

“Life Through Death”

“There are, strictly speaking, but two sacraments in the church of God - baptism and bread; for only in these two do we find both the divinely instituted sign and the promise of forgiveness of sins.” (Martin Luther)

The terminology of “ordinance” is preferred above the term “sacraments,” in that, an ordinance is a visible sign of the saving grace of the gospel (the work of Jesus). The American Heritage dictionary defines ordinance as ... “An authoritative command or order.” On the other hand, a sacrament, to some, connotes a standing rite that has the power in itself to confer grace upon the recipient. This is NOT the position of RCC.

Baptism: See Brochure – Drenched/Water/Grave

“I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies.” (Martin Luther - Lutherans)

“The word ‘baptize’ signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the early church.” (John Calvin - Presbyterian)

“Buried with Him, alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church.” (John Wesley - Methodist)

When should baptism occur?

Immediately! Don't wait until you are “perfect.” You will never feel good enough.

⁴⁷“No one can refuse to baptize these people with water. They have received the Holy Spirit in the same way that we did.” ⁴⁸So Peter ordered that they should be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for several days. Acts 10:47-48 (GW)

¹⁴One of them was Lydia from Thyatira, a merchant of expensive purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. As she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying. ¹⁵She was baptized along with other members of her household, and she asked us to be her guests. “If you agree that I am faithful to the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my home.” And she urged us until we did. Acts 16:14-15 (NLT)

³³That same hour the jailer washed their wounds, and he and everyone in his household were immediately baptized. Acts 16:33 (NLT)

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The Lord's Supper

1. Transubstantiation – “literally eat and drink the Lord's body and blood.” (Catholics)
2. Consubstantiation – “the essence of Jesus is ‘under, in, and with’ the bread and juice at the Lord's table.” (Episcopalians)
3. Communion – “the act of sharing, or holding in common, participation.” (A/G - Symbols!)

What occasion did Jesus use to institute the Lord's Supper?

¹⁹Jesus took some bread in his hands and gave thanks for it. He broke the bread and handed it to his apostles. Then he said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Eat this as a way of remembering me!" ²⁰After the meal he took another cup of wine in his hands. Then he said, "This is my blood. It is poured out for you, and with it God makes his new agreement. Luke 22:19-20 (CEV)

What was the Passover?

When Moses was leading the Israelites out of Egypt, the last plague that was inflicted upon the Egyptians was the death of the firstborn. The Lord instructed the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb on the 14th day of the 1st month and take some of the blood and sprinkle on the doorframe. In the middle of the night the Lord would strike down every firstborn, but would “Passover” the houses where the blood was. (Exodus 11-12)

It was not by coincidence that Jesus initiated the Communion rites during the Passover meal. God instituted the Passover when He delivered His people from 400 years of bondage in Egypt. The Passover celebrated a temporary, physical deliverance of the Old Covenant. Jesus transformed the Passover meal into the celebration of a permanent and spiritual deliverance of the New Covenant. Jesus gave His disciples this new practice of communion to observe because now they could celebrate their own rescue from sin's slavery and eternal punishment.

I'd like us to spend the balance of our time on the passage of Scripture that deals most thoroughly with the subject of communion ...

²³For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this **in remembrance** of me."

²⁵In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, **in remembrance** of me."

²⁶For whenever you **eat this bread and drink this cup**, you **proclaim the Lord's death until he comes**. ²⁷Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸A man ought to **examine** himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. ²⁹For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. **1 Cor. 11:23-29 (NIV)**

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Five Observations Regarding Communion

1. Communion causes us to remember -- the price, purpose, and the provision (v. 24b).
 - a. Reminds us of our deliverance from the bondage of sin and gives us freedom!
 - b. Reminds us of the physical abuse and punishment that he bore on the cross!
 - c. Reminds us that He bore our sickness so that we could receive healing!

2. Communion sustains us -- eat and drink, we are nourished spiritually at the Lord's table.
 - a. Worship the Lord for His sustaining power.
 - b. Thank the Lord for His mercy.
 - c. Take in again the benefits of being His child and commit to remaining in Him.

3. Communion inspires us -- we are encouraged that by faith we may enter into the benefits of His death and resurrection.

²⁹"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 new with you in My Father's kingdom." Matthew 26:29 (NASB-U)

4. Communion causes us to examine ourselves -- not our beliefs, but ourselves (v. 28).
 - a. We should test the attitude of our heart and actions.
 - b. We must examine both our vertical and horizontal relationships.

⁵Examine yourselves to see if your faith is really genuine. Test yourselves. If you cannot tell that Jesus Christ is among you, it means you have failed the test. 2 Cor. 13:5 (NLT)

5. Communion creates an expectation within us -- we are to anticipate the Lord's return (v. 26).