

## Engage with the Ordinances

Luke 22:7-23

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I'd like to call Pastor Tim and his wife Carrie up front. We want to publicly thank them for 35 years of faithful and fruitful ministry at Edgewood! As a symbol of our gratitude, we're giving them a generous gift card. Let's show our appreciation for them right now.

A symbol is something that stands for something else. I'm going to put some well-known symbols up on the screen and I'd like you to shout out what they represent.

- 3 Green Arrows Curved to Form a Triangle (Recycling)
- Bald Eagle (USA)
- Green Bay Packers (God's Team)
- Fed Ex

I'd like you to stare at this last one for a bit. Do you see anything else as you look closely at the logo? Did you catch the arrow between the "E" and the "X"?

Today we're going to address the two ordinances given to the church by Jesus Himself – Baptism and Communion. I'm hoping that we will see some things we've never seen before. I'm praying that the arrows from God's Word will penetrate our lives as we go behind the symbols to see a deep spiritual reality. It's interesting that Jesus began his official ministry with His baptism and the Lord's Supper was celebrated at the end of His ministry.

We refer to them as "ordinances" rather than sacraments because they were especially "ordained" or ordered by Jesus. We don't use the word "sacrament" because that word carries connotations that can lead to confusion. The Latin word *sacramentum* speaks of giving "grace" or the granting of some kind of special favor from God. While ordinances are important they are not in and of themselves grace-giving elements that contribute to our salvation. Our commitment is the same as the Reformers – The Scriptures alone, by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone (BTW, the sermon the last weekend in October will be on these five "solas").

Baptism and Communion are symbols, or visual aids of the gospel as they retell the story of redemption. Ordinances are determined by three factors: they were

instituted by Christ, taught by the apostles and practiced by the early church. And therefore we are called to *engage* in them today.

I'm reminded of the young pastor who was fresh out of seminary and was conducting his first baptism service. In his nervousness, he got his Scriptures confused concerning the two ordinances and declared: "*I now baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*" As he lowered the new convert into the water, he added, "*And drink ye all of it.*"

Let's look first at baptism. I'm grateful for insights that I've gleaned over the years from Ray Pritchard and John MacArthur on this topic and some of what I will share reflects their influence.

One of the best ways to study a biblical theme is by simply doing a Scriptural survey. While my preaching preference is to study a book of the Bible verse-by-verse, or to focus on one primary passage, there is great merit in pulling together the various verses that have to do with a topic and then drawing some conclusions from them.

### **Baptism in the Gospels**

Let's begin by looking at the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark in verse 4: "***John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.***" Drop down to verses 7-8: "***And he preached, saying, 'After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'***"

In Mark 1:9-10, we discover that baptism is important because Jesus Himself was baptized: "***In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.***"

It's likely that Jesus walked about 60 miles in order for John to baptize Him in the Jordan River. We also learn that the disciples were baptized and in John 4:2, they baptized others. Turn now to Matthew 28:19-20 where we see that baptism is a distinctive mark of discipleship: "***Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.***" Simply put, we believe in baptism,

and we practice it, because Christ commanded it. Making disciples of all nations includes baptizing them.

BTW, I'm looking forward to having Manuel and Kim Contreras with us next weekend as we focus on how to engage Glocally. Manuel, a former gang member, will be speaking on courage at the Man-up Breakfast and Kim will be joining the women for the bonfire Saturday night.

Now, let's see how this command is fleshed out in the Book of Acts. There are ten accounts of obedience to this ordinance in Acts alone. For the sake of time, I'll list just five of them.

### **Baptism in the Book of Acts**

1. Acts 8:12-13: ***“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. Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip...”***
2. Acts 8:36-38: ***“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?’ And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.”***
3. Acts 9:18: Listen to what happened to the apostle Paul after he was converted: ***“And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized.”***
4. Acts 18:8: ***“...And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized.”***
5. Acts 22:16: ***“And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized...”***

Here's one overriding truth from these passages – baptism *always* takes place *after* belief! The order is critical – the next step after being born again is to be baptized.

M.R. DeHaan gives an historical perspective: *“In the early days of the church...As long as a man gathered with Christians, he was tolerated, but when once he submitted to baptism, he declared to all the world, I BELONG TO THIS DESPISED GROUP, and immediately he was persecuted...A person might be a believer and keep it strictly a secret and thus avoid unpleasantness and suffering, but once he submitted to public baptism he had burned his bridges behind him...”*  
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When you are baptized you're declaring that you've burned your bridges to bondage. As you stand in the water waiting to be baptized, you symbolize Jesus dying on the cross. As you are lowered into the water, you're providing a visual demonstration that Jesus was buried in the tomb. As you shoot out of the water, you're picturing Jesus rising from the dead.

### **Baptism Illustrated**

Two illustrations help us understand the concept of *identification*. When a person pledges allegiance to the flag, he or she is openly identifying with the United States of America. Likewise, when a person is baptized, he or she is pledging allegiance to Jesus Christ by openly identifying with Him.

The second illustration is the wedding ring. When a man (or woman) gets married, he (or she) almost always wears a wedding ring. Just as the ring declares, "*I'm taken. I belong to another,*" so in baptism the believer declares, "*I'm taken. I'm a believer and I belong to none other than the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.*"

### **Mode of Baptism**

According to contemporary lexicons, the primary meaning of "*baptize*" is "*to dip, plunge, or immerse.*" The secondary meaning is to "*bring under the influence*" and the root means, "*to totally overwhelm.*" Interestingly, while there were Greek words for sprinkling or pouring that were available; the writers of Scripture chose the word *baptizo*, or immersion.

Let's ask and answer a few questions.

**1. What about infant baptism?** In the Bible, belief always precedes baptism so this would preclude babies getting baptized. Without the ingredient of faith, baptism becomes just another church ritual. Someone put it this way: "*Unless you have already come to faith in Jesus, being baptized does no more than get you wet.*"

I can remember a Christian guy asking me if I was saved when I was in high school. I told him very bluntly: "*Of course I am.*" He said, "*How do you know?*" I replied, "*Because I was baptized as a baby.*" I used to think that this was all it took. I had been led astray, just like millions of other people who have false assurance of their salvation just because they were dabbled with some water when they were a week or so old.

**2. If I was baptized as an infant do I need to be baptized again as a believer?**

Yes. Since baptism is *a public statement of your own personal faith in Jesus Christ*, then it's important to make your statement as a believer. Actually, you're not really being baptized again because when you were sprinkled as a baby it wasn't biblical baptism. When you are baptized as a believer by immersion, it will be your *first* baptism.

**3. When should baptism be performed?** As soon as possible after conversion. In fact, in the book of Acts, it often happened immediately after someone got saved. Remember, baptism is not a mark of spiritual maturity, but rather a statement of personal identification with Jesus Christ. You don't have to wait until your spiritual life is where you want it to be. It's an obedience issue, not a maturity issue.

When the first Christians were baptized, they would shout out, "*Jesus is Lord!*" Baptism has always been a sign of submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

In the early 1900's a machinist at Ford Motor Company in Detroit became a Christian and was baptized. Shortly after he got saved, the Holy Spirit convicted him of his need to make restitution for some car parts and tools he had stolen from the company. The next morning he brought everything back to his employer, explaining how he had just been baptized and wanted to make things right. His boss was dumbfounded so he sent a cable to Mr. Ford, who was out of the country, asking him how he should handle the situation. Mr. Ford sent an immediate reply: "*Make a dam in the Detroit River, and baptize the entire city!*"

Are you serious about following Christ? Then demonstrate your discipleship and get ready to take the plunge! If you're born again, your next step is baptism. If you want to learn more, pick up the booklet called, "Taking the Plunge" on the Resource Table.

Let's look now at Communion...

### **Going Way Back**

In Exodus 12 we learn about the roots of Passover. The head of the family was to take a lamb without blemish and slaughter it at twilight and then the blood was to be put on the sides and tops of the doorframes. That same night they were to roast the lambs, and gather bitter herbs and unleavened bread. They were to eat in haste

and be ready to travel because God was going to judge the Egyptians by killing their firstborn. Only those who were under the blood of the lamb would be “passed over.”

After being freed from the Egyptians, God’s people enjoyed a covenantal relationship with the Almighty for hundreds of years. As you read their history however, you quickly discover that they disobeyed and ruptured their relationship with Him time and again. When we come to the prophet Jeremiah we discover that God’s plan has always involved a new covenant: ***“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah”*** (Jeremiah 31:31).

### **The Savior’s Supper**

The night before Jesus was crucified He had a final meal with His closest followers. This dinner was more than just a social gathering. It was rich in spiritual meaning with sweet symbolism that goes back to the first Passover (The following insights were gleaned from “The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary,” 1988).

In order to prepare the Passover itself, Peter and John would have taken a lamb to the priests to have it slaughtered. The priests blew a threefold blast from their trumpets and collected the blood in gold and silver bowls that were then passed up to another priest who splashed the blood upon the altar. While all this was going on, a hymn of praise was led by the Levites, as the words from Psalms 113-118 filled the Temple. The two disciples would then receive their lamb back from the priest and then they roasted it on a spit over pomegranate wood. The 12 disciples gathered and took their places around the table in their best garments, joyful and at rest. To express this idea the rabbis insisted that at least part of the feast should be partaken in a recumbent position.

This explains Luke 22:14-16: ***“And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, ‘I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.’”*** That phrase “earnestly desired” literally means, *“I have desired with desire.”* Jesus was set on celebrating this supper because He knew the meaning behind his final meal.

Each element of the Passover meal had symbolic significance. The unleavened bread represented the haste with which Israel left Egypt. Bitter herbs would be eaten to remind them of the pain of their slavery. A paste-like puree was prepared

to look like clay to recall their forced labor. The Passover lamb helped them remember God's merciful "passing-over" Israel and the wine symbolized the blood sprinkled on their doorposts.

It's likely Jesus would have held up four different cups, each representing one of the "***I will***" phrases from Exodus 6:6-7.

1. "***I will bring you out from under***" (Cup of Sanctification).
2. "***I will deliver you from slavery***" (Cup of Plagues). As a way to recall the ten plagues, ten drops of wine were poured on a plate during the meal.
3. "***I will redeem you with an outstretched arm***" (Cup of Redemption).
4. "***I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God***" (Cup of Gathering).

The supper began with Jesus as the "host" pronouncing a benediction over the first cup. Then a table was brought in with the roasted lamb and Jesus would have taken some of the herbs, dipped them in sauce, eaten some, and given them to others. This is the background to Matthew 26:23: "***He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me.***"

Immediately after this, all the dishes were removed from the table and the second cup of wine would be filled. At this point it was customary for a son to ask his father a question: "*How is this night distinguished from all other nights?*" In response, as the host, Jesus would have recited the history of Israel, focusing on Abraham, their deliverance from Egypt, and the giving of the law. The dishes were then put back on the table and Jesus would have taken the symbols in succession, starting with the Passover lamb, then the bitter herbs and the unleavened bread as He briefly explained the importance of each one.

Everything was going according to the Passover plan. The disciples knew the drill, and could recite every word. And then in Luke 22:19, everything changes: "***And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'***" I imagine the disciples dropping their forks at this point (if they used them back then)! What did Jesus just say? This wasn't in the script for the supper, or was it?

As Jesus takes the unleavened bread, he utters words of thanks, breaks it, and hands it out to his followers. The Savior is saying that this bread is a symbol for

His body that was about to be broken, bruised and battered for them. This must have stunned them!

Before they could fully recover from this shocking statement, we read in Luke 22:20: ***“And likewise the cup after they had eaten...”*** This is probably the third cup, commonly called the “cup of redemption.” Interestingly, in the Passover observance, this cup was set-aside for the anticipated Messiah!

The script for the supper is back on track and then, in the second half of verse 20, Jesus startles them again when he says, ***“This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”*** The cup represents His bloody death, which would inaugurate the new covenant, spoken of by the prophet Jeremiah. Biblical covenants were always ratified by blood.

Brothers and sisters; please don't miss this. Jesus poured out His blood in order to kick off the new covenant. Hebrews 9:15 is very clear: ***“Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.”***

### Communion Correctives

As far as we know this memorial meal was celebrated with dignity and decorum (see Acts 2) until we get to the chaotic and confused church in Corinth. Please turn to 1 Corinthians 11. We see four “Communion Correctives” in these verses (this outline is from Bob Hostetler, combined with some help from Warren Wiersbe).

**1. To Remember – “Look Back” (23-25).** Paul received these instructions from Jesus Himself: ***“I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 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.’”*** Twice in this passage we're told to remember what Jesus did for us. *The celebration of communion is to be contemplative because it helps us remember what we tend to forget.*

Recognizing that there is wide disagreement related to the Lord's Supper among different denominations let me make just two points.

- **The bread and the cup serve as memorials of the Lord’s death; they don’t mystically *become* his body or blood.** None of the disciples would have thought that somehow the bread and the wine were turned into the body and blood of Jesus – After all, He was still in the room with them and he was holding the bread and the wine in his hands. When they saw Jesus hold these elements they would have immediately recognized them as tangible representations of a far deeper reality.
- **We are remembering His death, not *repeating* the sacrifice.** Some of you, including me, may come from a tradition that teaches that Jesus is sacrificed again and again through the celebration of the Mass. Scripture is very clear that Jesus has completed His sacrificial work on our behalf. Nothing more needs to be done, except to believe that He died as the substitute for our sins. Hebrews 10:10: ***“We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”***

Let’s pause and remember what Jesus did for us.

**2. To Rejoice – “Look Forward” (26).** ***“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”*** We’re to look back and remember the cross and also look forward to the crown. To ***“proclaim”*** means, ***“to announce publicly, to declare, publish, and perpetuate.”*** The bread and the cup tell the story of redemption and look ahead to the culmination of history. We eat and drink now in anticipation of a glorious banquet to come.

Let’s pause and rejoice that Jesus is coming again.

**3. To Repent – “Look Within” (27-28).** ***“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.”*** Once we remember by looking back, and rejoice by looking forward, we can’t help but look inside and see our need to repent. Paul is cautioning us about approaching the Lord’s Table in a trite manner.

Here are two questions to ask in preparation for communion:

- **Am I saved?** Have you ever come to the point in your life where you have received Christ by faith? Are you born again? 2 Corinthians 13:5 says: ***“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—***

***unless indeed you fail to meet the test!***” If you are not yet saved, the Lord’s Supper is not for you...yet.

- **Am I surrendered?** Are you keeping anything back from the Lord right now? Any sin that you’ve been playing around with that you’ve not repented of? Psalm 32:5: ***“I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not cover up my iniquity; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,’ and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.”*** Examine your attitudes, actions, and your affections. Let’s pause and repent of those sins the Lord shows us.

**4. To Reconcile – “Look Around” (28-29, 33-34).** ***“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...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.”*** Communion is also the time to make sure we’re living in union with those we’re in community with. Jesus has made us one, so we need to act accordingly. This is stated clearly in 1 Corinthians 10:17: ***“Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.”*** Communion is communal.

We’re all part of one body, and no one is better than anyone else. The story is told of a time that the Duke of Wellington took communion. As he was kneeling at the front of the church, a very poor old man went up and knelt down next to him. Immediately tension and commotion interrupted the silence of the church. Someone went up to the man and whispered to him, asking him to move away from the Duke. But the great commander overheard what was said and grabbed the old man’s hand to prevent him from rising. In a deep voice the Duke said, ***“Do not move; we are equal here.”***

Is there anyone you need to ask forgiveness from? Anyone you need to extend forgiveness to?

In the Bible, dining together signifies two things: *appropriation* and *participation*. By eating the bread and drinking from the cup we’re saying that we have received redemption and we’re declaring that we are in community with one another and with the Lord.

Communion is for sinners in Corinth and sinners in the Quad Cities. Let’s pray as the deacons prepare to serve us.

**Song: "Love Ran Red"**