

Eagle Ridge Lake Elsinore — May 3, 2020
“Why do you do that?!” (Part 3): Baptism & Communion

Introduction

- For those that have been a part of the church for any length of time, the concept of Baptism & Communion probably seems ‘normal’.
- There may be some that have never understood why we do these things in church.
 - What does ‘baptism’ and ‘communion’ mean?
 - Why are they such an embedded part of the church process?
 - Is it a command from God to partake in these sacraments?

Sacraments? What are those?!

- Sacramentum: “sacred mystery” or “holy mystery”.
- QUOTE: “The visible form of an invisible grace.” (Augustine)
- Others have said that our involvement in these practices are an “outward expression of an internal change”, or internal belief.

Baptism Scripture Reading (Acts 8:26-39)

27 And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship **28** and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. **29** And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” **30** So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” **31** And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. **32** Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. **33** In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” **34** And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” **35** Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. **36** And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” **38** And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. **39** And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

- What is “Baptism”? (the biblical precedent)

- Baptism = to cover wholly with fluid; dip
 - This is why we believe in the full immersion concept of baptism.
 - Not because it’s better, or more holy, or the only way.
 - But simply because we believe this is how Jesus was baptized.
 - In short, baptism is the process by which believers physically express their new found faith in Jesus.
- Jesus and John the Baptist

- The ministry of John the Baptizer was to call people to repentance.
 - His sole purpose was to prepare the way for Jesus.
 - Those that were baptized by John, were simply declaring that they were turning from their old ways, and would place their faith in Jesus Christ.
 - But John had this to say about his own ministry:
 - **Matthew 3:11**, “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”
 - Baptism of the Holy Spirit
 - **Acts 1:5, 8**, “for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
 - The indwelling Holy Spirit is what gives us the power to fulfill our mission.
 - He keeps us accountable.
 - He frees us from the weight of the law.
 - He teaches us the way of right living [righteousness] according to God’s standards.
 - **Acts 2:38-39**, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”
 - We don’t teach that Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a separate act that one has to seek or perform.
 - Upon repentance of sins and acceptance of Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to take up residence in that person’s life.
 - **1 John 4:13**, “By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.”
 - **2 Timothy 1:13-14**, “Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.”
 - **Galatians 5:25**, “If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”
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- **What “Baptism” is NOT?**
 - The way of salvation. Baptism does not save you.
 - Repentance of your sins. Acceptance of the grace through faith that only Jesus can provide, and belief in Him is what brings a person to salvation.
 - Baptism is the outward expression of that belief.

- Why do we get baptized?

- As a symbolic gesture in association with Jesus' death on the cross.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:17**, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."
 - Born again; a new life.
 - **1 Peter 3:21**, "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,"
 - Evidence that an individual has broken away from their former life of sin.
 - Outward evidence of the inward grace we receive from God.
- In comparison to Noah and the Flood
 - The flood waters brought Noah and his family to safety.
 - The water separated them from the 'old world' **[sin]**, and provided safety to the 'new world' **[salvation]**.
 - Again, Baptism does not secure salvation in Jesus.
 - It is not by walking in to the water that saves us.
 - It is the belief/trust/faith in the One who died for our sins!
 - What did it take for Noah and his family to build and get on to the ark?
 - Belief and Faith in God's word and plan for salvation.

Communion Scripture Reading (**Matthew 26:26-28**)

26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." **27** And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, **28** for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

- What is Communion?

- The Old Covenant celebration of Passover was to remember how God protected His people in Egypt, through the shedding of the blood of the sacrificial lamb.
 - This is a picture of what was to come in Jesus.
- This new covenant that Jesus institutes allows us to remember what He did for us on the cross, by shedding His blood for our freedom/forgiveness of sins.
- The bread represents His body, broken for us.
 - **Isaiah 53:5 NLT**, "But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed."
- The cup/wine/juice represents His blood.
 - Jesus said, "Drink of it, all of you."
 - We are individually responsible to eat the bread and drink of the cup as we identify with Jesus in our salvation.

- **1 John 1:7**, “But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.”

- **Why do we take Communion?**

- **1 Corinthians 11:24-25**, “and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’”
 - “Do this in remembrance of me”
 - This is in essence, a memorial to who Jesus is and what He did for us.
 - Washington D.C. Monuments & Memorials
 - Vietnam Memorial: 58,000+ names etched on the marble wall.
 - Korean War Memorial: faces of service members etched on the marble wall.
 - Arlington National Cemetery: 400,000+ veterans and their relatives buried or interred.
 - All these serve as memorials for us to remember not only their death and sacrifice, but their lives as well.
 - Visiting these sites should cause us to pause and reflect on what they did for us, and an appreciation of the life of freedom we now get to live because of their sacrifice.
 - Do you *need* to see these memorials in order to remember what these men and women did for our country?
 - But there is something special about standing in front of those memorials and seeing the names and faces. There’s something different about walking on the battlefields where tens of thousands lost their lives for the sake of freedom.
 - So is the same in partaking in Communion.
 - Do we have to do it? It doesn’t provide us salvation. Will it make us better Christians? No.
 - But it is designed to be a special event that we get to participate in, because it serves as a memorial to the greatest sacrifice that ever took place.
 - It’s powerful. It’s celebratory. It’s personal.

Application/Conclusion

- The last few weeks has been dedicated to talking about some of the things we do in the church, and why we do them.
- It was my goal from the start that in everything we discussed, the questions we answered, and the foundation upon which all of these things are done, is for one sole purpose.
 - We Worship to bring praise and glory to the name of the Lord as we enter in to His presence.

- We give back to the Lord through our Tithes and Offerings because it is an act of worship and dependence, recognizing that he is the one that has given us all things.
- We go through a believer's Baptism because it signifies that we have come to faith in Jesus, and represents a new life of worship and service to our Lord.
- We partake in Communion because we need to regularly remember the sacrifice of Jesus and the forgiveness of our sins through the breaking of His body, and the shedding of His blood on the cross for us.
- In EVERYTHING we do, we do it all for the glory of God!
- It is always about Him, always for Him, and Him alone! Amen!
- **Romans 12:1-2**, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."