

Can Fellowship Be My Church?

A Few Words on the Sacraments

But First... Why Should I Care?

- Let us know; **let us press on to know** the Lord.
Hosea 6:3a

But First... Why Should I Care?

- Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may **grow up into salvation**— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. 1 Peter 2:2-3

But First... Why Should I Care?

- You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But **grow in the grace and knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. 2 Peter 3:17-18

But First... Why Should I Care?

- And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for **building up the body of Christ**, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **to maturity**, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may **no longer be children**, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, **we are to grow up** in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, **makes the body grow** so that it builds itself up in love. Ephesians 4:11-16

But First... Why Should I Care?

- May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, **through the knowledge of him** who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, **make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.** For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:2-8

But First... Why Should I Care?

- I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 2 Timothy 4:1-4

What is a Sacrament?

- A religious ceremony that communicates a spiritual reality through visible means.
- Baptism and Communion, or the Lord's Table, are the two sacraments recognized by the Protestant Church.
- Because they are the only two commanded by Jesus Himself.

Again, Why Should I Care?

- The Church has been around for nearly 2000 years. And throughout that time, in every culture, country and age, the Church has declared the two sacraments of baptism and communion to be central to what it means to be a Church.
- That means we should pay attention and try and understand why. If Christians of all stripes and nationalities and confessions have been doing the same things for 2000 years, that probably means they are important.

Baptism

- And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28:18-20
- And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is **baptized** will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. Mark 16:15-16

Baptism

- And Peter said to them, “Repent and be **baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” Acts 2:38-39
- Do you not know that all of us who have been **baptized** into Christ Jesus were **baptized** into his death? We were buried therefore with him by **baptism** into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. Romans 6:3-4

Baptism . . .

- Is a visible sign, symbolizing the death, burial and resurrection of the Christian, as they have been united to Jesus through faith.
- Is a public proclamation of a Christian's unity with Jesus.
- Is a sacrament given to the elders of the Church to administer, and therefore it is a function of the Church.
- Is something every Christian should do, because Jesus Himself commanded us to do it.

Communion

- 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 covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Matthew 26:26-28
- 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. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Communion

- Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 1 Corinthians 11:27-29
- So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.” John 6:53-57

Communion . . .

- Is a visible sign symbolizing the broken body and poured out blood of Jesus, given freely to you.
- Is a meal that we eat with Jesus and with the rest of His body, not by ourselves.
- Is a sacrament given to the elders of the Church, and should not be done outside the ministry of the Church.
- Is something every Christian needs to do, as it is spiritual food. In the same way you wouldn't skip your actual dinner, you shouldn't skip your spiritual dinner.

Why Every Week?

- In 1 Corinthians 11:26, Paul wrote that, "Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." The Lord's Table is a time to remember, celebrate and proclaim the great culmination of God's eternal plan to redeem us, on the Cross of Jesus Christ. But when we come to the table, we do more than just remember, celebrate and proclaim. We also partake. As we put our faith in the things that the Bread and the Cup signify (the body and the blood of Jesus), God has promised to strengthen our faith and our lives by the grace that we remember and proclaim. We celebrate Communion every week because we need the strength and grace of Christ every week. We come hungry and thirsty, confessing that only He can feed us and quench our thirst.

Can Fellowship Be My Church?

- Only the Church can offer baptism and communion, two things necessary for a Christian to participate in: **Baptism**, when they come to faith; and **Communion**, every time they come to worship God on the Lord's Day.
- A Fellowship, while good and necessary for some things (community, social life, etc) cannot replace the central things essential to a Christian's spiritual growth and nourishment: the preaching of the word and participation in the sacraments.