

THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

(This course is designed to teach us about the two sacraments or ordinances of the Church. By sacraments or ordinances of the Church we refer to the practices ordained by Christ to be permanently observed by the Church. Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two Sacraments ordained by Jesus Christ our Lord, for the Church. These ordinances as practiced by the believer are also means by which the power of Christ's finished work on the Cross becomes real and effective in the believer's life. Learn how to receive the power of God into your life as you participate in the sacraments of the Church).

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Water Baptism

Introduced by John the Baptist when announcing the Kingdom of heaven on earth, as a sign of repentance.

Matthew 3:1-8

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.'" Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,

Jesus was baptized—although He had nothing to repent from—as a way to demonstrate obedience to fulfill all righteousness.

Matthew 3:13-16

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

Baptism is a command in the New Testament.

Matthew 28:19,20

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Baptism is an act of obedience. You can expect an increased measure of blessing.

Baptism expresses your decision to follow Jesus Christ alone.

Acts 2:38,39

Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

Baptism is a symbol of the inner experience of death, burial and resurrection with Jesus.

Romans 6:4

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Baptism is an expression of your desire to maintain a clear conscience before God.

1 Peter 3:21

There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

The only requirement to be baptized is “repent and believe” in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 8:36,37

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.”

Baptism is by immersion in water only.

Acts 8:36,37

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.”

You don't have to become very holy to be baptized.

Water baptism will not make you a spiritual giant.

You still have to grow spiritually through the Word and prayer.

Because baptism is a symbolic proclamation of the Cross, you can expect the power of the Cross to affect your life in breaking bondages, addictions, bringing deliverance during baptism.



In the book of Acts, we see each time people were baptized, they were baptized "in the name of Jesus." We understand that this means "by the authority given to us by Jesus."

The formula we use: "In Jesus' Name (*meaning, by Christ's authority*), I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

(If you have not been baptized in water according to the command in Scripture, we encourage you to be baptized. Please look for the next scheduled Water Baptism Service and please register).

The Lord's Table

Matthew 26:18-30

And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.'" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?" He answered and said, "He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born." Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said it." Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed[a] and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

I Corinthians 11:20-34

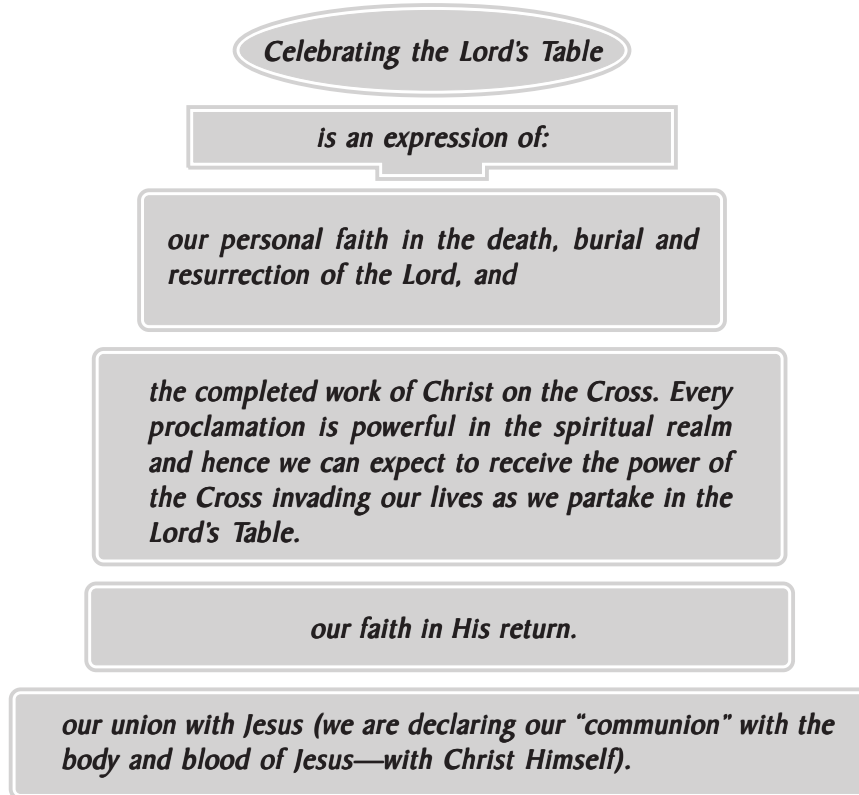
Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you. For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

I Corinthians 10:16-21

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread. Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.

The Lord's Table was instituted by the Lord Jesus Himself.

The Lord's Table is open to all who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.



1 Corinthians 10:16

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

- An expression of our union with one another.

1 Corinthians 10:17

For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

We must prepare our hearts by:

- Examining our lives and renouncing known sin.
- Taking the elements, understanding and believing in what they represent—the death and shed blood of Christ on the Cross.

In celebrating the Lord's Table, we can expect the full blessings of the Cross: salvation, healing, deliverance and wholeness, to be released into our lives.

Partaking in a Worthy Manner

One of the issues Paul is addressing is the behavior of people at the Corinthian church. There were two ways in which they were violating the Lord's Table:



They were partaking of the Lord's Table (as an act of worship) and then also partaking of foods offered to idols as an act of worship toward the idol, which Paul calls idolatry (I Corinthians 10:14-33). The real problem was not with the food—but with the reverence that was being given to the idol in eating something sacrificed to the idol, which also became a stumbling block to other new believers.

They had turned the Lord's Table into some sort of feast (I Corinthians 11:20-22) and hence the admonition to discern and partake in a worthy manner. If we do so in a worthy manner—we receive the full blessings of the Cross in our lives—which included healing. If we do it without really understanding or paying attention to the significance of what we are doing, we miss receiving the blessings of the Cross—and one of the consequences is we miss out on the provision of healing for our bodies, and hence " ... That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died ... "



Only Requirement

There is no explicit instruction in Scripture that you must be water baptized before taking part in the Lord's Table. Therefore at All Peoples Church, we keep participation in the Lord's Table open to all born-again believers. There is no explicit age restriction in Scripture on when a person should be baptized in water or when a person can start participating in the Lord's Table. The only requirement is that a person has been born again (has become a believer) through personal faith in Jesus Christ. Hence we take this approach in welcoming people to be baptized or partake in the Lord's Table.

Some Common Questions

If I was "baptized" before—either "sprinkled" or I just went through "immersion"—without having been born again, is it necessary/ alright for me to be baptized "again?"

Now that you are a believer, yes, it is alright to be baptized again and do it as an expression of your faith in Jesus Christ. We have such an instance in Acts 19:1-6, when Paul encountered some disciples who had been baptized by John the Baptist. He updated them about Jesus Christ, and after they believed, they were baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ.

Do I need to reach some spiritual level or spiritual maturity before being water-baptized?

No. The only requirement we see is that one is born again, becomes a believer in Jesus Christ. In the book of Acts, most of them were baptized in water as soon as they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Can one believer baptize another believer in water or should water baptism be conducted only by a Pastor or some spiritual leader?

In the book of Acts, we see Philip who was a deacon at the church in Jerusalem baptizing new believers. We also see Ananias who was a believer sent to baptize Saul (who later became Paul). So, yes, any believer can baptize another believer in water.

What if I took part in the Lord's table in an "unworthy manner" not really understanding or having faith in what I was doing—will I be struck down with some deadly disease?

No. Just recognize that you took this lightly. Tell the Lord you are sorry, (i.e. repent of doing this in an unworthy manner) and going forward, do this the right way.

Should I take part in the Lord's Table when the person leading the Celebration himself does not believe in what he is doing?

There is no value in taking part in the Lord's Table if the person leading the Celebration does not believe in what is being done.

Can I as a believer take part in the Lord's Table at home?

Sure. As long as you are doing it as unto the Lord, in remembrance of Him, one or more believers can celebrate the Lord's Table at home or anywhere else.

Now that I have understood the meaning and significance of water baptism, I must obey the Lord's command and be water-baptized.

Whenever I partake of the Lord's Table, I must do it with meaning and understanding. I must expect to receive by faith.

KEY MEMORY VERSES

Acts 2:38,39

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