

THE CHURCH ORDINANCES

Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Theme: Observation of the ordinances provides the local church with an outward, visible demonstration that its members are saved and living in submission and obedience to the Lord.

An “ordinance” is something that is “ordered” or commanded by an authority.

- We speak of “city ordinances,” which are city laws—things ordered/commanded by statute.
- (Exod 12.14) The first mention of “ordinance” in the Bible shows that it is something ordered or commanded by the Lord.
- (1Cor 11.2) Therefore, “church ordinances” are things that are ordered or established by God that He expects us to “keep” (to observe and obey).

There are two specific “ceremonial ordinances” (rites or rituals) that have been given to the local church:

1. Baptism: Guards the door of the local church (entrance into local church membership).
2. The Lord Supper: Guards the on-going membership of the local church.

There are two observations we need to make about these “ceremonial ordinances”:

1. (John 13) Foot-washing is *never* repeated by Paul as an ordinance for the Church.
 - There are several churches and denominations today that practice foot-washing as a ceremony much the same way we practice baptism and the Lord's Supper.
 - There is no biblical basis for this at all. They washed each others feet in New Testament times because they walked around in sandals and their feet got dirty.
2. The ceremonial ordinances given to the Church are *never* called “sacraments” in the Scripture.
 - The term “sacrament” is Roman Catholic and refers to certain religious ceremonies as a *means of grace* (i.e., you *do* the ceremony and you *receive* more grace; it's the system of the Law).
 - The ceremonial ordinances given to the Church are symbolic—they picture something. They are no means of grace, and to call the ordinances “sacraments” is to cause confusion.

This morning we are celebrating the Lord's Supper for the first time as a local church.

- I think it's a good opportunity to speak about what we believe as a church about both ordinances...

I. Baptism: Guards the Door of the Local Church

A. Baptism is the First Act of Obedience after Salvation

1. Baptism does not save you from from sin, but rather from a guilty conscience before God.
 - a) (Eph 2.8-9) Salvation is by grace through faith, not by any work that we could do.
 - b) (1Pet 3.21) However, baptism does “save” us, just not in the sense of being saved from our sins. It saves us from a guilty conscience before God because it is an act of submission and obedience to the Lord. To not submit to baptism is rebellion, and your conscience will condemn you.
2. Baptism is the Lord's first expectation for every believer after conversion/salvation.
 - a) (Mat 28.18-20) The Great Commission: After we preach the Gospel to the lost for their salvation, we are to baptize those who respond in repentance and faith.

- b) And this expectation of the Great Commission is *still* God's expectation for us today.
- (1) Many would say that water baptism is not for the Church today (more on this later).
 - (2) (Acts 2.38, 41-42) Before the transition from Israel to the Church: Water Baptism.
 - Peter called Israel to repentance and pointed them immediately to water baptism (first act of obedience by those who would respond in repentance and faith).
 - (3) (Acts 8.26-40) During the transition from Israel to the Church: Water Baptism.
 - (a) (v35) Philip preaches the Gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch.
 - (b) (v36) The eunuch expresses his desire to be baptized (to identify with the Lord's substitutionary death, burial and resurrection).
 - (c) (v37) Philip states the only requirement for baptism: Salvation. Baptism is the first act of submission and obedience after salvation (there is no other requirement).
 - (d) (v38-39) Both Philip and the eunuch go down *into* the water and then come *up out of* the water, which shows us that biblical baptism is my full immersion.
 - (4) (Acts 10.44-48) After the transition from Israel to the Church: Water Baptism.
 - Cornelius and the other gentiles were baptized in water immediately after salvation.

3. False Teaching: Some teach that water baptism is not for the Church today.

- a) This is one of the distinguishing marks of “hyper-dispensationalism” and they base their false teaching on a wrong interpretation of 1Corinthians 1.14-17.
 - (1) Hyper-Dispensationalism: Taking the biblical doctrine of dispensations too far.
 - (2) They make divisions in the Scripture where there are none and “wrongly” divide the Bible.
- b) (1Cor 1.17) They take this one verse out of context and state that Paul's Gospel for the Gentile Church does not include water baptism.
 - (1) Rather, they say that water baptism was given to the Twelve as they went out to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom.
 - (2) However, they fail to take the verse in its context...
- c) The passage teaches water baptism for the Church today.
 - (1) (v14, 16) Paul baptized new converts himself (just like we see in his pattern of ministry in the Book of Acts; e.g., Acts 16.30-34, he baptized the Philippian jailer and his family).
 - (2) (v11) The context: Division among the church members.
 - (v12-13 cf. 1Cor 3.4) The members were bragging about about who baptized whom.
 - (3) (v10, 17, 22-23) The correction: Paul is not teaching about water baptism, but rather about the church members being of *one mind*, and that *mind* is the focus on the *mission*.
 - (a) The church was divided over a silly, secondary issue (who baptized whom).
 - (b) They needed to move their focus and attention off that secondary issue and place it on the Mission of reaching the lost with the Gospel.
 - (c) (v17) Who baptized whom is not our mission. Preaching the Gospel is our mission!
- d) Dispensationalism does not remove water baptism, rather it confirms it because water baptism is the pattern we see in Jesus, Paul, and the early churches among the Gentiles.
 - And this is because...

B. Baptism is a Picture and Public Profession of the Gospel

1. (1Cor 15.1-4) The Gospel we preach (Paul's) is the good news that Jesus died for us, was buried, and then on the third day rose from the dead to give us new life.
2. (Eph 2.8-9) Salvation in Christ is not by works that we have done, but rather by the work done by Jesus Christ on the cross for us.
3. That is the picture in biblical water baptism.
 - a) Biblical baptism pictures the death of Christ in that the believer is placed under the water (full immersion, no sprinkling or pouring): "...buried in the likeness of His death..."
 - Every time you see baptism in the New Testament, it is by immersion.
 - b) Biblical baptism pictures the resurrection of Christ in that the believer is raise up out of the water: "...raised in the likeness of His resurrection to walk in the newness of life..."
4. Therefore, water baptism is a public proclamation of the Gospel the new convert has believed.
 - Through the picture of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the baptized believer is "preaching" the Gospel to all who are watching.

C. Water baptism, then, guards the door of our local church...

1. God expects all believers to submit to water baptism.
 - a) Baptism is the first act of submission and obedience in the life of a Christian.
 - b) Those who refuse to be baptized biblically are simply showing that Jesus Christ is not their Lord; they have not repented of sin and self, and they are not following Christ as Lord.
 - c) Side note: It is not rebellion to submit to baptism but have to wait to be baptized. So, if you have not been biblically baptized, but you are willing and waiting to do so, you are not in rebellion. You have "submitted" to baptism and waiting for the opportunity to "obey."
2. The local church, therefore, should expect all members to submit to biblical baptism.
 - a) In this way each new member of the congregation gives testimony to all the others that he believes the same Gospel we believe.
 - b) Baptism guards the door of our local church from false converts/brethren and a false gospel.

II. The Lord's Supper: Guards the On-Going Membership of the Local Church

- Participation in the Lord's Supper testifies of our continued submission and obedience to the Lord.

A. The Lord's Supper is an established order/ordinance for the Church.

1. (Mat 28.26-29) Christ established the practice the night before His death.
 - a) The bread without leaven is a picture of Christ's body without sin that was given over as a sacrifice for us.
 - b) The wine (new wine: grape juice—fruit of the vine in a cup) is a picture of Christ's blood shed for us and the remission of our sins.
2. (Luke 22.19-20) Christ clearly stated that the Lord's supper is a memorial, not some magical or mystical experience.
 - a) It is not the Catholic "transubstantiation": The substance of the elements does not transform into the actual body and blood of Jesus (we are not cannibals).
 - b) It is not the Lutheran "consubstantiation": The substance of the elements does not partially change ("con" = with: the body and blood of Christ "with" the bread and wine).
 - c) It is a ceremony we observe in order to remind ourselves of something...

B. (1Cor 11.17-34) Paul clearly established the Lord's Supper as a practice for the Church.

1. The Lord's Supper is for saved, born-again members of a local church.
 - a) (1Cor 10.16-17) “We” who participate in the Lord's Supper are member of the one Body, Christ's body the Church.
 - b) (1Cor 5.11) Those who say they are Christians but who do not follow the Lord in submission and obedience are not to participate in the Lord's Supper.
 - And this is why the Lord's Supper helps us to guard the on-going membership of our congregation...
2. (1Cor 11.17-22, 33-34) Just as with baptism, the carnal Corinthians were using the Lord's Supper as a “popularity contest.”
 - a) And again Paul exhorts them to have the mind of Christ: (v33) to esteem others better than themselves, and Christ did us on the cross.
 - b) (v34) Note: The Lord's Supper is not a meal to fill the belly. It is a ceremony to remind us...
3. (1Cor 11.23-25) Paul ties this local church ordinance back to the last supper and says again that we do this to remember.
4. (1Cor 11.26) The Lord's Supper helps us to remember two things:
 - a) The Lord's Death
 - (1) The bread is a physical reminder of all that Jesus suffered in His body for us.
 - (a) The bread is without leaven because Jesus' body was without sin. He lived 33 ½ years without sin—He lived the sinless life we could never live.
 - (b) Then He gave His body to die the sinner's death with all deserve.
 - (2) The cup is a physical reminder of His blood (sinless blood; which is why we use unfermented “wine”)... His perfect blood, shed in death for us.
 - (3) (2Cor 5.14-15) The Lord's Supper is an opportunity to ask yourself if you are living in a way that is worthy of the Lord's death for you?
 - b) The Lord's Coming:
 - (1) We are to observe the Lord's Supper “til He come” (until Christ comes back for us).
 - (2) (1Jn 2.28) It's an opportunity to ask yourself if you are living for the day you will meet your Lord and Savior—the day He comes back to take us to the Judgment Seat of Christ.
 - c) A remind “as oft as ye eat... and drink...”
 - (1) We can observe the Lord's Supper as often as we want, but every time we do, it should be a reminder to us of the cross and the coming.
 - (2) (v27) And so, we need to make sure we are eating and drinking in a manner that is worthy.
5. (1Cor 11.28-32) The Lord's Supper is an opportunity for examination and proclamation.
 - a) You should first examine and judge yourself.
 - (1) Are you living in sin? Are you living for self?
 - (2) Or are you striving to live for Christ and grow in holiness to be more like the Lord in character and conduct?
 - (3) Now is your opportunity to examine yourself, and then judge yourself (if you are guilty, confess that to the Lord, get it right, and walk worthy of the Gospel).

- b) By participating in the Lord's Supper, you are proclaiming to each and every other Christian here that you are striving to live in a way that is becoming of the Gospel—that is worthy of the name you carry being a Christian.
- (1) If you are later found to be in sin, you will be found to be a liar (your participation in the Lord's Supper was a lie because you had unconfessed sin in your life).
 - (2) (1Cor 5.11-13) And God instructs the local church to put away that kind of wicked person.
 - (3) (2Thes 3.14-15) We are to do so in order to bring such a person to repentance and restoration.
6. (1Cor 11.31) The Lord's Supper is our opportunity to judge ourselves in light of the cross and in light of the coming of our Lord to take us to the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Conclusion: Lord's Supper.