

“Why the Church” - Week 6

SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 2024 - MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - “Why the Church: Baptism & Lord’s Supper”

We began this series called “Why the Church”, with the hope and desire for those of you who attend Rich Fork on a regular basis, to have a better idea of the traits we expect to run throughout this body of believers called Rich Fork Baptist Church. So far in our “Why the Church” series, we have looked at the importance of biblical preaching, evangelism & discipleship, prayer, and obedient generosity. This week we will look at the two ordinances (practices) that Jesus modeled during his ministry and time with his disciples that we still regularly practice as a church: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (communion). We can look to Jesus Christ in the gospels and see him establishing these practices. We see the early church throughout the New Testament replicating and continuing them. We carry out these ordinances still today, not for the sake of tradition, but for what they mean and celebrate for each of us who have a relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus modeled baptism and the Lord’s supper to us and because of this we continue them today as we follow Christ.

Scripture - 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Matthew 3:13-17

The Lord’s Supper is a remembrance, pausing, to give thanks for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in his death as a payment for our sinfulness. During the Lord’s Supper, those who have confessed to believing in life, death, and resurrection take a piece of bread and a cup filled with juice. When we eat the bread, we remember the body of Jesus. We remember that God became man and dwelled among us, suffered as a man, and died. We remember in the bread that His body was given for us. Then, we take the cup and remember the blood of Christ that covered all our sins. We remember the price Jesus paid so that we could be forgiven of our sins.

Baptism is following the example of Jesus that we see from scripture, and it is also a physical celebration of a spiritual transformation in our own hearts and lives as believers in Jesus Christ. When we practice this ordinance of baptism, established by Jesus, we do so by immersion in a body of water which symbolizes our death to our former way of life (going under the water) and a resurrection to new life in Jesus Christ (coming out of the water). Through baptism, we are saying to others that, “I am a follower of Jesus and a part of this body of believers who have surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ.” As believers, we follow through with baptism because it is modeled by Jesus, there is the spiritual meaning in our lives and the church that it represents, and most importantly, because it is commanded of us as a church by Jesus Christ himself. Baptism is a significant step in the life of every believer.

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Scripture Study:

Matthew 3:13-17 & 28:18-20; Luke 22:14-20; Acts 2:38-41; Romans 6:1-4; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Ephesians 2:4-10 & 4:4-6

As you study the scripture verses provided for this week, study for right context and right questions...

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)

Key Thoughts

“This ordinance (practice) of the Lord’s supper (communion) is not about imagining something in our minds but about remembering actual events in history. It is not about dreaming but about deliberately directing our thoughts back two thousand years to a body given and to blood shed on a cross. It is about remembering the past with such vividness that it affects the present.” (Platt, p. 63, 12 Traits)

There are specific ways to practice the Lord’s Supper given to us in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. Some also call it communion because it celebrates the common union with other followers of Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:42) The Lord’s Supper is a remembrance, pausing, to give thanks for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in his death as a payment for our sinfulness.

When we eat the bread, we remember the body of Jesus. We remember that God became man and dwelled among us, suffered as a man, and died. We remember in the bread that His body was given for us. Then, we take the cup and remember the blood of Christ that covered all our sins. We remember the price Jesus paid so that we could be forgiven of our sins.

“When we celebrate this simple meal together, we announce, “Jesus has set us free, and He is coming back.” This meal is pausing to remind ourselves that through the body of Jesus and the blood he has shed, we can experience the forgiveness of our sins and the freedom we have from the power of sin in our lives.” (Platt, p. 95, 12 Traits)

Baptism is a public demonstration of our initial identification with Jesus Christ and His church. (Platt, p. 84 , 12 Traits)

Baptism is following the example of Jesus. Baptism allows us to identify with Jesus and the local church. It is far more than going underwater. Baptism also aligns us with the command of Jesus found in Matthew 28:18-20. It would be implied that when we make disciples, we lead them to baptism because each of us, as followers of Jesus Christ, has already followed through with this act of obedience to the example and command of Jesus Christ.

Baptism unites us to each other as the body, the church. When we participate in baptism as a church, there is such an incredible sense of unity and purpose because, at that moment, we are experiencing the commands of Jesus, the example of Jesus, being celebrated in front of us. It is truly a time of celebration.

Repent and be baptized. Repentance is not a popular topic or conversation starter in 2024 because it must include the confession of our sinfulness and the impossibility of saving ourselves.

Key Thoughts

Repent and be baptized. To repent: Includes confession, acknowledgment of sin, a broken and humbled heart, a surrender to Jesus Christ, and a complete change of direction. Repentance is not "I'm sorry" without change, and the behavior continues. Repentance is, I'm sorry, and then we examine how to face the other direction in our choices, our actions, our hearts, and, if necessary, our words.

Baptism is a celebration of the grace of Jesus Christ. It is a proclamation, an outward display of what Christ has done. Going into the water signifying the death of our old self, but it displays our union with Christ. His death was our death. When he was crucified for the sinfulness of mankind and died, those who confess our sins were baptized into his death - this is not something to cringe at or think as odd - but it is, in all actuality, it is a stunning picture of what happens when we commit our lives to Christ.

Baptism is a powerful act of submission. Our identity no longer clings to our life and accomplishments, but to that of Jesus Christ and his death. In the moment of baptism, we unite with all believers within our local church body and acknowledge our hope, our eternal home, our purpose, our direction; our purpose is in unison with this group of people and also with every other follower of Jesus Christ.

Baptism symbolizes that we have surrendered to a life of freedom. We were dead, buried, but when Jesus Christ rose from the dead, we were given new life - freedom. This is a joyous occasion, but one not to be taken lightly.

Baptism is an outward expression of a person submitting his/her life to Jesus Christ. We baptize because it is modeled by Jesus, we baptize because of the spiritual meaning it represents, and we baptize because it is commanded of us as a church. This is a significant step in the life of every believer. When we enter the waters of baptism and are plunged under the water, when we come up, it symbolizes the newness of life that happens when we confess our sins and are made right and can have a relationship to a holy God.

Reflect & Respond

Read Luke 22:14-20 and 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. Where do you see in these verses that the Lord's Supper is something that we should practice regularly?

Based upon these same verses above, what should our heart condition be as we partake in the Lord's supper? Dive into what it means to drink the cup in an "unworthy manner"

In 1 Corinthians 11:17-22 we see Paul rebuking the church in Corinth for how they are conducting communion. What things do you see taking place that have become issues for this church regarding communion? How as a church body can we help to guard against these same things taking place within Rich Fork's local body?

Acts 2:38-41 and Romans 6:1-4 both call us to repentance and baptism. Look up the definitions for both of these words to gain further understanding of how they go together. How do these two actions together demonstrate our faith in Christ and our willingness to obey Him?

As you read through Matthew 3:13-17, Ephesians 2:1-10 and Ephesians 4:4-6 what do you see regarding baptism? What should this look like according to what you read in scripture? What is the purpose of this baptism?

Read Matthew 28:18-20. What commands do you see from Jesus Christ within these verses? What does submission to Christ regarding these verses look like for us as believers? What may you still need to submit regarding these truths from our Lord?

As we work through this series, please know that you have **FREE access** to the book [Twelve Traits: Embracing God's Design for the Church](#), by David Platt, which this series is taken from. You can find and download this short book for free at the link below and we encourage you to read through this with us throughout the series.

https://radical-net-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/images/20220308095847/12Traits_Web.pdf