“The City of God- Worship in the Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper”

**Matt. 28:18-20; 1Corinth. 11:23-26**

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Earl Pleger,

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The sacraments of baptism and communion are outward signs of inward covenants. They are elements of worship to bring honor to Christ. (Q1) We observe the sacraments because they are commanded by Jesus in scripture. The sacraments remind us of the basis of salvation: Jesus’ death and resurrection. They also remind us of our obligation to walk in a manner worthy of our calling. Let’s begin with a look at baptism.

**Baptism is reserved for genuine believers**. It is reserved for those who have repented, believed, and are fully committed to following Christ. Is this you? Have you been swept off your feet by Him? **Baptism is to be done in the name of God**, not a man or a church. We’re giving an oath to renounce the ways of the world. Paul didn’t baptize in his own name; he baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Baptism cannot cleanse you from your sin; it signifies that you have already been washed clean by the blood of Christ. We’re not going to argue immersion vs. sprinkling vs. pouring. Baptism is a matter of the heart, not the means of doing it. **Baptism isn’t limited by our surroundings**. It can be in a baptismal tank, a mountain creek, a muddy stream in Africa, or even a stock tank in a prison yard. It doesn’t have anything to do with the surroundings. It has everything to do with what is taking place on the inside of the believer (see Heb. 10:22 and Ezek. 36:25-27).

What is the purpose of baptism? It’s a sign of the covenant of grace. It’s a sign of walking with Christ. It’s our profession of our desire to be holy with our whole being. When you decide to be baptized, you want His name to be made great. You want to proclaim His glory. You’re saying, “I am no longer part of the kingdom of darkness. I’m part of the kingdom of light.” When you are baptized before the church body, they get to join in on this celebration. Your baptism benefits the whole church body! (Q2)

The second sacrament we are studying is the Lord’s Supper. This communion is for our spiritual nourishment. It must be accompanied by the Word of God. Twice in this passage Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of Me.” When we want to remember something there is usually repetition involved. So we take communion often, but not so often that it becomes commonplace. Communion comes with a warning, a warning to not participate with the wrong mindset:

* It is not for someone who is not a believer.
* It is not for someone who is unengaged. The participant should be actively reflecting on the work of Christ.
* It is not for someone holding bitterness toward another believer.

We don’t need to be perfect when we come to this table (1John 1:9), Jesus took care of that! We do need to be thoughtful and remembering. There is nothing magical in these elements; they don’t bring salvation. But they are one of the signs that point to our Savior and His marvelous grace.

1 Corinth. 11:26 says to “…proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.” This is a reminder of what Jesus’ precious blood did for His people. His death was on our behalf. Without His death, God’s wrath could not be satisfied. We are saved by His death, and justified through it. THAT is what we remember as we take communion.

We are now at the end of our two-month study of the church. We will not be misled by whims of doctrine. We will listen to Jesus’ call and live out His Word. We will remember that our citizenship is in Heaven. We will set our minds on things above. We will trust and obey Him and carry out His will on earth. We will be the “one another” church, helping one another, serving one another, and loving one another. We will be a church of discipline, seeking to bring the stray sheep back in. We will be a church that always pursues the glory of God. We will be a church that grows by reading, praying, and meditating on God’s Word, and then following His commands to reach a lost world. We will proclaim our salvation to the world through baptism. We will remember Jesus and what He has done for us as we take communion. So, Hayden Bible Church, our call is to **BE** the church! Stand firm! (Eph. 6:10-17) (Q3) (Q4)

**QUESTIONS**:

1. What are OUR responsibilities as we come to worship God?
2. How does baptism benefit the whole church body?
3. Which of the reminders listed in the last paragraph was the most important for you to hear?
4. In Isaac Watts hymn (below), my favorite phrase is “Sorrow and love flow mingled down!” What is the sorrow? What is the love?

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (Isaac Watts)

1. When I survey the wondrous cross  
   On which the Prince of glory died,  
   My richest gain I count but loss,  
   And pour contempt on all my pride.
2. See from His head, His hands, His feet,  
   Sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
   Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,  
   Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
3. Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
   That were a present far too small;  
   Love so amazing, so divine,  
   Demands my soul, my life, my all.