

THE LORD'S TABLE

"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."

1Cor 11:23-26

An 'Ordinance' is a special command with ceremonial significance. Baptists traditionally believe in two Ordinances - 'Baptism' and 'The Lord's Table'.

Most people easily identify the Ordinance of Baptism with Baptists. This is not to imply in any way that Baptists are the only ones who practice Baptism, but only to suggest that it is less likely that Baptism would be forgotten in a Baptist Church!

Both Baptism and The Lord's Table (also called 'the Lord's Supper' or sometimes simply, 'Communion') are ceremonial. That is to say, they are acts which do not serve a practical purpose; rather they are creative ways of making a statement. On a practical level, the Lord's Table is as poor a meal as Baptism is a bath! But their power to communicate a message is great. You can think of them as 'word pictures' or as 'dramatic statements'.

Both, Baptism and The Lord's Table, picture the death of Christ, with Baptism placing perhaps more emphasis on the resurrection as well. Both identify the believer with Christ and with His sacrifice on our behalf. Both are emblems of our salvation.

The Uniqueness of The Lord's Table

Perhaps the most significant difference between Baptism and The Lord's Table is that Baptism is intended to be something that happens at the beginning of the Christian life, not intended to be repeated, whereas The Lord's Table is something we are to participate in regularly and continually. (See 1Cor 11:26)

The Lord has given us only two ordinances. This means they are very special. And it is important to notice that He has given us only one ordinance which requires our individual involvement continually as we meet as a local church. This should encourage us to recognize the great significance of this wonderful ceremony.

The fact that our Lord has chosen this ceremony only, over every possible thing He could have initiated, demands the question, "What is the significance of 'The Lord's Table' as an Ordinance of Christ for His church?" The answer to this question needs to be understood and appreciated by every Christian.

The Significance of The Lord's Table

What is the most important thing for Christians to remember? That Christ has won our salvation and that at great personal cost; He died for us; that we are saved by grace alone through faith in His precious blood. This most wonderful truth is the foundation for all of Christian faith and practice. The message of the Lord's Table is the heart and soul of the gospel message and of the church itself.

This is what makes the Lord's Table observance in the life of a local church a time of great significance. It could be said that the Lord's Table is to the local church, what a devotional time is to the individual Christian.

It is a time of cleansing; a calling back. It is a time to refocus and to be brought back to the one grand truth, the one great reality of the whole Christian faith and life - Jesus died for us. The Apostle Peter warns us not to forget about that time in our lives when we received the cleansing from all of our sin (2Pet 1:5-9). The author of Hebrews encourages us to keep our focus upon Christ (Heb 12:2).

This is not only the number one issue for individual Christians, but it is also the priority for the local church. Our success as a church in being what God wants us to be requires that we maintain this biblical focus.

You can see then why Christ has given us this wonderful memorial ceremony. It is a gift to His church which enables us to keep on track. It is as if Christ were saying, "If you're going to remember only one thing, remember this ..."

In the Lord's Table observance, the Lord Jesus Himself keeps drawing us back, back to the one great essential of the gospel and the foundation of the church - the atoning work of Christ.

If we are going to be Christians, that is to say 'Christ ones', if we are going to be the church of Christ, then our lives must be centered upon Him and upon what He has done for us and what He has taught us. The Lord's Table observance is the unique way which Christ has chosen to keep this before us. It is the beautiful way which He has chosen to cause us to remember as a group, who we are and why we are.

The Observance of the Lord's Table

At Faith Baptist Church, we normally observe the Lord's Table on the first Sunday of each month as part of our regular Sunday morning gathering. We encourage any sincere believer to join us for this significant time of meaningful remembrance. Remember, Jesus died for you!