

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

ORDINANCES (SACRAMENTS)

A. Definition

1. A religious rite or ceremony considered to be an outward sign of an inward, spiritual grace.
2. The Latin term *sacramentum* means an *oath of allegiance* and may have originally referred to a vow taken by soldiers entering the Roman army.
3. Christian use apparently began with Tertullian and was the Latin translation of the Greek word *mystery*.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 2:7, *But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.*
 - b. Ephesians 3:1-3, *For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— 2 assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, 3 how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly.*
 - c. Colossians 1:26, *the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints.*

B. Roman Catholic Sacraments

1. Baptism
2. Confirmation
3. Eucharist
4. Confession
5. Holy orders
6. Marriage
7. Anointing the sick (extreme unction or last rites), James 5:13-18.

EVANGELICAL ORDINANCES

A. Baptism

1. Spiritual baptism
 - a. It gives a new position
 - 1) It brings forgiveness of sins and gives eternal life, John 5:24, *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*
 - 2) It is the beginning of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Romans 8:9, *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*
 - 3) It unites believers to each other, 1 Cor. 12:12-13, *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.*
 - b. It gives a new power, the Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 2:2-5, *For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*
 - c. It gives new purpose, life in Christ, Romans 6:1-4, *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*
2. Christian baptism
 - a. It is believer’s baptism.
 - 1) It is a public identification to Christ, Acts 8:35-40, *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. 40 But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.*

- 2) It is a break from one's old life. Many societies are not concerned with what a person believes as long as it is not made public.
 - 3) It is an act of obedience, Acts 8:12, *But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*
- b. It is not infant baptism or confirmation.
- 1) It is a faith response to the Gospel by the one who believes, not by the parents on behalf of a child.
 - 2) Infant dedication would be a time when the parents make a public commitment to raise their child in the truth of God's Word and encourage their child to make an intelligent, personal response to the Gospel message.

B. Lord's Supper

1. Historical Perspective on Communion

a. Introduction

1) Discord

- a) Geoffrey Bromiley, *Perhaps one of the keenest reminders of our Christian fallibility is that of the Lord's Supper, instituted as a simple act promoting fellowship, has become the subject of complicated debate and blatant division.*
- b) Gary Wiley, *Tonight we have the opportunity to participate in probably the most controversial event in Christianity, communion. Wars have been fought over it, people have been tortured, even murdered because of their beliefs concerning communion.*

Why has there been so much controversy? Debate has centered primarily on the elements. Some defend transubstantiation, the bread and the wine are changed into the very body and blood of Christ. Others hold to consubstantiation, the bread and the wine become the substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ while keeping the appearance of bread and wine. We hold to the memorial position, the bread and wine signify Christ's redemptive work received by faith yet acknowledging the presence of Christ in our midst.

Let me quote some noteworthy comments concerning communion. In the 2nd century, in the Didache, it was stated, "On the Lord's own day come together and break bread and give thanks...Whoever is holy, let him come; whoever is not, let him repent." Ireaneus wrote, "The partakers now engage in a spiritual service and enter by communion into the presence of God while the elements remain as they were...The souls of believers are nourished because God superintends the service and by His grace feeds and blesses His own." In the 3rd century, Augustine declared, "What is seen is the bread and the cup which the eyes renounce; but what faith demands is that the bread is the body of Christ and the cup is His blood."

Controversy has not been only between Protestants and Catholics. The first major split in Reformation Protestantism came because of differing views on communion. Martin Luther held to consubstantiation while Zwingli held to the memorial view. He declared that This is My body, means "This represents My body."

As we participate tonight, let's be reminded that communion was instituted by our Lord - it is not an option or a personal opinion. Jesus Christ is the host at His table - we are the guests. It has purpose - it pictures what should be the unity of the Body of Christ, an expression of fellowship with God and each other through Jesus Christ. Therefore, may tonight be a time of sweet fellowship with our Lord and with each other. There is no place for controversy at the Lord's Table.

2) Important terms

- a) Transubstantiation - the bread and the wine are changed into the very body and blood of Christ.
- b) Consubstantiation - the bread and the wine become the substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ while keeping the appearance of bread and wine.
- c) Memorial - the bread and wine signify Christ's redemptive work received by faith. It rejects the bodily presence of Christ in the elements.
- d) Reformed - there is a dynamic presence of Christ in the elements made effective in the believer as he partakes.
- e) Memorial with presence - it is primarily a memorial while acknowledging the presence of Christ in our midst.

- b. Communion in the Early Church
 - 1) First Century
 - a) Most common designation was *Eucharist* from Greek word for praise or thanksgiving.
 - b) Justin Martyr, *When we cease from our prayers, bread is presented and wine and water...A distribution ...is made to each person, and to those who are not present they are sent by the deacons.*
 - 2) Second Century
 - a) *The Didache* - 100 A.D.
 - 1] Only baptized believers participate.
 - 2] *Whoever is holy, let him come; whoever is not, let him repent.*
 - b) Ireaneus, *The partakers now engage in a spiritual service and enter by communion into the presence of God while the elements remain as they were...The souls of believers are nourished because God superintends the service and by His grace feeds and blesses His own.*
 - 3) Third Century
 - a) Origen, Eucharist is a *bloodless sacrifice*.
 - b) Augustine, *What is seen is the bread and the cup which the eyes renounce; but what faith demands is that the bread is the body of Christ and the cup is his blood...What is seen has bodily appearance, what is understood has a spiritual fruit.*
 - c. Communion in the Medieval Church (13th - 14th Centuries)
 - 1) The Roman Catholic Church declared transubstantiation as dogma in 1215.
 - 2) John Wycliffe
 - a) He protested against superstition and idolatry he saw associated with the Mass and the importance given to the priest in *making* Christ's body.
 - b) He held to the *receptionist* view - participation is for believers.
 - c) He was committed to *remanence* - the bread and wine remain unchanged, *Nobody on earth is able to see Christ in the consecrated Host with the bodily eye, but by faith.*
 - d. Communion in the Reformation Church (16th Century)
 - 1) Differences in communion led to the first major split in Reformation Protestantism.
 - 2) Two Camps
 - a) Martin Luther
 - 1] He held to consubstantiation.
 - 2] The body and blood of Christ are really present, *Christ is in, with, and under the bread and wine.*
 - 3) Huldrych Zwingli
 - a) *This is my body* means *This represents my body*.
 - b) Communion is a sacred feast at which Christ's death is commemorated and contemplated in faith.
 - e. Communion in the Contemporary Church (19th Century to the Present)
 - 1) Elements
 - a) Baptists used wine and bread for communion.
 - b) In times of short supply, other staples were used, such as beer, brandy, biscuits, and cake.
 - c) With the advent of the American temperance crusade, Baptists found a substitute in unfermented grape juice.
 - 2) Distribution
 - a) The use of individual cups came as a result of the germ theory in the 1860's.
 - b) The concept of the minister as priest serving the sacraments to people changed to the concept of the priesthood of all believers with deacons serving individuals.
2. Purpose
 - a. Fellowship, 1 Corinthians 10:16 - 17, *The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.*
 - b. The Lord's Supper pictures the unity of the Body of Christ - an expression of fellowship, with God and each other through Christ.
 - c. Being reconciled to God, we can and must be reconciled to each other.

3. Means

- a. Remembrance, 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."***
 - 1) What He did: He died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay the penalty for our sins and to provide a place in Heaven for us.
 - 2) Who He is: the infinite God - Man
 - 3) Point - It was instituted in a Passover setting.
 - a) As the Passover reenacts the meal on the eve of redemption out of Egypt, so the Lord's Supper reenacts the meal on the eve of liberation from sin and death.
 - b) The Passover lamb is the Lamb of God.
 - 4) Point - It emphasizes our need to receive nourishment from the Lord - He is our means of spiritual growth.
- b. Proclamation, 1 Corinthians 11:26, ***For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.***
 - 1) Point - it looks to the past.
 - a) It is a declaration of the Gospel.
 - b) Augustine called it a *visible word* of substitutionary atonement, a feast of liberation.
 - 2) Point - it looks to the future.
 - a) It is a reminder of our certain hope.
 - b) Our fellowship will be perfect when Christ returns.
 - 3) Geoffrey Bromiley, *He has given us this table, insignificant and even pointless in the eyes of secular man, but eloquent to believers as a sign of things past and ...things to come.*
- c. Self-examination, 1 Corinthians 11:27-34, ***Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another— if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.***
 - 1) Faith - have I placed my faith in Christ alone for eternal life? If not, do so now.
 - 2) Motivation - am I at this table trying to gain favor with God instead of thanking Him for the full favor I have in Christ? If so, release yourself to His grace.
 - 3) Confession - am I carrying unconfessed sins? If you are, lay them at the cross.
 - 4) Irish theologian D.J. Templeton, *As we ponder the mystery of what Christ did for us on the cross, being silent allows us to realize our finiteness before the Almighty.*

CONCLUSION

- A. The sacraments do not supply grace.
- B. Sacraments remind us of the grace we have already received.
- C. Baptism is a public declaration of faith and the start of the new journey in Christ.
- D. The Lord's Supper is a reminder of our responsibility to stay on the path of faith and live what we believe.