

SERMON NOTES

Celebrating the Gospel Together
1 Corinthians 11:23-32

What are the ordinances? The “ordinances” refer to baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Baptism and the Lord’s Supper should be fundamentally understood as pointing to something greater: a visible reminder of the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Why are the ordinances important—that is, baptism and the Lord’s Supper? *Because they visibly mark out the community of the local church, and they were clear commands issued by Jesus Christ.*

According to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000:

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer’s faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer’s death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord’s Supper.

The Lord’s Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12
<https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/#vii>

Baptism is a one-time event that signifies:

- Identification with Christ
- Initiation into the Christian faith
- Entrance into the Christian church

Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:39, 8:16; 10:48, Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13, Acts 2:38-41

THE LORD’S SUPPER

The Lord’s Supper is a rite which Christ established for the church to obediently practice as a commemoration of His death.

The Lord’s Supper is an act of worship that enables us to meet with Christ.

The Lord’s Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

The Lord’s Supper is an ongoing, repeatable event (“as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup do this in remembrance of me”) that signifies:

- Fellowship with Christ
- Continuance in the Christian faith
- Unity with the Christian church

(see 1 Corinthians 10:16-17)

A. What is the significance of the Lord’s Supper?

I. Historical Significance

The Lord’s Supper reminds us of the continual working of God’s redemptive plan throughout history. As Jesus celebrated Passover to remember God’s deliverance of Israel out of bondage in Egypt, He transformed the Passover celebration into a new memorial, the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper reminds us that God has delivered us out of bondage to sin through the shed blood of His Son Jesus Christ.

II. Theological Significance

The Lord’s Supper is a memorial to remember His sacrificial and propitiatory death. The bread and the wine symbolize the very body and blood of Christ.

III. Ecclesiological Significance

The Lord's Supper reminds us of the benefits earned for us by His death. The body of Christ receives spiritual nourishment for our souls (John 6:53-57).

IV. Eschatological Significance

The Lord's Supper anticipates a future consummation of His coming (1 Corinthians 11:26; Revelation 19:9).

B. What is the purpose of regularly repeating the rite of the Lord's Supper?

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."
1 Corinthians 11:26, NASB95

C. Who can participate in the Lord's Supper?**I. Christians**

The Lord's Supper is an act of corporate worship for those who believe in Jesus, the church. (vs. 17-22)
The Lord's Supper is an act of the gathered family of those who believe in Jesus, the church.

We do not forbid taking the Lord's Supper to someone in a nursing home or a hospital, but that kind of individual celebration is exceptional, not the Biblical norm. Five times in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul speaks of the church "coming together" when the Lord's Supper is eaten.

The Sequence: Baptism Precedes Communion

The sequence is always baptism first, followed by communion. In Acts 2 it is only those who are baptized and added to the church in verse 41 who then participate in the breaking of bread in verse 42. In 1 Corinthians, when Paul talks at length about communion (in chapter 11), the assumption from earlier in the letter (chapter 1) is that he is writing to baptized Christians. There are no examples in Acts or the Epistles of unbaptized people taking communion.

"First, baptism represents the Christian's initiation into the church. Acts 2:41-47 records that those who responded to Peter's Pentecost sermon with faith in Christ were subsequently baptized. It was only after this baptism that the new converts "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers (Acts 2:42)." Second, baptism represents the believer's purification from sin. In Acts 22:16, Paul claims that following his Damascus Road conversion Ananias asked him, "And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name." Most scholars agree that Ananias was not claiming that the act of immersion physically washes away sin, but that it symbolizes cleansing from sin, which actually occurs at the moment of regeneration."

II. Christians who are not living in serious sin**D. What is the spiritual benefit to the one who participates in the Lord's Supper?**

The Lord's Supper serves to keep us anchored to Christ and the gospel.

1 Corinthians 11:23-28; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; Hebrews 2:1, Revelation 2:2-5

The Lord's Supper anchors our soul by providing...

- A powerful reminder of our forgiveness (11:25)
- An opportunity to participate in Christ's spiritual presence in the fellowship (10:16-17)
- The Lord's Supper is a source of spiritual nourishment (vs. 23-26)

The Lord's Supper expresses the value of Christ by nourishing our life in Christ. If we come to Christ over and over and say, "By this, O Christ, I feed on you. By this, O Jesus Christ, I nourish my life in you. By this I share in all the grace you bought for me with your own blood and body." *1 Corinthians 10:16*

"When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we feast spiritually by faith on all the promises of God bought by the blood of Jesus." *John Piper*

- A visible proclamation of the gospel (11:24-25)
- A reminder of the Lord's return (11:26; Matthew 26:29)
- An opportunity for self-examination (11:28)

David Dockery suggests, "The highest form of corporate Christian worship is the Lord's Supper. The celebration of the Supper directs our attention backward to the work of Christ on the cross and also encourages a forward look to the second coming of Christ."

Invitation to the Lord's Supper:

- Come to this sacred table, not because you must, but because you may;
- Come not to testify to your righteousness, but that you sincerely love our Lord Jesus Christ and desire to be His true disciple;
- Come not because your goodness gives you a right to come, but because in your frailty and sin you stand in need of heaven's mercy and help;
- Come because you love the Lord a little and want to love Him more;
- Come because He loved you and gave Himself for you;
- Lift up your hearts, above your cares and fears;
- Let this bread and wine be a sign of God's grace to you and a pledge of your love to the Lord Christ;
- Receive the love of God and consecrate your life afresh to Christian obedience and service, to discover and do the will of God in humble faith.