

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Open your Bibles this morning to 1 Corinthians 11:24-26.

“And when he had given thanks, he brake it and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.”

Let's bow for prayer.

Sometimes people, Christians, believers have differences of opinions.

We are not all made alike or drawn from the same vein.

When it comes to the ordinances of the church this is so.

Almost everyone who is a believer believes that there are at least two ordinances that are given to the church: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Some would add a third: foot washing.

While foot washing was and is still practiced in some circles, I find no evidence where the church of Jesus Christ was ever commanded to do this.

That is not so with baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Both of these two ordinances are to be practiced in today's church.

Jesus commanded us to “Go into all the world and baptize them...”

Where the Lord's Supper is concerned it is said, “As oft as ye do this, do it in remembrance of me.”

Both of these two ordinances are pictures, visual aids, if you will of our salvation.

Baptism, is generally a one-time occurrence visually demonstrating our death and burial and resurrection with the Lord Jesus Christ.

As Bible-believing Baptists, we don't practice infant baptism. I personally don't believe it is taught in the Scriptures.

Also, as Bible-believing Baptists, we follow what is often referred to as "Believer's Baptism."

What that means is that we don't baptize an individual until they make a "profession of faith in Christ," and then, as a general rule, we only baptize them once.

There are occasions when we may re-baptize someone if, for example, they come to us and tell us that they were not baptized properly; that is, they were not immersed in water when they were baptized.

They were either sprinkled or had the water poured over them but they were not immersed.

As Bible-believing Baptists, we don't practice sprinkling or pouring.

We practice baptism by immersion.

Based on the evidence in the Bible, we believe this is the proper form or mode of baptism and besides that, the word, "baptizo" means "to dip, or to immerse."

The other ordinance given to the church is the Lord's Supper or communion.

I have never made it a practice to call the Lord's Supper "communion," but I don't mind if you do and there certainly isn't anything wrong with it as long as we remember that the Lord's Supper or Communion doesn't save us.

Like the tap water in the baptistery the Lord's Table doesn't carry with it any saving grace.

Baptism and/or the Lord's Supper cannot and will not save you.

Unlike baptism, which as a general rule only occurs once, the Lord's Supper is a continuous ordinance.

Our text says in verses 25 and 26 "as oft as ye do this," which carries with it the connotation that the Lord's Supper can be and is supposed to be an oft repeated ordinance.

How often is a matter of opinion!

Folks, there is no right or wrong concerning how often the Lord's Supper is to be observed.

Some churches observe this ordinance every week, and some once a month and others once a quarter. We here at NEBC have set our desire for this to be quarterly.

But there is no right or wrong concerning the frequency of the Lord's Supper.

Now the Lord's Supper is a memorial.

Like the Passover, the Lord's Supper was instituted before the event took place that it was supposed to memorialize.

The Passover was to memorialize the taking of the lives of the firstborn of Egypt as the death angel passed over the land.

It was to be the "straw that broke the camel's back," so to speak so that Pharaoh would let the people go.

The Passover was put into place before that happened.

The Lord's Supper was to memorialize the broken body and the shed blood of Jesus on the cross.

His body was broken but not one of his bones was ever broken so that the prophecy in Psalm 34:20 might be fulfilled.

Since the Lord's Supper was clearly put in place before Jesus went to the cross that meant that the body, as symbolized by the bread, and the blood, as symbolized by the cup had to be figurative.

In other words, they didn't literally eat the body and drink the blood of Christ.

For one reason, He was still alive when He instituted the Lord's Supper.

So these elements of the Lord's Supper are figurative, not literal.

When you eat this cracker that I'm holding up you are not literally eating the body, the flesh of Christ.

When you drink the juice that is in this cup you are not literally drinking the blood of Christ...it is figurative.

It stands for something.

The bread stands for the body of Christ and the cup stands for the blood of Christ.

The Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation is not true.

The elements of the communion or the Lord's Supper do not actually turn into the body and blood of Christ before or after it is consumed.

The Lord's Supper is like baptism in that both are symbols or reminders.

Baptism is not our literally dying in the water and being literally resurrected.

It is a picture of our salvation.

In the same way, the Lord's Supper is a picture of His sacrificial death to secure salvation for us.

The Lord didn't want us to forget that – ever.

The Lord's Table is not a denominational table.

I would not feel comfortable as a pastor saying to someone, "If you are not a member of this church, even though you may be a believer, please refrain from participating in this."

I believe that if you are a truly born-again child of God, properly baptized, whether you are a member here or not, you not only can but should partake of the Lord's Supper.

Now while I have said that, I also want to say this: No pastor can ever know the hearts of individuals in his congregation at any given moment.

I don't know your spiritual needs this morning and I don't pretend to know them.

That is between you and your God.

Paul gave a stinging warning to the Corinthian Church to examine themselves before they partook of the Lord's Table.

Do you see in that way how personal this is?

It is between you and your God.

What Paul said in essence was this: Either you deal with your sin or God will. It's your choice.

In a few moments, we are going to have a quiet time.

You can call it what you like: a time to reflect or whatever.

This is not just down time.

It is time to reflect and, if necessary, deal with some sin that is in your life.

Remember, either you will deal with your sin or God will. It's your choice.

Let's bow for prayer!