

# Sermon Notes

Matthew 26:27-28  
 "Lord's Supper Policy"  
 March 31, 2019

## Introduction

- 1) What are the some of the tops things that a Christian should do as a means of piety?
  - a) "Piety" basically means "faithful acts" to "be pious."
  - b) Those positive things we should do as good Christians.
- 2) If you listen carefully, most modern Christians put their answers in an individualistic way. For example:
  - a) "Read my Bible" instead of "going to church to hear the Gospel"
  - b) "Time of personal prayer" instead of "going to church and praying the Lord's Prayer"
  - c) Those individualist things are not bad, and should be done, but it is interesting that we give them much more weight than the corporate acts of piety.
- 3) How many modern Christians would include "taking the Lord's Supper" in their top pious things?
  - a) The Lord's Supper being one of the two "Sacraments" (worship rituals that communicate the Gospel) commanded by Christ. (The other is Baptism.)
  - b) For most Evangelicals (i.e. modern conservative Protestants) it wouldn't make the list.
  - c) It is viewed as far too Roman Catholic for even a theological liberal.
    - i) Rome does have a superstitious view of the Sacraments that borders on the magical.
    - ii) For Rome, baptism literally makes you born again, simply by the ritual.
    - iii) For Rome, the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper literally transform into the body and blood of Christ. (Called Transubstantiation.)
    - iv) Thus for Rome, Christ is literally re-sacrificed every time the Mass (their word for the Supper) is given, which is dreadfully wrong.
    - v) So the Sacraments for Rome do not proclaim a true Gospel (that Christ's grace is imputed/credited to us, which fully justified us, and which is received by faith alone); instead it's a mutilated gospel (that just enough grace is infused by taking the sacraments so that we can try to earn our justification by faith and works.)
  - d) Because of various theological movements of the modern era, Evangelicals have a low view of the Sacraments.<sup>1</sup>
  - e) This is different from historic Protestantism of the Reformation<sup>2</sup> which had a high view of the Sacraments, though retaining a rejection of Rome's false views.
- 4) The Deacons have created a new Lord's Supper policy to bring clarity and focus on the Supper.

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<sup>1</sup> The main culprit is a movement called "Pietism" and its off shoots of Revivalism, the Holiness Movement, Fundamentalism, Pentecostalism, the Charismatic Movement and Evangelicalism itself. Before these movements, the works of Zwingli from Reformed Theology, Arminianism and to some extent the Anabaptist movement helped to encourage a lower view of the Sacraments.

<sup>2</sup> This can still be seen in the older denominations (that have remained conservative and true to their roots), such as Presbyterianism, Anglicanism, Lutheranism, etc.

## Section #1 – Definition

1) The Lord's Supper is a worship ceremony created and commanded by the Lord Jesus for His Church.

- 1) So the Sacraments, simply defined, are ceremonies we do during worship.
- 2) The main reason we do them is because they are explicitly commanded by Lord Jesus Himself.
  - a) *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,"* – Matt 28:19
  - b) *"In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." - 1Cor 11:25*
- 3) These are not optional, but central things for Christ's church.

2) It proclaims through the physical signs of bread and wine the divine promise of forgiveness through the good news of Jesus Christ. It graciously provides spiritual nourishment and is a sign of continuance in the visible church.

3) The Lord's Supper is also called the "Breaking of Bread", "Love (agape) Feast", "Eucharist" ("thanksgiving") and "Communion."

- 1) Since they are rituals, on some broad level they involve physical things.
  - a) For baptism it's water.
  - b) For the Lord's Supper it's wine (grape juice) & bread.
- 2) They are more than memorials (something done in remembrance of something/someone.) They are that, but they're something more.
- 3) The Sacraments proclaim the Gospel to Christians.
- 4) To understand the Sacraments, there are two critical things to remember:
  - a) The Gospel is for Christians too.
  - b) The primary direction of the Sacraments is God to us.
- 5) First, the Gospel.
  - a) The Gospel is the proclamation of the finished work of Christ and Him crucified, by which the Triune God has fully justified His people.
  - b) The word "Gospel" literally means "good news."
  - c) Pastor Doug's favorite text to show the Gospel is **Romans 1:1b-4,15a,16-17**.
    - i) *"the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, . . . So, for my (Paul's) part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you (i.e. Christians in the church at Rome) . . . For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'but the righteous man shall live by faith.'"*
    - ii) The Gospel is news: The Father has sent His Son, as per OT prophecy.
    - iii) The Gospel is good: It is about our salvation by the righteousness of God.

- c) So the Gospel is not a suggestion for a better, more successful life.
- d) It is a statement of fact that Christ has redeemed His people from God's wrath.
- i) Which is followed by the command to “repent” (literally turn from the world, sin, self and Satan) and believe in the Good News proclaimed.
  - ii) From this faith will come the desire to follow Christ as Lord, and thus piety.
- e) Yes, we proclaim the Gospel to unbelievers, seeking their conversion.
- f) The church proclaims the Gospel to believers because it is the power of God.
- i) As Paul just taught in Romans 1:15.
  - ii) The more the Gospel invades our thinking and lives, the more we will become Christ-like by the power of the Holy Spirit.
  - iii) This is the main job of the pastor, to evangelize (i.e. Gospelize) the saints.
  - iv) Where Baptism is to be done only once, because Christ was baptized only once, the Supper is to be done frequently, because it proclaims grace to us.
- 6) The next critical thing to remember is the direction: The sacraments are first God to us.
- a) Note who is doing the action, and if it is complete, in these critical verses:
    - i) **Rom 6:4** – “*Therefore we have been buried* (aorist passive indicative – finished complete action) *with Him (Christ) through baptism into death*”
    - ii) **John 6:54** – “*He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has* (present active indicative – completed action) *eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.*”
    - iii) **Matthew 26:27-28** – “*And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.’*”
      - Note who is doing the actions, Christ!
      - He is proclaiming a New Covenant to us based on His work, not ours.
      - His blood (i.e. the cross) actually does something – forgives sins.
  - b) By definition the sacraments are God speaking good to us saints.
  - c) And thus we respond with faith (believing in what God has said) or not.
- 7) The Supper is meant to be a public, communal thing.
- a) Of course there are times it can be done privately.
  - b) The biblical focus is the meal binds us together, as at all good meals.
    - i) **Acts 2:42** – “*They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*”
    - ii) **Acts 20:7a** – “*On the first day of the week (Sunday), when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them . . .*”
    - iii) **1Cor 10:16** – “*Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?*”
- 8) The Sacraments have deep biblical roots.

4) The Old Testament ceremony of Passover foreshadows the covenant relationship found in the Lord’s Supper.

- 1) The Old Testament is full of “shadows, figures, copies” of the reality we find in Christ.
- 2) So too with the sacraments.
  - a) Baptism is related to the Old Covenant worship ritual of circumcision. Col 2:11-12
  - b) The Supper is related to the Old Covenant worship ritual of Passover.
- 3) The first Passover was celebrated when the Jews were in captivity in Egypt. The final plague sent by God to force Pharaoh to let His people go was the death of the first born children. The only way to avoid this judgment was to slay a lamb and put its blood over one's doorpost. During this time the Jews ate a meal, the Passover meal. Ex 11-12
- 4) This is direct foreshadowing of Christ, our Passover Lamb, whose blood covers us from God's judgment.
  - a) **John 1:29** – *“The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'”*
  - b) **1Cor 5:7b** – *“For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.”*
  - c) **1Pet 1:19b** – *“For we are redeemed “with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”*

## Section #2 – Description

- 1) From the biblical understanding of the Gospel comes a greater appreciation of the Supper.

- 1) The Lord's Supper, when coupled with the Word (i.e. the verbal proclamation of the Gospel), represents . . .
  - a) The promise of the Gospel and the benefits of belonging to the new covenant in Christ through the signs of bread and wine.
  - b) Christ's sacrificial death and the salvation it brings.
  - c) Spiritual nourishment and continuance in the visible universal church, by which our faith is strengthened in the Gospel of Christ.
  - d) The authority and guarantee of God's promises.
  - e) A public statement of our faith in Christ, proclaiming His cross and awaiting His return.
- 2) By partaking in the Lord's Supper, by faith alone, Christians . . .
  - a) Are reminded of what Christ has done for them and are strengthened in their faith.
  - b) Publicly proclaim and submit to Christ as their Lord, Savior and God.
  - c) Are reminded of their service to God and their neighbor.

- 1) Sacraments are part of “the ministry of the Word” but to make them true sacraments there has to be the addition of the verbal proclamation of the Gospel. Lest they be viewed as magical.
- 2) There is an “us to God” direction in the Sacraments.
  - a) It comes after the proclamation.
  - b) We respond with faith, believing in this external declaration through words (the saying of the Gospel) and physical signs (bread & wine).

- c) We do this publically, as a statement of our faith in the Lord, not caring what the world thinks.
  - d) Trusting in who Christ is, what He was done, and what He has promised to us.
  - e) As we hear, rejoice and rest in the Gospel, how can that not produce more faith in us, which will produce hope making us more loving. And love is the basis of all our good works.
- 3) Though the Supper is more than a memorial, and is a means of grace, it isn't magical.
- 3) The Lord's Supper is not . . .

  - a) Magical. The elements (bread and wine) are not changed into the body & blood of Christ, nor is Christ re-sacrificed during the Lord's Supper. The Lord Jesus died but once and now bodily reigns in heaven. Any benefit in partaking in the Supper is received by grace alone, through faith alone, on account of Christ alone.
  - b) Required for salvation, though it is a sin to neglect it.

4) The act of participating in the Lord's Supper by itself offers no certainty of salvation, though it points to the certainty of the promises we have in Christ through faith alone.
- 4) Once we have the theology down we can move on to how the Sacraments are administered in this church. (Things which other churches might disagree about.)

### **III Administration**

- 1) The outward elements to be used in the Lord's Supper are bread and "wine."
    - a) Because Christ's sacrifice is perfect either leavened or unleavened bread can be used.
    - b) In order to be sensitive to those who wrestle with alcoholism grape juice is favored over wine.
  - 2) Because Christians constantly need to be fed and encouraged by the good news of Jesus Christ, the Lord's Supper should be regularly administered by the church.
  - 3) The Lord's Supper shall only be administered by those appointed by the church.
  - 4) The Lord's Supper will be administered, at least, on the following occasions:
    - a) First Sunday of every month during the regular worship service.
    - b) On special services as deemed appropriate by the pastor and/or Diaconate, such as Maundy Thursday and Easter services.
    - c) The pastor(s) and deacons should make sure that those who cannot attend Sunday services for good reasons shall receive the Supper if they desire.
    - d) Private communion given by the pastor upon his discretion.
- 1) Christians debate whether only wine should be used, or if grape juice is okay.
  - 2) Likewise whether unleavened bread should be used as in the OT Passover, or is the Christian Passover so different, that it is a joyful celebration.
  - 3) A harder question is frequency.
    - a) The biblical tradition seems to be weekly. Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1Cor 11:25-26
    - b) Monthly is solely a tradition of Protestantism.

- 4) Probably the hardest question: Open or closed Communion.  
(Communion for everyone, or only those in good standing with the church.)

- 5) This church practices open Communion.
- a) All those who confess the Triune God of the Bible and look to Christ alone for their salvation are welcome at the Lord's Table.
  - b) Before giving the elements, the pastor shall proclaim the Gospel and warn the recipients of the Supper that faith and repentance in Jesus Christ is required.
  - c) Those removed from the fellowship of either this church, or another biblically based church, for disciplinary reasons, shall not be allowed to partake in the Supper until there is evidence of repentance and reinstatement by the Diaconate.

- 1) Open Communion seems to go with the liberality of the Gospel.
- 2) However, it is a new thing. Historically, Protestant churches practiced closed Communion. Since the Supper is directly tied to church discipline. (See 1Cor 5.)
- 3) The other issue is when do you take the Supper.

- 6) The church encourages that one be baptized before receiving the Lord's Supper.
- 7) Children are welcome to take the Lord's Supper in this church.
  - a) Since the only requirement to take the Lord's Supper is faith in Christ, this church suggests that when a parent detects in their children conviction of sin, knowledge of the Gospel and trust in Christ alone for their salvation, that they bring their children to the pastor for instruction about the Lord's Supper before receiving it.
  - b) During 4th grade the church's children will be instructed in the meaning of the Lord's Supper and be given the opportunity to partake in the Supper.

- 1) Pastor Doug would strongly encourage parents to focus on 7A and not rely on 7B.
- 2) It is good that the children receive instruction about the Supper, but tying it to an age can be problematic.
- 3) Remember, the key thing about receiving the Supper correctly is faith.

## **Conclusion**

- 1) The Lord's Supper should be a major part of our piety.
- 2) Not as a superstitious thing, which is very dangerous.
- 3) But as a means of grace, where we go to feed on the Gospel.
- 4) It also is a great antidote to the radical individualism that plagues our society and the church.