

The Ordinance of Baptism

The Bible teaches the observance of two ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These are the only ordinances that First Baptist Church practices. Today we will learn about baptism. Acts 2:41 reads *Those who accepted his message [Peter's sermon about Christ being the Savior] were baptized...*

Read Acts 8:26-38 in your Bible.

Notice that baptism always follows belief. In the New Testament, baptism served as an outward expression of genuine belief. Throughout the book of Acts people heard the message of Christ, believed the message, and were baptized. Baptism cost first century Christians a lot - it even cost some Christians their lives.

Baptism is the first step of Christian obedience. It helps strengthen assurance of salvation. But only people that have made a definite decision to trust Jesus as Savior should be baptized. Committing children to a Christian home and environment should be demonstrated in a way other than baptism. Baptism is reserved for those that have decided to follow Christ as their Savior.

Match the following scripture with the appropriate phrase.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| _____ Matthew 3:13-15 | A. Jesus commands us to baptize believers |
| _____ Romans 6:3-4 | B. Jesus was baptized |
| _____ Matthew 28:19-20 | C. Baptism symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. |

Jesus was the perfect son of God, and yet he set the example and was baptized by John (Matthew 3:13-15). Jesus also commanded us to baptize anyone that becomes a disciple (Matthew 28:19-20). The word "disciple" simply means one that has chosen to follow Christ. Romans 6 tells us that baptism reminds us that just as Christ died on the cross, we are to die to sin; and as Christ was buried, our sins have been buried; and just as Christ arose from the dead, we are to live a changed life under the power of God.

Pray today thanking God for the power over sin that He can give you. Ask God to reveal any hidden areas of disobedience.

Your memory verse for this week is John 15:5. You will want to start learning it today!

The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper

Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-30 in your Bible.

Jesus initiated the Lord's Supper the night that He shared a final meal with His disciples before He died on the cross. The purpose of the Lord's Supper is to give Christians a visible reminder of the expensive cost of salvation - Jesus' body and blood offered up on the cross. Whenever the Christian takes the Lord's Supper he is reminded of God's love, human sin and Christ's provision of forgiveness.

Only Christians should take of the Lord's Supper, and even Christians need to be cautious about casually participating in this sacred time. Verse 27 assures us that those taking the Lord's Supper unworthily are guilty of sin. If a person is in an obvious conflict with another Christian, then he/she should not take the Supper (see verse 18). He should first seek to restore the relationship and then return to partake of the Supper. If a Christian has a selfish or self-seeking attitude he/she should avoid taking the Lord's Supper until the attitude is confessed and change has occurred (see verses 20-22). Even if there is sin that is unknown to others but God has convicted you of the sin, then you must forsake the sin and seek forgiveness before you could participate in the Lord's Supper (see verse 28).

Look carefully at verse 30! There were some people in Corinth that took the Lord's Supper when they should not, and this resulted in some being sick and some even dying. WOW, that's serious!

At First Baptist we try to give you prior notice to the Lord's Supper. This way you can spend a few minutes or a whole week preparing yourself for such a wonderful, but serious, act of worship. In dealing with the Lord's Supper, one must remember that Jesus forgives confessed sins. You don't have to be perfect to take the Lord's Supper, but you should be in the process of confessing and repentance.

Read 1 John 1:9. What do we have to do before Jesus will forgive our sins?

Spend a few minutes in prayer. Consider God's love, your sin and Christ's sacrifice.

A reminder: your memory verse is John 15:5. Try to write it below.

Communicating with God through Prayer

John 15:7 (NIV)

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

To “remain” in Jesus, means to consistently allow Jesus to be the center of your life. It is to daily choose to let Jesus rule all areas of your life: family, time, finances, education, hobbies, politics, dress and all other aspects of life. God directs our life through prayer and His Word - the Bible. When we listen to what God is saying as we read the Bible and if we obey what God is telling us, then we will pray in a way that pleases God and we can attain God’s best for us.

Prayer is to the Christian what breathing is to a new baby - essential! We naturally want to talk and listen to a person that we love; thus prayer should be a natural desire for the Christian. But just because it is a natural desire doesn’t mean it is naturally done. Did you know that even the disciples that lived during the time of Jesus needed help in learning how to pray?

Read Luke 11:1-4 in your Bible

Notice that there are at least four parts of this model prayer that we should include in our prayers. 1) Honor and praise God - “Father, hallowed be your name.” We miss out on real worship and real joy in our prayer time when we fail to spend time just expressing our thanks and appreciation to God. 2) Remember that all our daily needs are attached to God - “Give us each day our daily bread.” This is a request for daily needs. This is not a long list of all our wants. Did you notice that verse 3 requests bread for just a day? I wonder why Jesus didn’t teach us to pray for weekly or monthly bread? Maybe Jesus was trying to teach us daily dependence on Him. 3) Ask for forgiveness of sins - “Forgive us our sins.” The Christian cannot “remain” in Christ if there are un-confessed sins in his/her life. Christians still sin from time to time, but we must not habitually live in a sin. Instead we must confess the sin to God and forsake it immediately. Also notice that verse 4 mentions that we are to forgive those that have wronged us. The forgiven person must always be forgiving. 4) Seek strength to face life’s challenges - “and lead us not into temptation.” The person that becomes a Christian doesn’t have fewer problems, he or she is just able to face those problems with the strength of Christ. Philippians 4:13 says, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Now let’s put into practice what we’ve been studying today. Pray using the following outline.

Honor and Praise God

Ask for forgiveness of sin

Thank God for daily provision

Pray for strength to face life's challenges

An advertising representative for a national company told its customers, “The greatest compliment you can give this company is to tell your friends about us.” The same holds true for the Christian. The greatest act of appreciation we can give God is to tell our friends about God - this is witnessing. John 15:8 (KJV) *Herein is My Father [God] glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be My disciples.*

God is pleased when you tell other people about the change God has made in your life. He is also pleased when you tell people about the church that God has placed you in. Telling people about God’s impact on your life is one sign of a follower of Christ.

Read Matthew 28:16-20 in your Bible

This passage is called “The Great Commission.” It is Christ’s command to all Christians to tell other people about Christ and to provide a means for those new Christians to grow so that in turn they will tell other people about Christ.

Notice that in verse 17 the disciples first worshipped Christ and then they received the command to witness. Worship and witness are not in competition, but instead they work together as the two primary functions of Christians. Each Sunday that we meet to worship, we should leave the church ready and prepared to witness. You may think you can’t witness, and you are right. But verse 18 tells us where we find our strength to witness - the authority and power of Christ. His authority to make disciples of lost persons. Jesus Christ saves people, but we are the ones that must introduce the non-Christian to Christ.

Verse 19 means that we are to tell people about Christ as we go through our daily and weekly routines. But making disciples doesn’t stop with baptism. You can see in verse 20 that Jesus expects us to **teach** people to obey all that He has told us. Again, notice that Jesus is with us to give us the power to do this teaching.

List three people that you have some contact with might not be Christians.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Concerning witnessing, Jesus said in Matthew 9:38, “Ask the Lord of the harvest, to send out workers into his harvest field.” **Now would be a wonderful time to pray to God and ask Him to send an obedient Christian who witnesses into the path of the 3 names above.** Caution: Often you will be the person God sends!

Verbalizing Your Witness

Another way to describe a witness is one who gives evidence to something that he or she has experienced. You have experienced the change that the presence of Christ can make in a

person's life. When you tell other people about your experience you are becoming a verbal witness. The book of Acts records at least two times that Paul told people the change Christ had made in his life. We can use Paul's witness as an outline to develop our verbal witness.

Read Acts 22:1-15 and match the outline phrases with the appropriate verses.

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| ___ Paul had not always followed Christ | A. Verses 14-15 |
| ___ God began to deal with Paul's rebellion | B. Verses 10-13 |
| ___ Paul followed Christ as Lord | C. Verses 3-5 |
| ___ Paul's life after becoming a Christian | D. Verses 6-9 |

In the spaces below, complete three parts of your personal verbal witness. Just 2 or 3 sentences for each will be enough.

1. My life and attitude before following Christ:

2. How I received Christ as the Lord of my life:

3. What being a Christian means to me now:

The above verbal witness should be no longer than one minute and you should be familiar enough with it that you can tell it to a friend soon! ***Be sure and bring the above outline with you to class Sunday!***

Can you write your memory verse below?