

A Qualified word about a Non-Qualified sermon.

On November 10th, 2019, I preached a sermon talking about how the implication of Justification by Faith Alone is that we are to have Table Fellowship with All Christians of whatever tradition, and also with our baptized children.

I wanted to make a qualifying statement concerning the Table Fellowship we would have with other Christians of whatever traditions. When I say that the Table of the Lord at Christ the Redeemer Church is open to all believers of whatever Christian tradition they hold to, that assumes a number of things.

1. The person is an orthodox Trinitarian Christian, baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They accept and Embrace the Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed, and are members in good standing in a Church that holds that the Bible is the Authoritative Word of God.
2. We would not allow Jehovah's Witnesses, or Mormons, or Unitarians to partake of the Table of the Lord. They are not Christian. They are Heretics.
3. If a Baptized Christian from an orthodox Trinitarian Church tradition is a *notable* sinner who has not repented of his/her sinfulness, and is under church discipline, we will not commune with that person.
4. If a Baptized Christian from an orthodox Trinitarian Church tradition is a *notable* sinner who has NOT repented of his/her sinfulness, and is NOT under church discipline, due to the weakness and failure of Church leaders to exercise spiritual authority and discipline over him/her, we will still not commune with that person. Such an example of this would be – a person who publicly advocates for Notorious sins such Abortion, Homosexuality, Transgenderism, etc. Such high-handed sins are a blight and scourge upon our Lord, and no true Christian who has the Holy Spirit in-dwelling them can advocate for such abominable practices.

So in truth we do not actually celebrate Absolute Open Communion. It is a Modified, Nuanced Open Communion, or I guess could also be considered a Very Generous Closed Communion.

Now I would like to make a statement to further clarify why our children are invited to the Table of the Lord.

Right before Israel was about to be brought out of Egypt, they celebrated the Passover Meal. Everyone in the household, children and adults, ate the meal, which commemorated the fact that the Angel of Death passed over them, and preserved them from Judgment. In future celebrations of the Passover God commanded that children, who were at the table, eating the Passover meal, be taught about how God preserved Israel during the Passover and the Exodus.

²⁴ And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever. ²⁵ When you enter the land which the LORD will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this rite. ²⁶ And

*when your children say to you, 'What does this rite mean to you?' ²⁷ you shall say, 'It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared **our** homes.'*" Exodus 12:24-27

The Israelite family, many generations removed from the Passover Event, were to tell their children, that the Lord spared **our** homes. The redemption of Israel during the Exodus affected all Israelites present at the Exodus, and future, such that, even those who were never technically slaves in Egypt, were covenantally still redeemed from Egypt with Israel of old. Our identity is not separated from our ancestors. This is important.

It was because of what God did for Israel as a whole that the Children of even later generations were to participate in the Passover meal, learning from the meal that God had spared their homes also.

This same principle carries over into the New Covenant. Jesus Christ accomplished our Exodus for us on the Cross in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31), and because of that, all Christian households are to memorialize that Redemption that Jesus Christ purchased for us all in the rite of the Lord's Supper. Just as every Israelite household was redeemed, and was to celebrate the rite of Passover, so too is every Christian household to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Salvation comes to households, not merely to individuals (Acts 11:14; 16:31,33; 18:8).

We ought not to think of our households as a group of isolated individuals whose identity is separate and distinct from their family identity. Just as my children are identified by my last name as belonging to the Shover's, even more so do my children bear the family name of Christ. They are Christian. The Apostle Paul says that the children of believers are holy, that is, set apart unto God (1 Cor. 7:14). This is why we ought to include our children in the sacraments. They belong to the family of God, they are holy, they have been redeemed by the death of Jesus. The promises of God are for them, because their identity is wrapped up in the promises of God made to believing parents. The covenantal promise made to Abraham, fulfilled in Christ, is, "I will be God to you and to your children, and to your children's children." It is by belief in that promise that Abraham was justified by faith, and all his offspring we also justified by faith in that same promise. If God promised to be the God of our children, then who do our children belong to? If our children belong to God, then we should treat them as such. Our children have their identity in Christ.

It is not that every child has no family until they can articulate what it means to be in a family. It is not that a child is not a citizen of their country until they become an adult. We are not to consider that our children are out and out pagans. Their experience and identity is different than the one who never grew up in a Christian family. A natural born citizen does not need to take an exam to become a citizen of his country of origin. Neither should children of believers. This one was born there (Ps. 87:4-6). This is their identity.

In our day, people are at a fever pitch to rebel against God and their parents by “self-identifying” as something other than what God intended for them. Let us do our children a favor, and give them a sure confidence in their identity that God has given them in Christ. They belong to the household of faith. They too are Christians. They are holy. They belong to saved households. These are some of the reasons why our children are to be brought to Christ at the baptismal font, and to the Table of Christ.

Otherwise, if we tell our children that they do not belong, by keeping them from Christ at His Table, then let us not be surprised when they go searching for an identity that is outside of Christ and the Church, and they end up eating instead at the table of demons.

Pastor Michael Shover

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