

Our Bible reading for today – **1 Corinthians 11:17-34**

“Purest Worship”

I love the Ordinances – Baptism and Communion. We regularly do them both at our church, GracePointe. What a privilege! What a joy!

Baptism and The Lord’s Supper have a lot in common.

- Both were set up and commanded by Jesus Himself.
- Both were given as things to be done exclusively by true believers. (Baptism is an initiatory rite to identify with Christ and as a witness of faith in Him. The Lord’s Supper is to be celebrated by believers in the context of worship and Christian fellowship.)
- Jesus set both of them up for the church in the context of common practices among the Jewish religion and culture. (The Jews were practicing baptism of converts to Judaism. Faithful Jews were also immersing themselves as a ritual act of cleansing before worship at the Temple. John the Baptist used a baptism of repentance as a preparation of lives and hearts for the coming of their Messiah. Also, Jesus was observing the Passover, or Seder, with His disciples when He took two of the elements of that ritual to give them fresh meaning regarding Himself.)
- Both are symbolic of Christ’s sufferings for us. (Baptism by immersion pictures His death, burial and resurrection. In Communion the two elements symbolize Jesus sacrificial bodily suffering and His blood which was shed for the forgiveness of sin.)
- Both have very specific reference to sin and forgiveness of sin.

More could be said, but let me comment on that last point about sin. As to baptism, when we accept Christ, all our sins are “*under the blood*”. Baptism pictures what Jesus did I taking our penalty, and adds the additional picture of cleansing from sin.

Our text speaks of the idea of taking Communion “*unworthily*”, and says that we should “*examine*” ourselves before receiving it. If you glance back a few verses (verses 11-16) you’ll find Paul criticizing the Corinthians for being divisive, selfish, indulgent, and irreverent as they celebrated Communion – all sins!

It is always good as we take a moment to pray and prepare our hearts for the Lord’s Supper, and allow the Holy Spirit time to bring to our minds some unconfessed sin(s). We confess it (or them), and then receive the elements in remembrance of our Savior, claiming His abundant grace. Praise God!!!

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (^{NIV} 1 John 1:8-9)

Whenever you have the privilege of observing baptism or The Lord’s Supper, we worship in the purity of eternally and freshly forgiven sin.