

SERMON STARTER – Key words: Baptism, communion, Lord’s Supper, immersion

## CHURCH ORDINANCES

“Ordinances” is the word used by most Bible governed churches when referring to Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The word “ordinances” refers to the practices:

- (1) Ordained by the Lord Jesus;
- (2) Taught in the New Testament;
- (3) Practiced by the early church and
- (4) Perpetuated historically by Bible governed churches down through history.

Baptists have historically held that it is by the authority of the local church that these practices be administered and perpetuated. Let us review the two ordinances.

### I. THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM.

#### Matthew 28:19-20

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

The ordinance of Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water to show, as a solemn and beautiful picture, our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior. It symbolizes our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. It has no saving merit. It is an outward picture of an inward reality.

Look at the practice of baptism by briefly considering the Way, the Who, and the Why of Baptism:

#### A. The “Way” Of Baptism.

Sometimes Baptists are ridiculed for our insistence on a certain manner or mode of Baptism. But we do so because the Bible is clear about the way of Baptism. I will cite two New Testament examples of the actual observance of Baptism. The first is:

##### 1. *The Baptism of the Lord Jesus.* Matt. 3:13 & 16

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him..... When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water....”

##### 2. *The Baptism of the Ethiopian.* Acts 8:36-39

“Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?’ Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.”

Why, in both cases, did both the one being baptized and the one doing the baptizing get into the water? And why was John the Baptist called “John The Baptizer”? Answer: the New Testament was originally written in Greek, the predominant language at the time, and the word “baptize” in the Greek is “baptizo” meaning “to plunge or dip under the water.”

The word was used among the Greeks to signify the dyeing or washing of a garment or the washing of a vessel by plunging beneath the water. The Greek word for “sprinkle” is “rhantizo” and an example of its usage is seen in Heb. 9:13 referring to the sprinkling of the blood of animals in the Old Testament. The very word “baptize” means to plunge or place beneath the water!

### **B. The “Who” Of Baptism.**

Three scriptures that indicate *who* the proper candidate for baptism is:

Acts 2:41 - “Those who accepted his message were baptized and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”

Acts 8:37 - “Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

Acts 18:8 - “Many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.”

The prerequisite for baptism in the New Testament church was a valid confession of faith embracing the Person and cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **C. The “Why” Of Baptism.**

Baptism is indicative of a message believed – the message of the Gospel which is pictured in the scriptural observance of baptism: a standing in the place of death, in the water; a placing beneath the water, symbolizing burial with Christ and being raised up from the water, symbolizing being raised with Christ.

- Baptism is identification with Christ in His redemptive work;
- Baptism is introduction to Christ’s visible church;
- Baptism is an outward expression of an inward experience;
- Baptism is the Christian’s first and most important “show and tell”. It is a public testimony. Baptism is a silent sermon.
- Baptism is obedience. “Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ.” (Acts 2:38)

Have you come to faith in Christ? Have you been obedient in the matter of Baptism?

## **II. THE ORDINANCE OF THE LORD’S TABLE.**

### **I Corinthians 11:23-26**

“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night 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, after supper he took

the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

The scriptures teach that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of the sacrificial, substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus Christ and is to be observed by baptized believers, administered by the local church, until the Lord Jesus comes again. It is always to be preceded by solemn self-examination.

#### **4 Looks From The Lord's Table:**

**A. The Backward Look** – to the dying One.

**B. The Upward Look** - to the Living One.

**C. The Inward Look** – to the partaking one.

1 Cor. 11: 28 *"A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup."*

2 Cor. 13:5 *"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith."*

**D. The Forward Look** - to the Coming One.

1 Cor 11:26 *"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."*

#### **Conclusion:**

1. *Baptism* - the Ordinance of Identification;
2. *Communion* - the Ordinance of Commemoration.

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