

**The Growth Institute**  
**Ecclesiology: Baptism and the Lord's Supper**  
**2/21/24**

Why do people pick different churches? Ignorance, preference, or conviction, unity on essentials, love 4 all

What do Baptists base everything on? Bible, not tradition

Why so? Conviction that 2 Tim 3:16-17 Bible governs, all men sin (Rom 3:23) so anti-board, and anti Pope

Official Baptist Faith and Message Statement (2000) on Baptism: “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.”

*Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12.*

## Communion

Why is communion a big deal? Jesus said to do it, it is practiced very differently in differing traditions

What are some other names for it? Eucharist (giving thanks), The Lord's Supper, ordinance or sacrament

❖ **What is communion?**

- 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. (Baptist Faith and Message 2000)

- It is symbolic and to be done “in remembrance”(Lk 22:19) it does not “become” Christ’s body & blood.
- ❖ **Who celebrates communion?**
  - Examined believers (1 Cor. 11:27-32)
  - Why only those? Because anything else mocks the work of Christ in bringing forgiveness (Mt. 26:28).
- ❖ **Where/when/how is communion celebrated?**
  - The frequency and location varies by tradition. The important thing is that it is celebrated truthfully.
  - Varieties of ways the elements are celebrated, the important thing is that they are celebrated truthfully
- ❖ **Why is communion celebrated?**
  - It deepens our faith and grows us in grace as we obey Christ’s commands and celebrate it in remembrance of his work!
  - Taking communion allows us to grow in God’s grace by reflecting on the gospel and renewing and strengthening our faith through the physical symbols of the work of Christ on our behalf.
  - It is a time of looking back & of giving thanks for the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Jesus, who offers forgiveness.
  - It is a time of looking out at those around us and making sure we are in right relationships with other believers.
  - It is a time for looking in and making sure that you are living the set apart life God has called you to.
  - It is a time for looking ahead to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9) with all believers and Christ reunited in eternity.

Could you take communion right now truthfully? With forgiven cleansed confessed heart or just ceremony?

#### **We Look Out at those Around Us**

- a. Explanation: they had potlucks before Communion, but were not sharing.
- b. Taken by the gathered body of believers
- c. Unity, Unity, Unity (18)
- d. Not taking advantage of others or having something against someone (make it right!)
- e. Look around and pray for those in your section (6 sections in sanctuary).

#### **2. Look back to Christ’s work (23-26)**

- a. Completed one-time work! We do it in remembrance, not bread becomes Christ. Nobody in the original room thought it actually became Christ.
- b. Passover celebration made better—passover meal looked back to temporary physical deliverance (MacArthur)—we look back to permanent spiritual deliverance.

- c. And we look back with the intent of remembering as if we were there when Christ took and transformed the Passover Meal into what now refer to as the Lord's Supper/Communion/Eucharist
- d. "Jesus transformed the Passover Meal into a celebration of the infinitely greater deliverance He came to bring."
- e. His sacrifice once and for all. His stripes we are healed, his wrath bearing that we might be called sons. His tears that we might be made whole. His dying body that we might live. His blood for us!
- f. Going back means to recreate in and your mind and recapture the reality as much as possible.
- g. So—go back now, look back to when Christ gave the disciples the bread and cup. Go back specifically to the cross and resurrection when Christ gave his body and shed his blood that we might be forgiven of sin and given new purpose in life.

### 3. Look ahead to Christ's return (26)

- a. He makes all thing well!
- b. COVID will not be in heaven.
- c. No long-term illness or disease.
- d. No debilitating memory loss.
- e. Some on cancer drugs, but that will end.
- f. Some addicted to substances and failing as parents/spouses, but that will end.
- g. We all wander in our relationship with God, but that will end.
- h. We enjoy feeling the presence of God, but we will see His face!
- i. Come quickly and make all things well and give us that perfect relationship! WE say that in the Supper! It is an appetizer taken in anticipation of the Marriage meal when we will feast on all the goodness of heaven in the presence of God forever.

### 4. Look in for sin (27-34)

- a. God disciplines to get our attention!
- b. This passage means that some sickness and suffering is a result of personal sin. I don't think that's the cause of all sickness or suffering, but it was true biblically, and just because some people take this too far and say that if you are suffering, it's certainly because you sinned, doesn't mean we should ignore the Bible here.
- c. Sometimes sickness and suffering is a direct result of God disciplining us for our sin. So how do you know if yours is? Well ask God and if it's not clear and you are not doing something you know absolutely is wrong, then that's probably not the reason. God has a long history of communicating with people and he knows how to get his point across to us.
- d. You should recognize that God disciplines for His purpose of our holiness, and that should cause you to pray as David did in Psalm 139:

- e. Psalm 139:23-24 *Search me O God and know my heart, try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.*
- f. But, if you aren't aware of sin that continues to mark your life, then your suffering is not likely a result of that.
- g. That caveat given, the better question isn't really what sin that I committed has led to my suffering, but simply what sin have I committed?
- h. We don't want to approach the Supper casually as someone just having a snack. The bread and juice don't accomplish things on their own. They are not magical. And to treat them trivially is to treat Christ's death and resurrection as unnecessary. So examine yourself, see your sin and cling to Christ.
- i. You look in: not to see if you alone are worthy, but if you are taking the supper in a worthy manner. On your own, you can never be worthy, but even recognizing your own unworthiness is a step towards taking the Supper in a worthy manner!
- j. God forgives those who admit their sin, clinging to Christ in their place, not those that ignore it, or try to make up for it.

Value of the experience depends on the condition of your heart

Ask as we get ready to take the Supper:

1. Do you look out in harmony?
2. Do you look back in faith?
3. Do you look ahead in anticipation
4. Do you look in and see forgiveness?

Church Covenants and Membership: A Discussion about Why

Other Examples of Church Covenants

Our Church Covenants (Pre 1981 version vs. 2021 version)