

students the distinction between Law and Gospel, one of the ways it helps to think about the distinction is asking who is driving the verbs. If you or I are the doing the acting, it's usually a Law statement. Think of things like, "I honor my parents" or "You will not murder anybody" or "We still not steal from our neighbor." But Gospel is God doing the acting: God qualifies, God delivers, God transfers. These are things God does for us for Jesus' sake out of His love, grace, and mercy alone!

The way God delivers us from the domain of darkness is seen most visibly in Baptism. There the Old Adam is drowned and dies, and there at the font a new man arises to live before God in righteousness and purity forever. Jesus delivered us from sin, death, and the Devil with His death on the cross, and He gives us the assurance of that deliverance through Baptism! As Paul writes in **Romans 6:4**, "**We were buried with Him through Baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.**"

And yet it is not enough just to be delivered. Being removed from the kingdom of darkness does us no good unless we are also brought into the kingdom of the Son. The word "transfer" in English is derived from two words meaning to bear across; or to bear a change. *Trans* means "change" or "across" and *-fer* comes from a verb meaning to bear. Think of when someone changes jobs or starts a new career. When someone transfers from one job to another, or even from one church to another, a lot of change happens. It can be stressful and tiring. It can be quite a burden. When *we* do the transferring, the transition going smoothly is dependent on our ability to adapt. But you see, in the spiritual sense, when it comes to "transferring", God again does all the work. He transfers us; he bears the burden of bringing us from the kingdom of evil to the kingdom of grace. He did that work on the cross, and He continues to pour out the benefits of that work through the Means of grace. No wonder why Paul starts these two verses imploring us to give thanks to God!

Now the word *transfer* is a Latin-based word. In Greek, the word picture is slightly different but equally as beautiful. If the word transfer connotes someone bearing something from one place to another, the word in Greek means to literally "change where one stands". And that's, again, exactly what God does for us through Jesus. At the Font today, we will see/saw this most clearly with Christopher Edward's Baptism. The Rite of Holy Baptism has these words in the beginning, "The Word of God also teaches that we are all conceived and born sinful and are under the power of the devil until Christ claims us as His own. We would be lost forever unless *delivered* from sin, death, and everlasting condemnation. But the Father of all mercy and grace has sent His Son Jesus Christ, who atoned for the sin of the whole world, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

God delivers and transfers – He changes where we stand – because Christ died, made atonement, and redeemed. This is why Paul concludes after stating that God has transferred us to the kingdom of the beloved Son, "**in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins**" (**Col 1:14**). Redemption is the forgiveness of sins. To redeem is to buy back. The payment for transferring us from the kingdom of the devil to the kingdom of the Son was the holy, precious blood of Christ! You have been bought. You have been purchased. You have been delivered and transferred. You are "**a people for His own possession**" (**1 Pet 2:9**). You will receive "**the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints**" (**Eph 1:18**). By God's grace you have been saved. Like the daughter raised from the dead (**Mt 9:25**) and the woman healed of her hemorrhaging (**Mt 9:22**) in the Gospel reading, so also Christ will raise you from the dead, and give unto you total healing of body and soul in life everlasting. He qualifies the called. He has call you by the Gospel, enlightened you with His gifts, sanctifies and keeps you in the true faith. He has qualified you. So "**let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith**" (**Heb 12:1b-2a**). In Jesus' name, Amen.