

Biblical Theology

Unit 7: Doctrine of the Church – Lesson 7: Ordinances of the Church II

Communion

- Communion is a tangible reminder of a transcendent reality.
 1. **Communion was instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper as a reminder of his death.**
 - **Matthew 26:26-29** - Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the[a] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."
 - **1 Corinthians 11:23-26** - For 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." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
 - Bread = Body, Wine = Blood / Covenant
 2. **Communion is a transcendent reminder of God's faithfulness.**
 - **Past:** Passover
 - **Luke 22:14-15** - 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."
 - **Present:** New Covenant
 - **Luke 22:20** - "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."
 - **Future:** Marriage Feast of the Lamb
 - **Luke 22:18** - For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.
 3. **Communion symbolizes the receiving of benefits through Christ.**
 - **Matthew 26:26** - Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."
 4. **Communion symbolizes spiritual nourishment.**
 - **John 6:53-57** - whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.
 5. **Communion reaffirms unity within the body of Christ.**
 - **1 Corinthians 10:7** - Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.
 6. **Communion is a personal affirmation of our faith in Christ.**
 - **1 Corinthians 11:26** - For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Other Disputes and Considerations Regarding Communion

- **Does the bible support transubstantiation?**
 - Catholic dogma maintains the teaching that Christ is repeatedly crucified every time the Lord's Supper takes place and that the bread and wine actually turn into the flesh and blood of Jesus.
 - Transubstantiation fails to recognize symbolism of Jesus' statement in John 6:53-57 (John 15:1; 10:9; 6:41).

- Transubstantiation fails to recognize the New Testament teaching on the finality of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary (Hebrews 9:25-28; John 19:30; Hebrews 1:3).
- **Who should take communion?**
 - The bible never prohibits an unbeliever from participating in the Lord's Supper, though Christ purposed the remembrance for those under the New Covenant.
 - While 1 Corinthians 11:27-30 seems to teach on exclusive nature of communion, it should be observed as a teaching on the examination of one's motives when taking communion.
- **Who should administer communion?**
 - The Scriptures do not specify a role for administer communion.
- **How often should communion be taken?**
 - As often as we do it, remember... (1 Corinthians 11:26).
 - The purpose of communion is edification, remembrance, and examination. Frequency is not the point.

Worship

- A true understanding of worship is seen in a life fully consumed with glorifying God in every aspect. There is, however, a time and place for corporate worship in a corporate setting within the community of Christ.
 1. **Worship is the activity of glorifying God in his presence with our voice and hearts.**
 - **Colossians 3:16** - Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.
 - **Acts 2:46-47** - Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.
 2. **Worship is an intentional expression of God's worthiness.**
 - **Exodus 20:5** - I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God,
 - **Isaiah 48:11** - I will not yield my glory to another.
 - **Revelation 4:11** - "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."
 - **Revelation 5:12** - Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!
 3. **Worship brings delight to the worshiper.**
 - **Psalms 27:4** - to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.
 - **Psalms 73:25** - And earth has nothing I desire besides you.
 - **Luke 24:52-53** - Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.
 - **Hebrews 12:28-29** - let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably
 4. **Worship brings delight to God.**
 - **Proverbs 15:8** - The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight.
 - **Psalms 150** - Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.
 5. **Worship edifies the body by fostering unity in Christ.**
 - **Psalms 149:1** - Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of his faithful people.
 - **Acts 2:46-47** - Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

- **1 Timothy 2:1-8** - *I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles. Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.*
- **Colossians 3:13-16** - *Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.*

Doctrine of the Church: Conclusion

- Jesus' vision for the church is that those who follow him would be a unified, Spirit-filled people that will overcome the enemy's kingdom and establish the Kingdom of God (Matthew 16:18).
 - Is it ever appropriate to break union with a church via church split or changing churches?
 - Blatant heresy on fundamental truth (Galatians 1:7-9; Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6,14).
 - Toleration of sin within the church (1 Corinthians 5:1-11)
 - Dysfunctional or abusive leadership (1 Timothy 3:1-13)
 - Relocation or a call to ministry elsewhere.
 - This is not to suggest that these are the only circumstances under which people are permitted to leave a church. There is certainly nothing wrong with moving one's membership just because another church offers better teaching or more opportunities for growth and service. But those who transfer their membership for such reasons ought to take extreme care not to sow discord or division in the church they are leaving. And such moves ought to be made sparingly. Membership in a church is a commitment that ought to be taken seriously. – John MacArthur
 - Issues of preference on secondary should never be a reason for a break in unity.
 - Refusal to confront issues in a God-honoring way is never a reason to break unity (Matthew 18:15).

Discussion Questions

1. How would you respond to someone who asks you, "Why do Christians take communion?"
2. How do you guard from allowing communion to become ritualistic?
3. What type of worship do you to be more biblical: liturgical or non-liturgical?
4. Why do you believe there is an ongoing debate between traditional and contemporary worship styles?
5. How would you respond to a person who is leaving their church because they are being unforgiving toward another member of the church?

Reading Assignment

No class next week. Next class will be on November 8th. Read Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem – Chapter 54: The Return of Christ; When and How?