

Doctrine/Membership Class Article 9: Ordinances \Sacraments

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ has ordained two sacramental signs or gospel ordinances to be observed by His community of faith until He comes again (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor.11:23-26). They are immersion in water of penitent believers in the name of the triune God upon confession of their faith in the person and saving work of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; 8:34-39; Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:11-12; 1 Pet. 3:21) and the sacred eating of bread and drinking of the cup (fruit of the vine) in remembrance of his atoning sacrifice for sin. These holy rites are a visible sign of the grace of God in Jesus Christ on behalf of his people and of his pledged word of forgiveness, as well as the ratifying acts of faith by which the believer is publicly identified with Christ in his saving work.

Brief Confession: *We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are two gospel ordinances observed by the believers to signify spiritual union with the Lord Jesus Christ in His saving deeds.*

The Ordinances/Sacraments

by Wayne Conrad

The ordinances involve ritual, holy ritual that is established by God. If you change the symbols, you change the meaning of the ordinances.

Notice that baptism follows the article on sanctification. In fact, one's baptism is directly related to our sanctification. Paul reminds us to remember our baptism (Rom. 6; Gal. 3:27) in a manner similar in which the Old Testament saints remembered God's deliverance of them by the Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea. They were cut off from Egypt; they could not go back.

So your baptism marks you as a child of God. You are separated from your old life and have entered a new life. Christ died and was buried and so also you died and were buried with him. Baptism is a cleavage. When Christ arose, you arose. Your baptism is an act of consecration.

The Lord's Supper is a continuing sign of your status before God - it brings weekly to our remembrance our status before him: we are accepted only because of Christ's death.

In addition, we are reminded that week by week our life is dependent on the constant nourishment of the risen, living Lord. Christ is our life - we feed upon him by faith.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic ritual but it is more - it is a communion (or fellowship or participation) with our ascended Lord (1 Cor. 10:16). It is the central act of Christian worship.

The evangelical church emphasizes too much the preaching to the neglect of the Lord's Supper. Yet even if a liberal church portrays Biblically the Lord's Supper the gospel is preached!

In our services we most often have the Supper at the end of the service because it is the chief act of worship - it is the climax!

"Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Feast" (1 Cor. 5:7).
Alleluia!