

The Benefit and Blessing of the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26; 1 Corinthians 11)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at GCBC on July 25, 2010

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This Lord's Day and next couple Lord's Days, I want us to spend time looking at the two ordinances Christ gave to His church and instituted while He was here on earth:

1. The Lord's Supper/Communion (Matthew 26) - today
2. Baptism (Mt 28 "*make disciples...baptizing them*")

We'll look at these in that order the ordinances were instituted in the gospel of Matthew. There are other things the Lord ordained in OT times that continue to the end of time (for mankind: marriage, government, and for believers: worship). But Christians recognize that while Jesus was on earth He established *two new institutions or ordinances for His church*: Baptism and Communion. There are some different names Christians use for Communion (Lord's Table, Lord's Supper, Eucharist, Breaking of Bread, etc.) and some Christians call the 2 ordinances "sacraments" but in a different sense than the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and their 7 sacraments which RCC sees as part of salvation, including works of penance, unction, etc.

The Reformers rightly rejected the RCC view of "sacraments" and only saw in Christ's teaching 2 new sacraments/ordinances for the church's blessing, but not as good works toward salvation. They called them "means of grace" in the sense of special spiritual blessing in obedience by those in the church (in a similar way that prayer and the Word are "means of grace," i.e., ways or channels God's grace works in our life). In other words, Communion was practiced because Christ commanded us to, and spiritual blessings do come with it for those who are saved. But communion is not part of what makes anybody saved nor does it keep anyone saved.

We live right near Sacramento, which I'm told comes from spanish for "the most blessed Sacrament," a reference to the sacrament of Holy Communion. I don't often use the term "sacrament" and Protestants don't use the term *Mass* and especially the theology of an ongoing sacrifice and elements to be adored or worshipped, as in RCC theology. In past centuries, Christians considered a right understanding and a right practice of the Lord's Supper to be so important to their faith that they were willing to die rather than dishonor the Lord's Table, and many did in England/Europe. May we never treat it lightly!

These 2 ordinances that the Lord gave to be a gift to the church have sadly been so corrupted throughout history both inside and outside the true church. So we need God's help as we study.

Let's start in Matthew 26 today (sometimes called Last Supper, later called the "Lord's Supper" by Paul) and then next week we'll look at Matthew 28 where the resurrected Lord commissions baptism for His disciples. I have taught classes on baptism each year I've been here, but have never given a sermon entirely on baptism, and it's important that we give it the importance Jesus gave in Matt. 28:19. In communion services I regularly take a few minutes to explain what we're doing and why, but I want to take time today to make sure we understand more fully Communion and its benefit and blessing for the body.

OUTLINE:

1. Why Do We Celebrate Communion?
2. What Happens During Communion?
3. Who Should Partake of Communion?
4. How Should We Partake of Communion?

1. Why Do We Celebrate Communion?

Matthew 26:26 *While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."*

[In the parallel in Luke 22:19 it says Jesus also added here "*Do this in remembrance of Me*" – pres. tense in Greek, continually do this, *remembrance* = after I'm gone]

²⁷ *And when He had taken a cup and given thanks*

[this is the Grk verb "eucharist," a word some use for Communion]

He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; ²⁸ for this is My blood of the covenant [Luke says He explained this as the new covenant], which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

The language implies they would continue to drink of this cup, but that Jesus would not drink it *with them* as they did so "*until that day.*" Luke adds that He specified the next Supper He would drink and eat with them at would be when "*the kingdom of God comes.*" There is a kingdom still to come when the King comes again. He's not talking about an invisible spiritual kingdom of God here that Jesus established or inaugurated while on earth, but of the future final literal kingdom to come where believers will be eating and drinking, celebrating the Lord's return and marriage supper of the Lamb and the bride He is presently betrothed to (see Rev. 19).

So the so-called "Last Supper of Christ" was not really the last supper that Christ will share with His disciples after all. As we eat and drink we are not only to remember Christ by looking back on what He did on that Passion weekend, we are also to look forward to His return and kingdom and that wedding Supper of the Lamb.

When the disciples ate this Passover meal in the original context, they were looking back to Israel's redemption from Egypt (v. 17-19 talk about the unleavened bread and Passover). Each of the elements of the meal symbolized a part of their deliverance and was done in remembrance or commemoration of that redemption.

But now Jesus takes the elements and gives them new significance: "*Do this in remembrance of Me.*"

- Remember the redemption Jesus accomplished eternally and spiritually on the cross, not redemption from Egypt
- Remember not the Passover Lamb but Jesus, Lamb of God!
- Remember as you eat the unleavened bread what Christ did as the Bread of Life in His body given for you as substitute!
- Remember the blood that caused the wrath of God to pass over you if you are covered by it in faith, not the blood of the lamb that Israelites covered their doorposts with

- Remember as you drink the cup, not of the old covenant under Moses, but the New Covenant under Christ Jesus

Next month, on August 15th, a Jewish Christian missionary will be with us in an evening service to talk about the Messiah in the Passover, which he is much better and uniquely qualified and to present from a Jewish background of one who has turned to his Messiah and now sees the fullness of the Passover fulfillment in the Lord Jesus, which he's going to present with demonstration of the table/cup. But to sum up this first point, it's because of Christ and His command that we celebrate communion "*until He comes.*"

2. What Happens During Communion?

RCC VIEW - TRANSUBSTANTIATION

-*Trans* = change (ex: transform)

-*Substance* – in this case the bread and wine is transformed or changed into the literal body and blood of Christ by a miracle. They refer to it as a real sacrifice that propitiates (removes sin). The double-miracle is outward appearance of it doesn't change, it still looks like bread and wine

(it's a transformer that's "more than meets the eye")

The term was first used by a Catholic archbishop who died 800-some years ago, and came into wider use in the 12th century. The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 said it this way: "His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine, the bread and wine having been *transubstantiated*, by God's power, into his body and blood."¹

Council of Trent, 1551: "a wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the Body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the Blood – the species [appearance] only of the bread and wine remaining – which conversion indeed the Catholic Church most aptly calls Transubstantiation."²

LUTHERAN VIEW - CONSUBSTANTIATION

-Substance+Con (with) = Christ present with the substance

-Phrases "in, with, and under" are used by some Lutherans

-Luther's own view may be better called "sacramental union" and not all Lutherans embrace consubstantiation

In Luther's own words: "we do not make Christ's body out of the bread ... Nor do we say that his body comes into existence out of the bread. We say that his body, which long ago was made and came into existence, is present when we say, "This is my body." For Christ commands us to say not, "Let this become my body," or, "Make my body there," but, "This is my body."³

For Luther's followers, the "real presence" doctrine meant the physical body of Christ, not the spiritual body or spiritual presence of Christ. For the followers of another Reformer Ulrich Zwingli (whose personal view also differed somewhat from his followers) the Lord's Supper is only a memorial, with no real presence, just a remembrance. For many in this tradition, which would include many Baptist and Bible churches and other denominations, any implication of special grace or blessing communicated by the Lord's Supper is a sacramental RCC remnant.

The other Reformation view (which some call the Reformed View) affirmed a *real presence* of Christ spiritually, but *not His physical body* which is in heaven sitting continually at the right hand of the Father and cannot be localized at tables all over the world. The person of Christ is present everywhere (and in a special way where 2 or 3 gather in His name even for matters like church discipline) but the physical body of Christ ascended into heaven and will be there until His 2nd Coming. I actually in this stage of my study find myself somewhere between the Memorial and Real Presence views

There is a remembrance aspect to be sure (“do this in remembrance of me”) but as I humbly wrestle with the text trying to free myself from traditions and labels as much as possible, I’m not yet certain I can say communion is *only a memorial*. I think it’s possible for some Baptists or memorial-view people to be so concerned about RCC error that they swing too far the other side and deny any real presence of Christ in a spiritual or special way— almost as if to say, “we’re ok with Jesus being present just about everywhere at every time *except when we take communion and that’s one place we’re sure His real presence is not there.*” I say that tongue-in-cheek but if there is a special presence of the Lord and spiritual benefit and blessing in Communion, I don’t want us to miss it. Not a “means of grace” that is different than what we receive from prayer or the Word, but not less than them, either. Whether that makes me sound truly Reformed or truly Baptist is not my concern, I want to be truly biblical.

So let’s focus on the biblical text: “*Take, eat, this is my body.*” In v. 26, our authority is not what the medieval church understood or even how our favorite Reformer or tradition understood the words of Jesus. The authority is the original speaker (Jesus) and we need to ask what He meant in the original setting to His original hearers and how they originally understood it, based on Scripture and its contexts (broader context, cultural/ historical, use of language, etc.)

Remember Jesus is talking to Jewish disciples, whose law forbid them to eat human flesh or drink blood, or even eat animal meat with blood, which was foundational to the whole law (Lev. 17:11). Peter was never shy to speak or object to what the Lord said, and in fact in Acts 10, when the Lord tells Peter in a vision to eat of animal meat that OT law forbid him to eat, he said, “*by no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean*” (10:14), i.e., a violation of OT law. That’s *animal* flesh and blood – if Peter thought Jesus was giving him real *human* flesh and asking him to drink real *human* blood, we know Peter would have spoken up if he thought this was cannibalism or blood-drinking like vampirism.

No, they knew how Jesus spoke, often in parables and metaphors. When Jesus said, “*I am the Door,*” they didn’t think He was saying He transubstantiates into a piece of wood with a handle. When He said, “*I am the gate,*” they didn’t think He was transforming into a large metal thing with hinges, they understood His common use of physical objects to make a spiritual point. And when Jesus used the same phrase to say “*I am the bread of life,*” they didn’t think Jesus had physically become a loaf of bread (nor would they think the reverse took place in Matthew 26). So when Jesus holds bread in His hand apart from His body that they all could see was not an actual part of His physical body He had broken off, when He said “*this is my body,*” they knew He was speaking as He often spoke. How Jesus spoke is our authority, not how or what councils spoke 1,000+ years later.

Even in this immediate context, it's clear that when Jesus said "*this is my blood*" He didn't mean that it was no longer the fruit of the vine (grape) they were drinking. Look at v. 29: He calls it "*fruit of the vine*" still that they're drinking, not a transformed substance.

Earlier in Matthew 13, Jesus uses the phrase "*this is*" several times to explain the spiritual analogy behind a parable, what each element represented (v. 19, 20, 22, 23, NASB / ESV). Jesus also in Matthew uses the phrase "this is" for "this represents or stands for" in Matt. 7:12 "*In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for **this is the Law and the Prophets.***"

They didn't think the actual physical prophets from the OT or actual physical scroll of the law was present when Jesus said "*this is the Law and the Prophets.*" It's a powerful way to say that *this is what signifies or summarizes or stands for or represents the whole law and the prophets, this spiritual reality of this "golden rule."*

As Jews who would have been familiar with the opening chapters of the Torah, they might have thought of the first covenant God gave to sinful man after Eden (same words "this is ... covenant"): In Genesis 9:12, the Lord uses a literal visual rainbow to say: "***This is the sign of the covenant which I am making***" ...
v. 17: "***This is the sign of the covenant which I have established***"

The Lord uses the formula "*this is*" as a covenant is inaugurated, to speak of the visual "*sign of the covenant.*" Every time you see the rainbow, it is a sign of God's presence and promise to never again flood the earth because of man's sin because of the covenant reality. The sign symbolized and visualized the covenant's reality.

When God inaugurates the next covenant in Genesis 17, He uses the same formula to introduce its sign/symbol: "***This is My covenant ... every male among you shall be circumcised ... and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.***" (v. 10-11)

So when establishing a covenant, the formula "*this is*" was used in relation to the sign or symbol of the covenant in the Jewish Scriptures we call the OT. It's possible if not probable that when Jesus and the Disciples celebrated Passover on this same evening, they read from Exodus 12 similar language from its institution:

Ex. 12 (NIV) ¹¹ ***This is*** how you are to eat it ... ¹³ ***The blood will be a sign*** for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will ***pass over*** you ... ¹⁴ "***This is*** a day you are to ***commemorate*** [or "a memorial"]; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ***ordinance*** ...

So the language of ordinance and memorial for this supper would have already been in their mind along with the language "this is." Jews who had the OT already saw the meal as memorial ordinance with a visible sign associated with eating and a covering of blood (NT forgiveness). The Protestant Reformation didn't invent this!

Exodus 24:8 "***This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.***"

With the language of Exodus perhaps fresh in their ears, Jesus now says these words we hear every month but these Jews never heard before: “***This is the New Covenant in My blood for forgiveness...***”

There was no sacrifice that took place at that table (Jesus was still to be betrayed that night and was sacrificed the next day) and there is no ongoing sacrifice that takes place at the Lord’s table today, no matter what any priest does or says or would have you believe. There is only one sacrifice in the history of the world that results in the forgiveness of sin and the giving of saving grace to any Jew or any Gentile in any dispensation or any covenant: It is the sacrifice that took place the day after the Last Supper when Jesus Christ died as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world for all who repent and trust in Him. It is a sacrifice “***once for all***”! He said on the cross “***it is finished!***” The cross is empty. The tomb is empty. His saving work is finished and is sufficient and those who try to add to it or repeat it in any way assault the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 11, we don’t repeat the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in any way, the key word you’ll hear twice is “*remembrance*”:

²³ *For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you...*

[in other words, this was not just for the original disciples present with Jesus that night, but was given by the Lord to Paul to instruct the churches as well to observe]

... *that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread;* ²⁴ *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.**”*

[“Do this” = break bread as Jesus did, and eat it, as Jesus said (which we read in Matthew) and *remember* Jesus as you do so, not *recreate* Jesus physically mystically or magically by saying something in Latin, *remember* Jesus]

²⁵ *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.**”*

[again Jesus highlights that this is a remembrance, or to use the OT term for this meal, “a memorial.” When Jesus said “this cup is the new covenant,” now Jew who knew the OT would think the physical cup was the covenant, but like the other old covenant it had a sign, too, in this case a cup. This is where I depart from Reformed Brethren who assume that baptism is the sign of the new covenant (the NT never uses that language for baptism), baptism replacing circumcision as the sign of the old covenant, therefore infant baptism is valid. We’ll talk about baptism next time, but the ordinance with new covenant actually associated is communion here]

²⁶ *For as often as you eat **this bread** [notice it’s still bread] and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.*

So what happens during communion? There is a remembrance (v. 24b, v. 25b) and there is a proclamation of His death till His return (v. 26b). But it’s more than that in context – look back at 10:16. If you’re taking notes, we: **1) remember, 2) proclaim, 3) commune**

10:16 (NAS) *Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in*

[NKJV “communion of” with a footnote that it can be translated “fellowship” – Grk *koinonia* – this is where the title “communion” comes from, as well as the phrase “breaking of bread” in 2nd half – in v. 21b it’s called “the table of the Lord/Lord’s table”]

... *Is not the bread which we break a **sharing** in the body of Christ?* [NIV/ESV “participation”]
¹⁷ *Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body* [the spiritual body of Christ is the analogy here, not the physical body of Christ; like a loaf has many parts but is one, so the church] *for we **all partake** of the one bread.*

So I don't want to completely deny any real spiritual presence in any special way when we celebrate communion, because the very word communion has communing as part of it, it communicates something to us spiritually. It's not just a mental remembrance of what Jesus did in the past, it's a real time of communing with Him in our spirit in the present. It's called by Paul a partaking, sharing, fellowship, a two-way interaction and an imparting is implied. The spiritual analogy of eating or taking in seems to imply more than a mere memorial or bare symbolism, but an actual spiritual benefit to us spiritually just as eating and drinking benefits us physically. In the context of v. 3-4 leading up to this, Paul speaks of the spiritual food and drink Israel partook of in the past, which end of v. 4 says was ultimately Christ. When they ate the bread from heaven and drank from the rock, it wasn't Christ's actual physical body, it was manna and water, but Christ's genuine spiritual presence was there

The Reformer John Calvin explained communion: “These benefits are to nourish, refresh, strengthen and gladden.” An old confession says helpfully “Yet the Lord is not absent from us His church when she celebrates the Supper. The sun, which is absent from us in the heavens, is notwithstanding effectually present among us. How much more is the Sun of Righteousness, Christ, although in His [physical glorified] body He is absent from us in heaven, present with us, not corporally, but spiritually, by His vivifying operation [i.e., reviving us spiritually], and as He Himself explained at His Last Supper that He would be present with us.”⁴

It's as far as my mind can go to *what happens in communion...*

Question #3: Who Should Take Communion?

In church history, virtually all traditions have reserved communion for “believers, baptized.” Some traditions, of course, baptize children very young, but even those who don't think belief or a certain age is required before they are *baptized* (even to infants) usually delay first communion to a time closer to young adult years and pattern of time that the child's faith has matured and maintained. In some churches catechizing or confirmation first (RCC sometimes younger than Protestants, 1st Communion in practice might be given to some as young as age 7).

In Matthew 28, which we'll look at more next time, the order is you become a disciple (by faith), you're baptized, and you learn and observe all Jesus commanded, including continually observing the Lord's Table until He comes again. In Acts 2, the early church pattern is “repent and be baptized” (v. 38) and then it says:

⁴¹ *So then, those who had received his word were **baptized**; and that day there **were added** about three thousand souls.* ⁴² *They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, **to the breaking of bread** [communion] and to prayer*

Even in this Corinthians context, the spiritual analogies of baptism followed by eating and drinking lead up to Paul's communion text:

1 Corinthians 10 (NAS) ¹ *For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea;* ² *and all were **baptized** into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;* ³ ***and all ate the same spiritual food;*** ⁴ *and **all drank the same spiritual drink**, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ ...* ¹⁶ *Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing [communion] in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing ["communion"] in the body of Christ?* ¹⁷ *Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread*

Flip forward to chapter 12, where a similar pattern/analogy is used:

1 Corinthians 12:13 *For by one Spirit we were all **baptized into one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, **and we were all made to drink of one Spirit** [spiritual "drinking"]*

Baptism is in the initiatory one-time act that symbolizes / signifies our once-for-all salvation and the beginning of our Christian life. Communion is then an on-going ordinance repeated in the life and walk of the Christian, continual eating and drinking spiritually.

The pattern of Romans 6:4 is that we are first baptized, signifying the death of our old life, and now we walk in our new life, a life of obeying what Christ ordains "*under grace*" (v. 14) not to earn grace (v. 23 says eternal life is a "*free gift through Jesus Christ*").

In Galatians 3, baptism is also so closely associated with our being one with Christ and in the body of Christ, not as the source of it, but the sign of it, and that's what we then celebrate in communion. But to be clear; forgiveness/salvation in the NT takes place at the time of repentant faith, and then you are baptized to obey Christ and you take communion to obey Christ, not to obtain salvation.

Justin Martyr, writing about 50 years after the NT was completed, said of the Lord's Supper: 'This food is called by us the eucharist, of which it is not lawful for anyone to partake, but such as believe the things taught by us, and have been baptized' (Apol. Ic. 65, 66)

The Didache, an early church worship book written maybe only 10 or 20 years after NT: 'let no one eat or drink of this eucharist...but they that have been baptized into the name of the Lord' (Did. 9.5)⁵

Neander, the noted church historian, speaking of the Lord's Supper in the first century, says: "At this celebration, as may be easily concluded, no one could be present who was not ... of the Christian church, and incorporated into it by the rite of baptism." ... Wall, a leading Episcopalian, says: "No church ever gave the communion to any before they were baptized. Among all the absurdities that were ever held, none ever maintained that any person should partake of the communion before he was baptized" ... [a Presbyterian weighs in] "I would not for a moment consider a proposal to admit an unbaptized person to the communion ..." ... Dr. Hibbard, the great Methodist leader: ... "in one principle, the Baptist and Pedo-Baptist churches agree ... in rejecting from communion at the table of the Lord ... all who have not been baptized ... The only question then, that here divides us is, What is essential to valid baptism?"⁶ [we'll look at that next week]

Now some Baptists take stricter views than me on who should take communion (ex: a pastor who I respect has Presbyterian guest speakers but won't let any infant-baptized take communion). I'm committed to believer's baptism, but many people smarter and godlier than me in the body of Christ have a different conviction on baptism and in my conscience I can't deny them an ordinance that so symbolizes the unity of all in the body of Christ. We're a Baptist church but gospel-loving non-Baptists who love the Lord and are living for Him are welcome at His table here, with all due respect to others in the body of Christ who differ from me.

Curt Daniel writes that in some Scottish churches, the practice of "fencing the Table" has been abused, he says, when 'The fence has too small a gate ... It has not been that unusual for some old Scottish churches to have 500 members in attendance, but only a couple of dozen actually partake. Those are seen as the extra-spiritual ... [Other churches in Scotland once used] Communion tokens. The elders would examine would-be participants; if approved, they would be issued a Communion token for presentation at the church on the day of Communion for admission to the Table. These tokens were usually in the form of coins.

Then there was the controversy with Jonathan Edwards. Some of his fellow congrega[nts] taught ... that all who have been [infant] baptized are entitled to all the privileges of Christians, such as ... admission to Communion ... Edwards disagreed, saying that Communion was only for the regenerate who gave evidence of conversion [not just something they had done/prayed as a young child] and a credible profession of faith. They outnumbered him and dismissed him from the church [!]

This in turn is related to another unusual controversy in some Reformed circles ... First, there are those who say that children past an age of accountability but under the age of puberty should be allowed to the Table if they have been baptized in a covenant family. Second, some take this a step further and would admit even infants ... if they have been baptized in a covenant family ... as soon as he is old enough to digest solid food ... Others even ... dilute the bread into a mush with the wine and give a small bit to the infant (!) ... [I think the Protestant Westminster view avoids all of that with the simple statement:] Communion is "only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves"⁷

The Scripture text is always much safer than someone's tradition:

11:28 a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup [clearly implied level of maturity and ability of self-examination spiritually].²⁹ *For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.*

³⁰ *For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep [some have actually died for violating v. 27-29!].* ³¹ *But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.*

4. How Should We Take Communion?

The focus of this text isn't that Christianized, baptized, catechized guys go through a ritualized ceremony that automatically makes them more spiritualized. There's actually several warnings:

- v. 27 -> not to take in an unworthy manner, or you're guilty *concerning the body* (ESV) or *of sinning against it* (NIV)
- v. 28 -> not to partake without prior self-examination
- v. 29 -> judgment can come if we don't rightly judge the body, or NKJV/ESV "*discern the body*," NIV "*recognize*," even to the point of effects in physical body or life (v. 30)

- v. 31 -> partaking without first judging ourselves rightly
- v. 33 -> partaking without thinking of / considering others

I don't want to rush through those phrases, we'll come back next time. But we can see here why in church history parents have not rushed their children to the Lord's Supper. Even adults have to be very careful not to treat it lightly, and if adults for centuries have often not judged rightly what communion is all about, as shepherd and parent in my family I don't want to rush my children into the ordinances prematurely or immaturely when they're not at a place spiritually where they introspectively judge their own sin rightly, examine self and repent on their own, not for dad but for God. As adults we also don't want to partake superficially or too casually.

It's difficult to tell when young ones are truly regenerated and when their parent's faith is now their own faith by their own choices even into the young teen years at times – God knows that where we can't, but rather than think in terms of a specific *age* I prefer to think for my children of a *stage of life* where they have demonstrated fruit of a changed life and the Spirit of God. And the Scriptures have produced in them a heart-desire to first be baptized to obey and glorify Christ publically professing He is their Lord. Not because mom or dad wanted them to be baptized, or because so-and-so did it but not them, but because in their own study and own spirit independently they long to make a public declaration of their dedication to follow Jesus in baptism. A mature, memorable, and meaningful participation not only in baptism but then following in communion has a real spiritual benefit and blessing.

Let me clarify one thing before next time about judgment in v. 29. For believers, there is no *eternal judgment or punishment* for sin. In v. 32, Paul clarifies that there is no condemnation for God's children, but there are consequences and there is chastening or discipline when we sin in general or in relation to the Lord's Table.

I also don't want to wait till next week to tell you that if you are in sin against someone else in this body of Christ, it's imperative that you do what you can to make that right between you and the Lord and between you and the person if you can before next Lord's Day. If you're unrepentant or unwilling to deal with it or do what Jesus commanded us to do in Mt 5 ("*first go and be reconciled to your brother, then come*" to worship), I'm unable in my conviction and conscience and concern for you to say you're ok to participate in the outward ordinances of Christianity if your heart is not right.

Go and do what's right to make things reconciled and right with you and the Lord and the other person where needed and possible, before you come to worship (study Matthew 5:23-24 before next week). I can't police what's in your heart, but God does command you (not me) to *examine your heart / yourself* before you eat of the bread and drink of the cup (v. 28). And there is great blessing and benefit God intends for the body of Christ through His ordinances, and great joy and great unity and great grace He has for His body. My great desire is that our great God will help us to apply and come back next week to experience it in greater measure as a body.

¹ <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Councils/ecum12-2.htm#Confession%20of%20Faith>

² <http://history.hanover.edu/early/trent/ct13ce.htm>

³ Martin Luther, vol. 37, *Luther's Works, Vol. 37 : Word and Sacrament III*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald and Helmut T. Lehmann, Luther's Works (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 187.

⁴ Curt Daniel, *The History and Theology of Calvinism*, p. 452, citing the 2nd Helvetic Confession, XXI, which was mainly the work of Heinrich Bullinger (Zwingli's successor in Zurich).

⁵ Joseph Barber Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1891), 232.

⁶ William Dudley Nowlin, *Fundamentals of the Faith* (Roger Williams Heritage Archives, 1922; 2003), 305-10.

⁷ Daniel, 454-55, citing Westminster Larger Catechism, Question 177.