

Baptism & The Lord's Supper

We've been looking forward to this service for some time . . .

And it's a bit different than normal, as we're going to celebrate baptisms and observe

The Lord's Supper in the same service

Which is significant b/c of what they mean and how they relate

So I want to take a few minutes to *explain* that, before we witness/participate in them

So on that note, why don't you turn with me to Titus 3:4-7

It's one of the many Scriptures to which I'm going to refer . . .

And I'll meet you there in a few minutes

But first, let me start by saying that we celebrate baptism in the first place, b/c it's an ordinance . . .

1. Baptism is an ordinance

Which is simply a church word that means, "a practice symbolic of the gospel, that was instituted by Christ, taught by the apostles, and observed by the church"

Which is exactly what we see happening in Scripture with baptism

Jesus said go and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and HS

And the early church followed through as a result of the Apostle Peter's preaching

Like in **Acts 2:41** where it says – *those who received his word* [his teaching] *were baptized*

It was instituted by Jesus, taught by the apostles, and practiced by the church *****

Which makes baptism an ordinance – something we continue to celebrate, and something very important to our Christian walk

• And so is The Lord's Supper – it too is an ordinance

Jesus said in **Luke 22:19b** – Do this in remembrance of me.

And the Apostle Paul affirmed it in 1 Cor 11, by instructing us in how to do it well

And while the church in Corinth did it poorly, at least they did it

They were practicing the very thing Jesus instituted and Paul taught *****

Which makes The Lord's Supper, in addition to baptism, an ordinance

And those are the *only* two ordinances found in the Bible

Washing feet is not an ordinance, b/c though it's mentioned in the Bible, there's no evidence that the apostles taught it as a practice for the church . . .

Or that the church observed it in its gatherings

And the same is true of a *holy kiss*

Baptism and The Lord's Supper are the only two ordinances we find in Scripture

The only 2 practices symbolic of the gospel – that were instituted by Jesus, taught by the apostles, and observed in the church as a whole

Which is why we continue to observe them today

• But it's important to understand that they're not sacraments

Don't confuse ordinances with sacraments, b/c the idea of sacraments is not biblical

A sacrament is a rite or ritual in some religious circles, that supposedly conveys God's grace by *doing* it, by participating in the act

Like baptism and communion; or penance, or mass, or confirmation, or last rites

Some would say that those things justify us for salvation, or sanctify us for holiness, just by the very act of participating in them

Which is totally contrary to the Bible; Look at **Titus 3:4-7**

Paul says in the previous verses that we used to lead sinful lives . . .

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness [i.e. not b/c of things like sacraments], *but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration* [rebirth, revival] *and renewal of the Holy Spirit* [not the washing of water, but the washing of the HS] *6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified* [declared righteous] *by his grace* [not our works, but his sovereign, unmerited favor] *we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life* [that we might receive all the blessings and benefits that go hand in hand with being God's children, including eternal life].

Sacraments are contrary to the Bible b/c we're not justified or saved by works . . .

And, there *are* no shortcuts to sanctification

No hit and run check-offs that serve as convenient substitutes, for making *every effort* as the Bible says, to grow in godliness and Christ-likeness (2 Pet 1:5-7) *****

So sacraments, by definition, are not biblical – they don't save, and they don't sanctify

Which is why we use the word ordinance

B/c it conveys the importance of participating in baptism and The Lord's Supper, but stops short of implying that by doing so, we are somehow infused with grace

Second . . .

Both are symbols

Both are ordinances, and both are symbols

Symbols of the New Covenant, the gospel – the promise of salvation that God offers us in Christ Jesus

Characterized by the forgiveness of sins, life to the full, life forever, and his presence within us

That's the New Covenant – that God will save us, if we receive him

And while baptism is symbolic of our *entrance* into that covenant . . .

The Lord's Supper symbolizes the *means* by which it happened

You see, baptism is an outward symbol of the inward transformation that took place when God saved you – he washed your sins away and raised you to new life

The Lord's Supper on the other hand, is an outward symbol of the *means* by which that inward transformation took place

Namely, the broken body and shed blood of Jesus on the cross, in your place, for *your* sins – that's the means by which you are saved, which the Lord's Supper symbolizes

While baptism symbolizes your salvation itself

Which means that . . .

And both are for believers

Both are symbols, and both are for believers

If baptism is a symbol of our forgiveness of sins and new life in Christ, then it's meaningful *only* for believers

Only for people who have received those things
Otherwise, by participating you'd be saying something outwardly that's not true
inwardly
So it's no surprise that the pattern in Scripture is belief, and *then* baptism
It's only for believers

- And it's for *all* believers
In fact, baptism is so closely associated with salvation in the Bible, that under normal circumstances an "un-baptized believer" is a contradiction of terms
It's not a requirement *for* salvation – that would make it a *work done by us in righteousness* (Titus 3:5)
But it's unthinkable for a follower of Jesus Christ to remain un-baptized, b/c it's the primary means in the Bible of publicly proclaiming your personal salvation
It's *only* for believers, and it's for *all* believers
- And the same is true of The Lord's Supper
When we eat the bread and drink the cup, we not only remember Christ's death on our behalf *personally*, but we *proclaim* it corporately
We proclaim the Lord's death until he comes the Bible says (1 Cor 11:26)
We tell the old, old story of the old rugged cross by our actions, every time we partake
It's a living drama, acted out together, corporately – showing that Jesus died for the sins of the world; including our own

Which is why, just like baptism, it's for *all* believers, and *only* believers
Otherwise, you'd be proclaiming something that's not true of yourself, and that you don't even believe *****

So with all that in mind, we have the privilege of witnessing 20 baptisms this weekend, and rejoicing in God's work of grace in their lives
And as you do, let me encourage you to remember your own baptism, or reflect on your need to be baptized . . .
And then prepare your heart to participate in the Lord's Supper