursday, communicants will receive the cleansing fountain that is Christ our Lord. Jesus tells us what this bread is: “This is my body.” And he tells us what this cup of wine is: “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” The

very body and blood of Christ, given and poured out on the cross, is present here in this sacrament. Christ's own body and blood is the fountain for us to receive that cleansing for dirty souls.

Soaps like to advertise how pure they are. Ivory soap advertises itself as 99.44% pure. A typical hand sanitizer claims to kill 99.9% of germs. But that's not a 100% guarantee, is it? The fountain of Jesus, however, does cleanse us of 100% of all sin. He removes the big sins and the tiny sins, the sins we know we've done, and the sins we're not aware of. When you come to receive Holy Communion, be assured that Satan, the spirit of uncleanness, has lost his grip on you. You will get to sit at Christ's table with clean hands and a permanently pure heart.

Communion assures us that we are cleansed of sin. When we leave church tonight, let's also let that cleansing fountain enable us to a life of cleansing sin.

After getting cleansed in Christ's fountain, how could we think, "That was nice! Now I'm going to back to my sinful ways because I'm forgiven!" That would be like a little child who's all washed and clean and runs back outside to play in the mud. Our Lord wants us to stay clean. So the Lord continued to speak in Zechariah: "On that day, I will banish the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more." Judah and Jerusalem were to get rid of the heathen idols that they were still bowing down to: Stay clean, worship the Lord God alone!

The Lord has also banished the names of modern-day idols from our lives—idols with the names "Money, Sports, Family, Friends, Nation, Hobbies, Self", and the like. We need to keep vigilant, examine our thoughts and desires and ask ourselves, "Am I trusting in God or in my bank account? Do I love God most, or are other things and interests taking first place in my heart?" Keep cleansing yourself from these idols and put God first in your life!

The Lord also promises to "remove both the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land." The Lord is referring to false prophets, those who claim to be speaking God's Word but are actually promoting false teachings. They are using God's name as a cover for their lies, one of the sins against the second commandment, "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God." False teachings are snares that can lead us to fall away from faith. Do not fall for their lies!

The Lord adds, "And if anyone still prophesies, their father and mother, to whom they were born, will say to them, 'You must die, because you have told lies in the LORD's name.' Then their own parents will stab the one who prophesies." Rest assured, parents, God isn't asking you to stab your child if they become a teacher or preacher in a false church spreading false teaching. But the point the Lord makes here is clear: God is to come ahead of family, and we need to warn anyone, including our closest family member, of the false teaching that kills the soul.

Threats to our faith are everywhere—Satan's temptations, the world's false teachings, our own sinful nature still inside us. That's why we need to keep coming back to the cleansing fountain of Christ. Stick with the Word of God taught in its truth and purity. And receive Holy Communion often for the strength the Holy Spirit provides, and the assurance of Christ's cleansing power.

Two hundred and fifty years ago, William Cowper composed a hymn about this cleansing fountain named Jesus. It serves as a lasting reminder to us all: "There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains: lose all their guilty stains" (CW 401:1). Amen.