

**Sermon Notes**  
**“Baptism and the Lord’s Supper”**

Material for this message was drawn from a series of sermons by Dr. Calvin Wittman (2009)

**Focal Scripture Reference: Matthew 28:19 & 26:26-28**

When things are done in church over and over again and there is no regular explanation for why they are done, people may assign their own meanings to these activities and this can lead to all manner of problems. It is to that end, that we will address two of the most important things we do here at Fairacres Baptist Church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Many of you may have a good understanding of what these two things are and why we do them, but as we continue to make our way through key foundational doctrines, these two ordinances require our attention. Observing the Lord’s Supper and practicing Biblical Baptism are two of the most important things Christ has commanded us to do. They are not merely ceremonies we are to execute; they are holy ordinances, rich in spiritual significance and they are directly tied to our walk with God, at a very deep level.

The Baptist Faith and Message, says this about these two ordinances of the church:

"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 Savior, 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 a 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 bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming."

We find our scriptural mandate for these ordinances in **Matthew 28:19**, which we refer to as great commission.

Jesus tells us, “... **Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,** <sup>20</sup>**and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”**

And in **Matthew 26:26-28** Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper.

**<sup>26</sup>While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." <sup>27</sup>Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. <sup>28</sup>This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**

In addition to these two scripture passages, we find additional teachings about both of these ordinances throughout the rest of the New Testament. As traditional Southern Baptists, we refer to Baptism and the Lord's Supper as ordinances of the church. An ordinance is a command that our Lord has directed us to obey. Both the Lord's Supper and Baptism are symbolic – participating in or observing either ordinance does not impart forgiveness or salvation. As we consider these two ordinances, we will look first at what they are and how they are to be observed, and then we will reflect on what they have to say about our daily Christian walk.

Let's begin by taking a look at Baptism.

## **1. The Ordinance of Baptism**

When I explain baptism to someone, I like to explain it in three ways:

### **A. Baptism is an Act of Obedience**

If someone has truly accepted Jesus Christ as his or her Savior, if in fact he or she has chosen to surrender control of his or her life to Him as Lord, then obedience to Christ's commands should be the next step. Baptism is the proper first step in an obedient lifelong journey with Jesus Christ. This is why we as a church require that a person must be baptized if he or she is going to become a member of our church. We want church members who are obedient followers of Jesus.

In addition, when we talk about baptism we are talking about believer's baptism. By examining God's Word, we find that baptism is reserved for those who have made a conscious personal decision to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. Furthermore, we do not believe baptism has anything to do with your salvation; it is merely a step of obedience for those who have already been saved. Baptism does not save us. It is an act of obedience on the part of those who are already saved.

## **B. Baptism is Symbolic of Our Death, Burial and Resurrection**

Baptism by immersion symbolizes the death of our old self, our burial, and our resurrection to walk in a new way of life. In fact, the Greek word from which we get the word Baptize literally means, "to immerse."

**Romans 6:4** says that, "**We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.**"

## **C. Baptism is a Public Testimony and Witness**

Baptism is, for many believers, their first public testimony and witness about what has happened in their hearts and lives. By being baptized, a believer is saying publicly, "I have accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior and I am committed to acknowledging Him to be the Lord of my life." Biblical baptism is an act of obedience; it is symbolic of the death of our old selves, our burial, and our resurrection to walk in a new way of life in Christ; and it is an opportunity to bear public witness and testimony to what Christ has done in our hearts and lives. Let's next turn our attention to the Lord's Supper.

## **2. The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper**

In many Christian circles these days, the Lord's Supper has lost some of its significance. In some churches, it is their practice to observe the Lord's Supper as a part of each service. They pass out the cup and the bread and within a couple of minutes, it is over and done with.

The problem with this is that the observance of the Lord's Supper can become nothing more than just another regular activity. But that's not what it is intended to be. From a biblical point of view, the Lord's Supper has deep theological and spiritual meaning.

In **Luke 22:19** Jesus tells His disciples that they are to observe this ordinance in remembrance of Him.

**1 Corinthians 11:26** tells us, "**Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**"

By reading God's word, we are told three things the Lord's Supper calls us to remember.

## **A. The Bread is Symbolic of the Broken Body of Jesus**

Like the Passover lamb, Jesus, the Lamb of God, laid down His life as a sacrifice for sin. His body was broken, His hands and His feet, His side and His brow were pierced for us. Each time we take the bread in the Lord's Supper we are reminded of the theological truth of substitutionary atonement. Jesus laid His life down on the cross to pay the price for our sins. He died in our place. His body was broken so our broken souls could be healed.

**As Isaiah 53:5 says, "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."**

## **B. The Cup is Symbolic of the Blood of the Covenant**

In Exodus 24, Moses ratified the covenant God made with Israel by taking the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkling half of it on the altar and the other half on the people. It was with the blood of the sacrifice that the covenant was sealed between God and His people.

A covenant is the same thing as a Testament. The Old Testament, or old covenant, was based on the blood of sheep and oxen whereby the High Priest would have to go into the Holy of Holies once each year and make atonement for the sins of the people. But when Jesus died, He fulfilled the law and instituted a New Covenant, or New Testament, one that was ratified by His blood shed on the cross for us.

This is why the Bible says in **Hebrews 10** that it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, but Jesus, it says, took away the first covenant and established the second, so that by this, "We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

His blood, shed on the cross, was poured out for the forgiveness of sins. With His blood, He became the sacrifice for our sins, a sacrifice that was acceptable to God. When we take the cup, we are remembering Jesus shed blood; we are reflecting on the sacrifice He made for us. We are being reminded of the covenant between each of us and God, a covenant sealed with the blood of His only begotten Son.

But there is a third thing which this calls us to remember, and that is that Jesus is coming again to take us home. The Lord's Supper reminds us not only that Jesus died for us, but also that He will come again for us some day. And it calls us to live each day as if it might be that final day.

Our participation in and observance of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper also call us to be the people these ordinances signify we are. They call us to concrete action. And this is the final thing I want you to consider.

### **3. We are Called to a Different Way of Life**

Here are four things these ordinances call us to do.

#### **A. Reflect**

The ordinance of Baptism calls us to reflect on whether or not we are truly disciples of Jesus Christ. By being baptized, we are not merely joining a religious organization; we are not simply saying that we agree with the doctrines of a specific church or that we will lend our physical and financial support to a particular church.

When we enter the baptismal waters, we are publically stating that we have repented of our sins; we have turned from our old way of life and have begun to live a different way. And if Baptism calls us to identify with the body of Christ, the Lord's Supper calls us to be in right fellowship as members of the body of Christ.

#### **B. Remember**

First **Peter 1:18-19** says, **“<sup>18</sup>For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”**

Each time we take the cup and the bread we are to remember to whom we belong and the price He paid to redeem us from the penalty of our sin. It should call us back to the cross. Not only are we to reflect and remember, we are to repent.

#### **C. Repent**

When we take the cup and bread and remember all that Jesus has done for us and we allow His Spirit to show us the things in our life that are inconsistent with His will for our lives, we should repent. We should stop doing what is displeasing to God and begin to do what is pleasing in His sight.

**1 Corinthians 11:27-31** says, **“<sup>27</sup>Therefore, 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. <sup>28</sup>A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. <sup>29</sup>For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.”**

The Lord's Supper calls us to repent of our attitudes and actions that are displeasing to God. We are also called to recommit.

#### **D. Recommit**

We are called to recommit ourselves once again to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in our lives and to allow His Spirit to have absolute, unreserved control.