

Baptism and the Lord's Supper

1 Corinthians 10:1-4

Now that we've gotten through our study in the book Revelation, many of you have asked, where are we headed next? After such an intense book of the Bible, Pastor Dave and I felt like it would be a good idea to let the dust settle a little, and spend some weeks sharing from our hearts, and that will include some passages from Psalms, and I'll think we'll dip our toes briefly in the wisdom from the book of Proverbs as well, and from there we're considering a walk through the book of Genesis. I particularly am excited to journey through that book and take good notice of all the things even from the beginning, that point to Jesus. In Luke chapter 24, we have recorded Jesus, after His resurrection, walking with the two men on the road to Emmaus, and the passage tells us that Jesus was teaching them, from Moses and from all the prophets about all the things referring to Him. Moses wrote Genesis and the next next four books as well of the Old Testament- Moses wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy- these 5 books are referred to as the Torah (Hebrew) or the Pentateuch (Greek word meaning the same thing). That would be amazing to have recorded Jesus' conversation with these 2 guys, pointing out all the places in the Old Testament that were pointing to Him- unfortunately we don't have that, but I'd be excited to do our best to look for in Genesis much of the things Jesus might have referenced in His conversation with these two guys.

Ever since our study in the book of Hebrews, I've personally been awakened to the idea of the Old Testament heavily pointing to Jesus. I think I had already heard that idea, but I don't think I really contemplated it much or tried to understand it better until more recently. Hebrews chapters 8, 9, 10 are really dedicated to this idea, there things are stated such as: the priests served a copy and a shadow of the heavenly things, and the Law was only a shadow of the good things to come, and

that the New Covenant of Jesus is the better covenant, enacted on better promises. Jesus Himself states in **Matthew 5:17** that the law and the Prophets weren't erased, but rather that He fulfills them. The idea is that Jesus doesn't replace the Old Testament, but rather that the Old Testament is pointing to Him. We don't trade the Old Testament for the New Testament, but rather we embrace the Old Testament because it sets up the New Testament. We don't put the Old Testament against the New Testament or vice versa, but rather the Old Testament's intent and meaning is to be interpreted through what the New Testament says of it. In today's time in history, we have the luxury of being able to read the Old Testament through the lens of the New Testament.

And in this mindset, I recently was reading through 1 Corinthians, and I've read through the Bible from start to finish now probably 5 or 6 times, but this passage in 1 Corinthians I've probably read at least 20 times, but this time, an Old Testament connection really jumped out to me that I hadn't noticed in detail before. Look at it with me, it's **1 Corinthians 10:1-4...**

The context here is that Paul is writing to a primarily non-jewish body of believers, who didn't have the context and culture resulting from an extensive knowledge of the Old Testament, but rather they came from all sorts of backgrounds- and as a result- they were mixing in all kinds of craziness into their church. Paul had to address all kinds of sin issues going on there in Corinth, he had this seemingly impossible job of welcoming Greek, Roman, Asian, Arabian, African, etc believers into this community of followers of Yahweh- assimilating them in directly to the family of God that was started with Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses- and at the same time, he was having to teach them how descendants of Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses are to conduct themselves in their behaviors and lifestyle. This was a ground shaking paradigm shift, verse 1 here, Paul (being a Jew) says to these Gentile believers- he addresses *them* as his brothers and sisters, and then says "*our* fathers"-

fathers referring directly to the Jewish patriarchs of the Old Testament- in other words Paul is directly tying these non-Jews/non-Israelites, to the Jews/Israelites of the Old Testament, declaring that these Gentiles are to be considered as sons of Abraham- Jews, children of Israel. And then what is interesting, is that Paul further connects these New Testament believers to the Old Testament “believers” through speaking of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Now, there were lots of practices, formalities, systems, ordinances setup in Old Testament- mostly revolving around the Temple and sacrifices- but the New Testament presents only 2 specific ordinances for followers of Yahweh the creator God- Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. And what Paul is saying here, is that these 2 ordinances aren’t something new, they aren’t practices that separate us from those in the Old Testament, but rather those of the Old Testament, in a sense, practiced these 2 things as well. It’s not just that everything is all about Jesus *now*, it was actually all about Jesus then too. The people of *that time*, were baptized. The people of *that time* drank and ate of Jesus Christ. And what Paul is addressing, if we look to the verses that follow, the point Paul is making is that the people of *that time* messed things up too. Paul is connecting these who were formally “outsiders” to the chosen people of God, he’s connecting them, considering them too as the chosen people of God not only through pointing out that they too are now sons and daughters of the Jewish Patriarchs, and that Jesus was there all along, and that the old covenant points to Jesus, and that they in Corinth, they too are doing the same things as those did in the Old Testament- but the further connection is that those in the Corinth Church weren’t doing things quite right, and neither were those from the Old Testament doing things quite right either- and there are life consequences for not doing things right. And the verses that follow, go on to explain that those in the Old Testament were punished severely, cut off from life, for not following God in the right way. And the scary warning that Paul then gives these in Corinth- these living on this side of

the New Testament, under the law of grace- is that they should be careful to follow and obey Jesus, *collectively*, in the right ways, lest they be dealt with in the same way as their Jewish ancestors who proceeded them.

Now, I bring this before us today, not because I want to warn us that if we are now considered children of Abraham, that if we misstep the earth might open itself up and swallow us as it did other children of Abraham in the Old Testament- that's not my intent. But rather, I felt impressed on my heart that in this passage, and in other places as well, that Baptism and The Lord's Supper are to be taken very seriously, and we need to properly understand these two ordinances, and probably be reminded of their meaning and significance from time to time. So this morning will be a little different in that I'm going to be teaching more so on specific topics, rather than working through one particular passage of scripture like we usually do. So we'll be doing a little more bouncing around to different passages than we typically do. So hold on tight, and even if you think you know all there is to understand about Baptism and the Lord's Supper- pay attention still and allow yourself to be further strengthen through God's word this morning.

Early in the Gospel accounts, we are told of John the Baptizer, a wild hippie of a man who was at the Jordan River, and using his own words as recorded- it says he was preaching "*Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near.*" (**Matt. 3:2**) The Greek word there for "repent" means to think differently, to reconsider, to change one's mindset and/or purpose. The idea is to change from thinking about and pursuing life in a selfish and worldly way, to thinking about and pursuing life with a kingdom mindset. John called out to the religious leaders of that day who took pride in being blood related to Abraham, and said that *that* relationship wouldn't help them at all, but rather judgement was coming, and so John was basically warning the people to repent and get right with God, pointing to the fact that Jesus the Messiah was coming. And

anyone who expressed they wanted to change their ways, was baptized, dunked under the water *“for repentance,”* as the passage in Matthew goes on to say. (Matt. 3:11a) The imagery is that an old way of living is being washed away- that there is an outward cleansing act demonstrating an *inward* spiritual change.

Jesus then came to John and requested to be baptized- although He had no need to change His mindset or repent of anything. It seems Jesus got baptized more so as an example and as a sign to the people. And from this point on, whenever the Bible mentions someone believing in Jesus- that belief is paired also with being baptized. Not only is it recorded scripturally as just something people did when they believed in Jesus and chose to follow him; but it is actually treated as a command- in Mark 16, Jesus is sending out his followers to fulfill the great commission- sending them out as missionaries to the world right before He ascends into Heaven and He says this: *“The one who has believed and has been baptized will be saved; but the one who has not believed will be condemned.”* **(Mark 16:16)**

Then in Acts chapter 2, on the day of Pentecost, after preaching to a huge crowd in Jerusalem, Peter says this to all the listeners: *Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* **(Acts 2:38)** Now, with verses like these 2, it might be easy to infer that baptism is literally the act that saves you, but actually Peter later clarifies so that we don't arrive to that conclusion. In 1 Peter chapter 3, he mentions Noah and the ark- and he is tying *that* washing of water to the act of baptism; and he says this: *“...baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”* **(1 Peter 3:21)** Here's what Peter is saying- yes baptism is what you do for salvation- but it's not the washing away of dirt from the body- it's not the getting dunked in the water, taking a quick bath that saves you- but rather it's

the act of turning to God for Him to cleanse us and give us a good conscience- and this is possible because of the work of Jesus- because of *His* death and resurrection.

So, in harmonizing these scriptures alongside other verses that speak of Baptism, the idea is that when we believe in Jesus, when we place our trust, hope, faith in Him, choosing to follow Him and receive His forgiveness, repenting of our previous mindset and way of doing things- *that* is the moment of salvation- and we are then to celebrate that salvation through being obedient to Him through getting baptized. It's a celebratory event, in which we are not only taking that first step of obedience to His ways, but also in celebratory fashion declaring to others that this is our decision and new way of life.

We've had 7 baptisms this year so far, and if you've been able to attend any of those events, you've probably heard me describe baptism as being a way of identifying ourselves with Jesus in the *past, present, and future*. Romans chapter 6 concisely describes baptism in exactly these type terms. In Romans 6, Paul is making an appeal to baptized believers to live differently, to live changed, to live free from sin, and he says this, see if you can recognize the past, present, and future connections "...do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, **6** knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; **7** for the one who has died is freed from sin. **8** Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, **9** knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is

master over Him. **10** For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all *time*; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. **11** So you too, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”
(Romans 6:3-11)

Throughout this verse, there is language of our baptism connecting us to, identifying us with, Jesus when He died on the cross. And then because of us being connected to Jesus in His death, the appeal is made for us to now in the present, live in newness of life, to live in freedom from sin. And then the passage ends by reminding us that because Jesus was resurrected, we too (in the future) will be resurrected to live with Him.

Now, I really want to plead with you, if you consider yourself a follower of Jesus, a believer, a Christian- if you have not yet been obedient to Him by publicly declaring that to others through the act of Baptism, then I plead with you to do that. Talk with Pastor Dave and/or myself and let's do it. Let's figure it out together.

The second New Testament ordinance that we as followers of Jesus are to follow, is the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. There are also several other titles, the term “the Lord's Supper” goes hand in hand with the last supper- the last meal Jesus shared with His disciples before His death, the meal in which Jesus declared for His followers to do this- is where the term the Lord's Supper comes from. “Communion” is another term- that's a word translated from the Greek word in **1 Corinthians 10:16** that says *“Is the cup of blessing which we bless not a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is the bread which we break not a sharing in the body of Christ?”* That word translated as “sharing” in the NASB is the Greek word “koinonia” which is the word from which *Communion* is directly derived. “Eucharist” is another term to describe the same thing, that's a Greek word meaning “thanksgiving.” Other terms describing the same event are “the breaking of the Bread,” “The

Cup of Blessing,” and “The Lord’s Table.” Of all these terms, there really isn’t any right or wrong titles, as what Jesus set up is not labeled in the Bible with an official title.

Traditionally it has been widely considered that Jesus was eating the Passover meal with His disciples on a Thursday night, the day before His crucifixion, but I tend to side more in with those who believe it might have been on a Wednesday night, a night *before* the Passover meal, which would then place Jesus’ death on the cross on Passover itself, the same time lambs were being slaughtered and roasted to eat that same night, and this understanding would make more sense in attempting to line up the chronology with the verses that state Jesus was dead/buried for 3 days/3 nights. But that’s a whole other discussion- if you want to personally look at that theory more closely, let me know after the service and I can send you a message I gave on it several years ago. But the reason I mention it today, in the theme of the New Testament clarifying the Old Testament- what I personally believe Jesus did during the last supper, was explain what the passover meal was pointing to, so that the very next day, and in the years that followed, followers of Jesus would practice a form of the Passover meal, but with the fuller understanding of it being more complete in reference to Jesus, the sacrificial, Passover lamb of God.

The Passover meal was what God told Moses and the Israelites to do while in Egypt so that in the years following they would remember God’s rescue. They were to sacrifice a healthy lamb, smear it’s blood over their door, roast it on a fire, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. I can imagine Jesus being like, from now on, this is the truer meaning, this is the fulfillment of what has been traditionally celebrated for many years. The concept of salvation is still there, but the details are changed. A lamb would no longer be needed for the Passover meal, because Jesus was the lamb. The unleavened bread

represents Jesus' body. Instead of bitter herbs, there is juice from grapes representing Jesus' blood shed in order for salvation to occur.

In the Gospel books, the disciples are recorded sharing a meal with Jesus, and it says that He took the bread, gave a blessing, broke it, and then gave it to the disciples and said "Take, eat; this is My body." **(Matt.26:26)** Then He took a cup, and gave thanks (Eucharist) and said "Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is being poured out for many for forgiveness of sins." **(Matt. 26:27-28)**

In 1 Corinthians 11, the Lord's Supper is further described, Paul quotes Jesus as saying to take of the bread and of the cup, and as often as you do so- do it in remembrance of Jesus. He says "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." **(1 Cor. 11:26)** Now, what I've always wrestled with is, how often are we to do this? The Bible doesn't say, Paul just says "as often," in other words, *when* you do it- you are proclaiming Jesus until He returns. The Passover meal was once a year, and some churches celebrate Communion once a year, others celebrate it every Sunday, or even have it available everyday of the week. The other question I have always asked is, how formal of a thing was this meant to be? When I read the Gospel accounts, it sounds like Jesus and the disciples are relaxed, it says they are reclined at the table, although I'm sure the air was a little tense with Jesus knowing He would be betrayed, on trial, and crucified only hours later- but is the idea just that every time we eat and drink- we are to remember this event and remember Jesus' sacrifice for us; or is this to be a specific, very formal, solemn assembly ceremony type thing where we gather at a certain time and place for this specific ordinance? And I think the answer is, perhaps... yes. Perhaps it's *both*. It's definitely not a bad thing to have Jesus on our mind and celebrate His sacrifice and forgiveness every single time we eat; and it's definitely not a bad thing to set aside a reverent ceremony from time to

time in which we pause in focused attempt to more fully absorb the gravity of His sacrifice for us.

Today we are going to do the *later* together, we will pause in a more solemn fashion and celebrate the Lord's Supper today with reverence and contemplation as we consider His sacrifice that provides forgiveness for our wrongdoings and reconciliation between us and our Creator God. And I want to note while there is no direct command contained in the Bible that specifically limits this symbolic act to only be practiced by *baptized* followers of Jesus, the pattern in the Bible seems to be belief, baptism, then fellowship through communion, and that has also been the general view of the church historically as well. Communion has historically been an event only reserved for those who have already been initiated into covenant relationship with Jesus through belief and baptism. In addition to that prerequisite, there are some warnings that Paul wrote to the early church, that we should consider as well, so that we might partake of the bread and the cup in a manner that is right and pleasing to the Lord. Look at **1 Corinthians 11:27-34** with me...

This is a very heavy passage of scripture, and I don't know if I understand all of it 100%, but it is very evident that this practice of partaking in the Lord's Supper is to be taken very seriously. We are not to go about it lightly. We are advised in verse 28 to first examine ourselves, and I think the idea is to examine ourselves to confirm first that yes, we are indeed followers of Jesus, and that we are living in right relationship with Jesus, able to proclaim His death and resurrection with clear conscience. And it seems to be the idea that if we are *not* able to say those things, then we should probably refrain from partaking in the symbolism of this act, and rather first get things right with the Lord beforehand. Verses 29 and 30- I admit I don't fully understand how it all works, but these verses seem to indicate that there can be negative real world consequences for not having the right focus, mindset, heart

condition, attitude- in respect to what Jesus did for us and our remembrance of what He did for us through partaking of the Bread and the Cup. Verses 31 and 32 encourage us to judge ourselves rightly, to examine and see ourselves honestly. The idea seems to be if we humbly judge ourselves, then the Lord won't have to judge us. And then verses 33 and 34 use language that indicates the manner in which the early church celebrated the Lord's supper seems to be a little bit different than how we typically celebrate it with a bite of bread and a swallow of juice, but I think the universal truth that we can apply to ourselves today from these two verses is that not only are we to examine ourselves to make sure we are personally right with the Lord, but we are also to examine ourselves and consider if we are personally right with the rest of the body of Christ- making sure that we are honoring one another, showing respect, humility, love, patience with each other, as we gather to celebrate Jesus.

So I'm going to ask now, that we spend a few minutes in personal prayer and reflection- feel free to stay in your seat, or you can come down to the front to kneel here on the steps- but let's examine ourselves and confirm if we are ready in this moment to partake of the Lord's Supper in the right way. Now, after a minute or two into our time of introspection, I'll call upon the ushers to pass out the bread and juice, and as we continue in the quietness of the moment, if you feel like something is not quite right, like it's not the right time to share in this event, if you're still on the fence about following Jesus, or something is not right relationally with Him or with others in the church, then it's ok to abstain from taking the bread and the cup- no one will judge you for not participating. But once everyone has been served, I'll offer a prayer of blessing and thanksgiving, and lead us in the partaking of the elements.

Introspection

Ushers

Prayer of blessing and thanksgiving

The bread the body
The cup the blood

In the Gospel books, after expressing the symbolism of the bread and the juice and after partaking with His disciples, Jesus is recorded as saying that He would not drink of the juice again until the day in which He would drink it newly in the coming Kingdom of God. In **Matthew 26:29** Jesus says “But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it with you, new, in My Father’s kingdom.” In saying this, Jesus *seems* to be pointing to what is mentioned in the book of Revelation as the Wedding Feast of the Lamb. I earlier connected the Lord’s Supper to the Passover Meal, stating that the Lord’s Supper was the fuller, more true understanding of the Passover Meal, but with this statement from Jesus, it seems to be that the Wedding feast of the Lamb will be the fullest, truest, completed meaning of what was first introduced as the Passover Meal. In *that* day, in the coming Kingdom- followers of Jesus will be joined together in celebration, reward, blessing, and in the fullest communion with one another and with Jesus our God.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise Him all creatures here below
Praise Him above ye heav'nly hosts
Praise Father Son and Holy Ghost
Amen