

THE BEAUTIFUL SIGNS
OF GOD'S BEAUTIFUL COVENANT

A CORE COURSE ON:

BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

PROPERTY OF:



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Abstract:

An in-depth look at the ordinances of Baptism and Lord's Supper. This core course will cover their historical-biblical origins, significance, relationship, and practice in the early church *in order to* correct and clarify our church's beliefs and practice concerning them.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES: *The Function of Doctrine*

The following is taken from Kevin Vanhoozer's *The Drama of Doctrine*, (15) and may provide a helpful way of discussing and applying systematic theology with your congregation.

- (1) **Coping** — Making sense of the vast, complex, and seemingly chaotic reality we find ourselves in and helping use to live our role.
- (2) **Celebrating** — Ascribing the worth that God is due for who he is and what he has done by truthful and Spiritual speaking about him.
- (3) **Communicating** — Explaining and making clear who the Triune God is, what he had done, and how he wills us to live before Him and to those in and outside the church.
- (4) **Criticism** — Struggling "to demarcate true from false witness to God and his work."
- (5) **Continuing** — Guiding and impelling us to live out our place, individually and collectively, in God's redemptive mission in the world.

"Doctrine has to do with what faith seeking understanding gets when its search is successful. To be precise: Christian doctrine is the reward that faith finds at the end of its search for the meaning of the apostolic testimony to what God was doing in the event of Jesus Christ." - Vanhoozer

(4)

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Session 1 - Overview and What is Baptism?

What is the point of this course?

- (1) Want to make a small adjustment in our doctrinal statement to bring clarity to our understanding of these ordinances.
- (2) If you are a Christian and have already been baptized or regularly take communion ...
 - This course is meant to help you understand them so you can better communicate them to others.
- (3) If you are a Christian and have not been baptized or have not taken communion OR have never withheld yourself/been withheld from communion, ...
 - This course is meant to help you see the importance of baptism and encourage you to be baptized, to take communion more consciously in regards to the church, and/or to see a more clear biblical connection between these two ordinances
- (4) We want to understand the ecclesial (church) shape of baptism and the Lord's Supper.
 - Contra *expressive individualism* - "*that each person has a unique core of feeling and intuition that **should** unfold or be expressed if individuality is to be realized*"¹ - **We don't want** to treat these ordinances given to us, in Scripture, by Christ, as if they are simply means for us to "express ourselves" however we wish! There is a form, structure, and purpose to them that goes beyond ourselves and glorifies God when rightly practiced..
 - "*If we think of the whole Christian life in individual terms, we'll think of the ordinances in individual terms. We'll see baptism as an intensely individual profession of faith and the Lord's Supper as a personal, almost private devotional experience of the cross.*"²

What is the structure of this course?

- (1) The class is modeled in five weeks, and it's structured around a number of questions: including (but not limited to):
 - What is baptism & communion?
 - Where did baptism & communion come from?

¹ Trueman, Carl R. *Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2022) 22.

² Bobby Jamieson, *Going Public: Why Baptism is Required for Church Membership* (Nashville: B & H, 2015), 18

- What do baptism and communion signify?
- Does baptism save a person?
- Should a person ever get “re-baptized” (as it is often called)?
- What is the right age for baptism?
- How do I get baptized at this church?

(2) Helpful Resources (you’ll see these again at the end):

- John S. Hammett, “40 Questions About Baptism & the Lord’s Supper”, ed. Benjamin L. Merkle, 40 Questions Series (GrandRapids: Kregel, 2015)
- Stephen J. Wellum, “Baptism and the Relationship Between the Covenants” in *Believer’s Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright, NAC Studies in Bible & Theology (Nashville: B&H, 2006)
- Bobby Jamieson, *Going Public: Why Baptism is Required for Church Membership* (Nashville: B & H, 2015)

What is the gospel and why is it important to start here in relation to Baptism and the LS?

(1) God, man, Christ, response.³ (one way you may put it below)

- **God** is the righteous Creator of all things. He made man, male and female in his image, body and soul, to represent him as priests/kings in the earth ruling and representing him “in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts” and external command to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, ‘lest they surely die; yet while maintaining their obedience existed in happy communion with God (Gen 1:27-28; 2:16-17; LBCF 4.2⁴)
- **Man** in Adam willfully broke God’s commandment and by this sin “fell from their original righteousness and communion with God” and brought death to all mankind, both physical and spiritual, becoming “wholly defiled in all” our faculties (Rom 3:10-18; Rom 5:12-21; LBCF 6.2). God, thus being perfectly holy, just, and loving all goodness has placed man under sure condemnation for their sins.
- **Christ**, the eternal Son and Word of God, came into the world as a man, born of a virgin to save people from their sins (Matthew 1:18-23; John 1:1-18; Luke 1:26-38). Being born pure as the God-man, he lived a righteous and unblemished life and offered himself on the cross as a substitute, under the

³ Always try to have some copies of this to giveaway. Gilbert, Greg. *What Is the Gospel?* 9Marks Series. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2010.

⁴ This can be googled for free online. *London Baptist Confession of Faith* (1689)

wrath of God and in accordance with the covenants of old (Ex 12; Lev 16), to satisfy the wrath of God. God's wrath thus being turned away, Christ rose from the dead on the 3rd day, conquering the power of sin, and offering eternal life and his salvation to all who receive him (Luke 24) .

- **Response.** Man, recognizing the love of God displayed in Christ and their own sin, must repent (turn from sin) and believe (trust wholly) the aforementioned good news as the only means of being made right with God and they will be justified and have peace with God, no longer being under condemnation forever (Acts 2:36-41; Rom 5:1; 8:1; 10:9-13).

(2) **This is the starting point for baptism/communion.** A person must believe the gospel before he or she can rightly get baptized. Otherwise, a person is wearing a wedding ring while not having a spouse, or a person is putting on cleats and a jersey without actually being on the team. Baptism always follows conversion, which follows repentance and faith. Communion then follows this as the regular "celebration meal" of baptized believers.

What does GCC belief specifically about baptism?

We believe that...

- the Scriptural ordinances of the local church, given to us directly by Christ Jesus are Baptism and the Lord's Supper
- Baptism, by immersion, should be administered to believers only, as an identifying symbol of their belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and our death to sin and resurrection to a new walk in life (**Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 8:36-39; 18:8; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12**)

What is the biblical-historical basis for this practice?

Christian baptism most likely finds its roots in John's baptism of repentance (**Matt 3:1-12; Mk 1:1-8**) .

DISCUSS: Before moving on, discuss or make a list of the things that you know about John and his baptism. Who was it for? Why did people need it? How did different groups of people react to John's baptism?

So where did John's baptism come from?

(1) Some see the washings of the people/priests before approaching God or the tabernacle...

- When the people of Israel were first to meet with God at Mount Sinai, they were to wash their clothes (**Ex 19:10, 14**); before the priests entered the tabernacle they were to wash their hands/feet (**Lev 16:4**) and after (**Lev 16:24**) to offer sin offerings to God. Moreover, the people would get washed for all kinds of defilements in **Lev 12-15**.
- **However, none of these cleansings were once and for all**; rather, we see longings for a deeper type of cleansing in **Ps 51; Ezek 36:25-26**

(2) Some people see Qumran washings or a washing for new converts into Judaism⁵, and here are the reasons the Jewish conversion practice is probably the most relevant source for John:

- **First off, we must understand that John was calling for the reconstituting of Israel.** This is why John preached in the "wilderness" (**Matt 3:3**) to "prepare the way for the LORD", the same "way" that Israel was called to in the Exodus where they entered into national relationship with God (**Ex 23:20**).⁶
- **This is why John framed his message and baptism as one of 'repentance'** and not merely cleansing (**Matt 3:2,8**). The people did not merely to wash themselves, but to reform their whole way of living/thinking - as in to say, the way they had been living was **not** going to cut it for the coming Messiah!
- **Further, this best explains why John predicts the people to defend themselves with the statement "We have Abraham as our Father" (Matt 3:9).** If they saw John as merely offering another form of "washing", there would be no need to defend themselves as Abraham's children, for all the Jews were familiar with such practices. Rather, it only makes sense if *they* understood John as essentially saying "You are **not** truly Abraham's children, but are essentially Gentiles" **and that** is why you need to be baptized again.
- **John is preparing the people to go through God's coming judgment (Matt 3:10-12).** As the prophet in the 'wilderness', John's

⁵ This is the view that was taught against the first time the Baptism course was offered, based off Hammett. I've done some additional research along these lines and argue that **it is most likely** John **did** have Jewish conversion practices in mind (see below).

⁶ Ben F Meyer. *The Aims of Jesus*. (San Jose, Calif.: Pickwick Publications, 2002), 116.

biblical theological analogy is more closely linked to the judgment Israel passed safely through at the Red Sea (**Ex 14:21-31**), *before* entering God's covenant at Mount Sinai (**before** ceremonial washings were instituted).

- **The closest present analogy to John's baptism was the once-given Gentile conversion baptism.** Obviously, Jewish men couldn't be recircumcised, so the other sign, a "baptism of initiation" is the more convenient choice for John (and again best captures John's message).

John's Baptism	Christian Baptism
Similarities	
Baptism in water	Baptism in water
Involves repentance and confession	Involves repentance and confession
Symbol Relating to the forgiveness of sins	Symbol Relating to the forgiveness of sins
Has a once-for-all, non-repeatable	Has once-for-all, non-repeatable nature
Differences	
Looks <u>forward</u> to the Messiah's arrival	Looks <u>back</u> to the Messiah's arrival
<u>Not valid</u> as Christian baptism (Acts 19:5)	<u>Valid</u> as Christian Baptism
No use of the covenant name of the triune God	Uses covenant name of the triune God (Matt 28:19)
No involvement of the Spirit	Linked to the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:6-7)
No identification with the church	Identifies someone with the church (Acts 2:41)

Why did Jesus get baptized then?

Difficulty? If people got baptized in the whole order of repentance from sins, then why did Jesus get baptized? **Jesus was sinless!** (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1 Pet 2:22)!

DISCUSS: This would be a good point to pause and read either parts of or all of **Matthew 3-4:17**. Remember, Jesus' actions aren't occurring in a vacuum! Each one is framed within the Gospel author's context, so we should notice what is occurring in the narrative both before and after Jesus gets baptized to see how that helps us understand its purpose.

Three likely reasons (we can see some of here) Jesus was baptized:

(1) To identify with Sinners (and yet be Sin-less)

- Jesus commits himself to the mission of saving sinners: (**Matt 1:21; Isa 42:1**) and to do so, must take their place, not only as a sacrifice, **but also** as a perfectly righteous man who earns the covenant blessings for his people (**Matt 3:15; 5:17-20**).⁷ It is Jesus alone, instead of OT Israel, who passes through John's baptism (of judgment-Red Sea) and resists temptation in the wilderness (**Matt 4:1-11; Ex. 32**)

(2) To be identified by God

- In God's sovereignty, this is when Jesus is publicly identified by God as his "beloved son": **Matt 3:16-17** (cf. Ps 2:7; Gen 22:2; Isa 42:1)

(3) Equipping and Commissioning

- God sends the Spirit to Christ to empower him for His ministry: **Matt 3:16; Acts 10:38**. Afterwards, he immediately is tempted by and successfully resist Satan.

What does baptism signify?⁸

(1) THE GOSPEL: Singular Public Identification With Christ and Profession of *both* faith and repentance (**Acts 2:38-41**)

- **The fact that baptism is a "public" act is often missed.** As Jamieson highlights though, becoming a Christian (which in the N.T is synonymous with baptism) is "**not a private act. Personal, yes, but never private.**"⁹

⁷ Jesus' righteous deeds "earn wages that are stored up in heavenly treasures" that can pay our debt of sin. Eubank, Nathan. *Wages of Cross-Bearing and Debt of Sin: The Economy of Heaven in Matthew's Gospel* (De Gruyter, 2013), 123;129-130.

⁸ To this list Jamieson adds that it is a sign of "the gift of the Holy Spirit" as it relates to John's description of Jesus' ministry (Mark 1:8). Acts 2:38 and 1 Cor 12:13 suggest a similar link, if only symbolic. Our immersion in water symbolizes our symbolic immersion in the Spirit (John 3:5). Jamieson, 48-49.

⁹ Emphasis added, Bobby Jamieson, *Going Public*, 35.

DISCUSS: Why would Jamieson say this? Why is it significant that baptism be “public”? Isn’t it just about my personal faith in Jesus?
Hint: Consider Matt. 10:18, 32–33; 2 Tim 2:12.

(2) UNION WITH CHRIST: In his death (to sin) and resurrection (new life) and all the benefits thereof proclaimed through immersion (**Rom 6:1–4; Col 2:11–12**)

Defining ‘Union with Christ’: In our day and age, this theological phrase has largely fallen out of common usage, but it is an extremely important concept to understand. Why? Christ died and rose 2000+ years ago, how can that possibly save us? It is only through the Holy Spirit, that is the Spirit of Christ, who truly unites us with the person of Christ that his death is our death, and his life becomes our life and redemption

Constantine Campbell describes our union with Christ in terms of “*participation* with Christ in the saving events of the gospel narrative” (when he died we died), “*identification* with Christ since we are ‘in’ him and subject to his lordship, and *incorporation* into his body, the church. All of these realities are pictured in baptism” (Jamieson).

John Calvin states the importance of this doctrine this way:
“Nothing is more central or basic than union and communion with Christ. Union with Christ is really the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation not only in its application but also its once-for-all accomplishment in the finished work of Christ.”

(3) UNION WITH THE CHURCH: The body of Christ living on earth (**Matt 28:19; Eph 4:2–5; Acts 2:40–41**) - marks believer’s off *from* the world and *toward* the Triune God and His new covenant people

(4) SEAS OF JUDGMENT: Passing through the waters of God’s Judgment (Red Sea) into a New Kingdom! (**1 Pet 3:18–22**)

- “**Appeal to God for a good conscience**” - it “*dramatizes the decision of faith...that says, in effect, ‘O Lord, accept me on the terms of your new covenant.’*”¹⁰ Since the new covenant cleanses us of all sins and grants us a new heart it, in effect, grants us a “clean conscience” free from guilt and condemnation.

¹⁰ Jamieson, 70.

Session 2 - Our Baptism Beliefs and Questions

What does GCC belief specifically about baptism?

We believe that...

- the Scriptural ordinances of the local church, given to us directly by Christ Jesus are Baptism and the Lord's Supper
- Baptism, by immersion, should be administered to believers only, as an identifying symbol of their belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and our death to sin and resurrection to a new walk in life (**Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 8:36-39; 18:8; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12**)

How do our views compare/contrast with other churches?

Credobaptism vs. Paedobaptism?

- **We are credobaptists** – we only baptize professing Christian believers. If any person or church says that they are Baptist, then that means they are credobaptist (in this sense, even Non-Denominational churches are technically 'Baptist')
- **Others are paedobaptists** – “baptize” infants who have Christian parents.

Note on Language: As a credobaptist church, we would not affirm that any church actually “baptizes” infants in the true sense of the word. They sprinkle infants, get them wet, but it is not actually a symbol of a person's professed faith and union with Christ.

What is the reasoning for paedobaptism?

- (1) **Paedobaptists understand that baptism replaces circumcision** as the “sign of entrance” into the covenant (Old vs. New Covenant) **and *should be applied just as circumcision was applied*** (complete continuity).
- **Baptist Response?**
 - Two crucial differences we must understand between baptism and circumcision:

(1) Circumcision threatens judgment for disobedience (cut off from God's people Gen 17:14; Moses cf. Exod 4:24–26) **whereas** baptism pictures the complete judgment that fell on Christ, it is *judgment satisfied* (Isa 53:8; 6:3–4; c. #4 SEAS OF JUDGMENT)

(2) Circumcision implicitly demanded that the people renew their own hearts (Deut 10:16; cf. Jer 4:4) **whereas** baptism proclaims that God *has* circumcised our hearts through his Holy Spirit (Col 2:12; cf. Rom 2:28–29).

- Therefore, we conclude that the paedobaptist view sees too much continuity/relationship between circumcision and baptism, where the Bible draws some sharp distinctions.

(2) **Paedobaptists argue that early Jews would not have known not to baptize their children** (as they had previously circumcised them; cf. **Gen 17:12; Lev 12:3**). They argue that the inclusion of children is implied in the early church in the baptism of 'households' in texts such as **Acts 10:44-48; 16:15, 31-33**.

DISCUSS: Pick one of the 'household' texts and ask: What in this text actually leads us toward a *credobaptist* understanding instead?

- **Baptist Response?**

- Biblically, we see this as *an argument from silence*. The New Testament does not clearly guide us toward baptizing believer's children, but *rather* to baptize true disciples of Christ! (cf. **Matt 28:19**)
- Early Church History is *inconclusive* on this (not addressed until Tertullian in 200-220 A.D who cautioned *against* paedobaptism)

(3) **Paedobaptists understand the New Covenant differently** - for them, to be born into a Christian household is enough to warrant entry into the Covenant (like Abraham's offspring) so they give them the sign of entrance (baptism). Only if a child grows and believes in Jesus will they receive the covenant benefits (entry into the Kingdom of God).

- **Baptist Response?**

- We understand the kingdom and the new covenant as describing essentially the same thing **and** that Jesus demarcated spiritual birth as the point of entry for people into his covenant, not physical birth (**John 3:5-8**).

DISCUSS: Turn to Jeremiah 31:31-34, our key Old Testament text on the “New Covenant”, and the one that the *credo* and *paedobaptist* argument usually hangs on. Make a list of the various aspects of the covenant described here. Hypothesize how *credo* and *paedobaptists* would read this text differently?

Hint: Paedobaptists caution here against an ‘overrealized eschatology’

Jeremiah 31 Summary:

- **Areas of Agreement:** both see this as describing the covenant that God makes with mankind through Jesus’s work in his death, resurrection, and ascension.
- **Areas of Disagreement:**
 - (1) Paedobaptists *don’t see* all of this passage as being fulfilled yet. In the systematic idea of “already-not yet” eschatology, they would accuse baptists of interpreting this passage in a way that brings **TOO MUCH** of it into the already (our present experience), instead of not yet (future fulfillment in Christ’s 2nd coming). This text *has* begun to be fulfilled in Christ, since some people know God through faith in the covenant **BUT** you also still have people in the covenant who don’t “Know the Lord.” When Christ returns he will sift out believers from unbelievers and then this text will be completely fulfilled.
 - (2) Paedobaptists would point to texts like **1 Cor 7:14** as showing that the children of Christian parents are also considered a part of the covenant (“holy”) even though they don’t know God in a salvific way. Only if a child grows and believes in Christ will he receive the “covenant benefit” of justification (we agree!). **We would say** “No!” that’s an overreach of that verse. The point is that normally in marriage unbelief will pollute the household with ‘uncleanness’/worldliness (like the husband here), but when there is a believing spouse the holiness of that believer spreads and affects the lives of her children/husband in such a way that they too are ‘holy’ in a sense or ‘set apart’ from the norms of the world around them. This does **not** mean they are in the N.C which is not in view in this text.
 - (3) From **Jer 31 and what we see in the gospel narratives, we would consider** the kingdom and the new covenant as describing essentially the same thing. Particularly because v.34 highlights that the

distinguishing mark of being in the new covenant is the forgiveness of sins. And so forgiveness of sins and knowing the Lord go together. Therefore children without faith are **not** forgiven and therefore not in this covenant. This seems to be evident again when Jesus demarcates spiritual birth as the point of entry for people into his covenant, not physical birth as the Pharisee Nicodemus seemed to think (John 3:5-8). Only people 'born of the Spirit' through faith receive the covenant benefit of eternal life (John 3:16).

CLOSING: A Note on Disagreements

Romans 14:1-12 - helpful for areas of disagreement such as this. The content of what Paul's addressing here is different, but the principle and his intention are applicable for us...(read)

Do not loom in judgment over a brother/sister who disagrees with you on this, friends. There are faithful believers on both sides of this debate, and so we ought not despise each other. That doesn't mean we don't have helpful challenging conversations, and that doesn't mean that there isn't "truth" to be grasped. We want to hold our convictions about what the Bible teaches faithfully (amen), and we believe that to be a believer's baptism. And yet, on something like this that doesn't determine whether someone is saved or not we want to show grace fully conscious that many of these brethren are trying to honor the Lord and will have to give an account for all they do just as we will.

Session 3 - What is the Lord's Supper?

What is the Lord's Supper/Communion?

We believe that...

- the Scriptural ordinances of the local church, given to us directly by Christ Jesus are Baptism and the Lord's Supper
- the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's death and His atonement for our sins (**1 Cor 11:17-34**)

What is the biblical-historical basis for this practice?

- **Christian communion** finds its immediate roots in Jesus' Passover Meal with his disciples (**Matt 26:17-30; Mk 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-23**).

DISCUSS: What historical event does the practice of Passover come from, and what is that event's significance? (**cf. Ex 12**)

Why Passover?

- (1) **Points to the atoning, sacrificial nature of Christ's death** as the slain lamb (just as Israel sacrificed unblemished lambs at the Passover!) whose blood provides forgiveness of sins and protects people from God's wrath (**Ex 32:1-32**). That is why Christ says "this is my blood of the covenant, *which* is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (**Matt 26:27**).

DISCUSS: Read **Lev 16:16-22**. What is meant by the laying on of hands? (imputation of sin; may need to define this!) What does this passage tell us about how God forgives?

- Requires the shedding of blood
- God accepts a substitute

Read **Heb 9:11-22** and see how that lines up with your conclusions! It could be helpful here to draw out the Old and New Covenants as two "bubbles" again for comparison.

- (2) **Marks the Exodus of God's people** out of bondage and into freedom and covenant renewal (**Ex 12:48-51 - people had to be circumcised, set apart as the people of God to keep it**)
- (3) **Maintains and affirms Israel's covenant with God.** Although the Passover itself wasn't when Israel inaugurated its covenant with God, it was the primary way it was maintained, so it is appropriate Jesus announces the new covenant here (**Exodus 24:10-11; Deut 16:1-8**)
- (4) **It is the family festival of Israel that gives them a national identity (horizontal aspect; 2 Chr 30)**

DISCUSS: Read **2 Chronicles 30:10-26**, what about this text highlights the horizontal nature of the Passover? What about this may help inform how we should practice the Lord's Supper in the church?

GOOD QUESTION FOR A FRIEND: When your church celebrates the Lord's Supper, is any attention given to the background of the OT background of the Passover? If so, what aspects are mentioned?

What does the Lord's Supper signify?

- (1) **THE GOSPEL:** Ongoing Identification with Christ through partaking of his flesh/blood as offered up on the cross *with faith and repentance* (**John 6:52-58; Cor 11:26**)
- (2) **UNION WITH CHRIST:** In his death and resurrection and all the benefits thereof (forgiveness) proclaimed in the elements, bread and wine (**Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 10:16; 11:23-26; Eph 1:7; 2:13; Heb 9:12-14,18-22**)
- (3) **UNION WITH THE CHURCH:** John Hammett, a senior professor at Southeastern Theological Seminary puts it like this: we "approach the Lord's Supper seeking to affirm, renew, and celebrate" our unity with the "church"¹¹ (**1 Cor 10:17; 11:17-22, 27-33**)
 - **#2 and #3 here work more closely together in Communion.** The union we have with Christ displayed in the L.S is not an *individual* union, it is a corporate union of the local church with Christ.¹²

¹¹ Hammet, John, 271

¹² see also Jamieson, 113.

- (4) **WEDDING FEAST OF THE LAMB:** points to the eschatological fulfillment in the wedding feast of the Lamb that all believer's look forward to enjoying one day with the Lord Jesus himself! (**Matt 26:29; Rev 19:7,9**)

CLOSING: Reflection

Ask the class to help you re-write the 4 things baptism symbolizes (from the 1st and 2nd class). What similarities do you notice? Differences? Is there any underlying idea that ties these two signs together? What is it?

Could pick one or more of these to discuss also?

- Which of the above ideas is most clearly represented or emphasized in our church (if any)? How do we balance them?
- Is the gospel proclaimed visually in the LS or is a verbal explanation necessary?
- How can our celebration of the LS better reflect a joyful anticipation of the Lord's coming?

Session 4 - Our LS Beliefs and Questions

What does GCC belief specifically about baptism & the Lord's Supper?

- **We believe (altogether now) that...**
 - the Scriptural ordinances of the local church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper; that Baptism, by immersion, should be administered to believers only, as an identifying symbol of their belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and our death to sin and resurrection to a new walk in life ; that the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's death and His atonement for our sins. Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 8:36-39; 18:8; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; I Corinthians 11:23-32.
- **Another way to put our understanding** - "Baptism is the front door into the house, and the Lord's Supper is the family meal. All who belong to the family identify themselves by "showing up" in baptism, and their unity as a family is both displayed and sealed as they sit down to eat together."

REVIEW: Take a couple minutes and see if the class can recall the 4 things that we said Baptism and the Lord's Supper symbolize respectively (jotting them on the board if possible).

Who should celebrate the Lord's Supper (on a corporate level)?

- **The Lord's Supper Should Only Be Celebrated by Local Churches**
 - **1 Corinthians 11:18:** "When you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you." The Lord's Supper is celebrated by the church, as a church. Therefore, only a local church has the authority to administer the Lord's Supper, and it is only authorized to administer it to the whole church.
 - It should not be celebrated outside the assembly of the local church or any part of the church separate from the whole (i.e weddings, families, youth groups, mission teams, parachurch ministries, etc.). To do so disobeys and destroys the meaning of the act and the ecclesial reality it points to as given to us by Christ.¹³

¹³ Jamieson, 131.

NOTE: The above comment often provokes a question about multisite or multiservice “churches.” You’re welcome to invite the discussion with the audience! In all truth, these churches that think they are ‘one’ are actually multiple, partaking of multiple breads, at multiple places, at multiple times.

Jamieson notes this “[Paul] doesn’t say, ‘Because we all have one vision statement, and leadership structure, and statement of faith, and budget, we who are many are one body.’ Instead, he points to concrete, in-the-same-place, communal participation in Christ as the *effective* sign of a church’s existence.” (132; cf. 1 Cor 10:17)

Who are the proper participants in the Lord’s Supper?

(1) Open Communion -

- **Anyone who is a professing believer in Christ**
- **Proponents:** Non-denominational, most megachurches
- The Case for Open Communion:
 1. The Supper is the Lord’s (not the church’s) and the church has no right to close the Table to any the Lord has received.
 2. Christian Unity (1 Cor 10:16-17) - to deny the LS to a fellow believer is to sin against the unity of the body of Christ
 3. Uncharitable - even if the paedobaptists are wrong shouldn’t be bear with them in this (with love and humility?) mindful that we may be the ones wrong?

(2) Professing, Baptized Believers in Christ -

- **Recognizes that baptism is the *beginning* of the Christian life**, while the Lord’s Supper is clearly a symbol of *continuing* the Christian life (Grudem)
- **Proponents:** Traditional Reformed view, United Methodist, SBC, Presbyterians
- **Baptist’s Specifically** - A ‘Valid’ Baptism - requires a proper subject (a believer), a proper mode (immersion), and a proper understanding (that baptism doesn’t save, regenerate or confer saving grace)
- **Question:** Is it intolerant or uncharitable for Baptists to not recognize the validity of infant baptism or is it intolerant to ask Baptists to compromise their convictions in order to recognize infant baptism?
 - (1) No, because the Supper “is the Lord’s” given to the church, not to individual, to be practiced a particular manner. It involves properly

“recognizing the body of the Lord” (1 Cor 11:29) i.e the church. So, if baptism precedes church membership, then it must necessarily precede communion as communion is an expression of the church.

(2) Liggon Duncan (presbyterian) on the Issue: “I appreciate the conviction of a Baptist who...would argue strenuously that people who have not been baptized as believing adults are not baptized and therefore shouldn’t be welcomed into church membership and communion because, in our day-and-age, that sounds mean to a lot of people. We’re about inclusion. It’s the Baptist who won’t let me join his church who is the Baptist with whom I want to fellowship. I’m trying to say ‘That conviction is something desperately needed in the world today.’ And even though they disagree with me on that point, I’m really glad they’re discipling their congregations with a high view of what it means to be a member of the local church and what it means to embrace the truth of the Bible. That’s something we can do with our distinctions interestingly better than we could if we were all in the same group saying ‘it doesn’t matter.’ We want people to have biblical convictions on these issues.”

(3) Closed Communion

- **Restricted to church members only**
- Notes Paul’s command that we should not even eat with those disciplined by the church (**1 Cor 5:9–11**) and are in danger of partaking in the LS in an unworthy manner (**1 Cor 11:27–28**).
- **Proponents:** Amish, Conservative Mennonites, Roman Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran,

What is the role of the Lord’s Supper in restorative church discipline?

Basis for restorative church discipline is found in Matt 18:15–19; 1 Cor 5:1–13; 2 Cor 2:5–11...here’s what our statement summarizes about the matter

- “Restorative Church Discipline is the process that Jesus Christ instituted where members of a local church seek to call a straying member to repentance through a series of intensifying steps that culminate in removal from church membership, carried out with the conviction that the lives of Christians ought to be distinctively different from the world.” (GCC)

What sins necessitate restorative church discipline? Any sin that is:

- (1) *outward* (demonstrable, can’t discipline someone for looking at you funny or because one person “feels” someone else is proud)
- (2) *significant* - must rise to a level that it calls into question a person’s profession of faith. Every sin crosses a line, but some sins are such “deep or

patterned or calculate rebellion against God” that it jeopardizes a person’s profession. (characteristics of such sin often include divisiveness, false teaching, or immoral behavior)

- (3) *unrepentant* - i.e the person is unwilling to turn away from their sin, demonstrated through their actions or words. (can be difficult to detect as worldly sorrow can be mistaken for godly sorrow).

Where does the Lord’s Supper come in?

- Per Matt 18 there are a couple stages of restorative church discipline (individual confrontation, taking 1-2 witnesses, telling it to the church)
- **The Supper becomes a part of the discussion in the 3rd step** because it is at this step, where if the person is still unrepentant, that he is to be treated as a “Gentile or a tax collector” (that is, an unbeliever!). And unbelievers, are not to partake of the Lord’s Supper because it is (as we discussed last week) the regular sign of participation in the New Covenant with Christ. So if we can no longer affirm that a person is a believer (to the best of our knowledge), then we consider that person in a 1 Cor 11 sense to be “worthy” of coming to the table. Indeed 1 Cor 5:11 states this much more explicitly “Not even to eat with such a one.” This is where we get the language of excommunication (final step of church discipline)
- **This does not mean** that they are not welcome in the gathering but that their unrepentant sin has put a strain on all their relationships with those in the church.

APPLICATION: When someone in the church is excommunicated, what should be our response as members? How should we treat them? What should be our goal as we interact with these people?

How do our views compare/contrast with other churches?

(1) Roman Catholic – *Real Presence*

- The Roman Catholic Church holds, since the Council of Trent in 1551, that **the bread and wine physically become the blood/flesh of Jesus** by a miracle known as *transubstantiation*. This miracle only occurs through a R.C priest who is ordained to “act as a representative of Christ.”
- Communion acts *ex opere operato* to “cleanse us from past “venial” (slight) sins and preserves us from future ones *even apart from faith*.

Our Response?

- We as Protestants understand this view as contrary to the once for all sacrificial work of Christ: "It is finished!" (**John 19:30**). – Catholics would hold that this is still "one and the same sacrifice" as Christ's death on the cross (despite a separation across time and space).
- The apostles taught that men are justified and forgiven on the basis of faith alone (**Rom 5:1**), not on the basis of practicing the Supper. Apart from proper faith, the Supper only delivers judgment (**1 Cor 11:27–30**).

(2) Reformed View - *Spiritual Presence*

- **There is a *real* spiritual presence** of Christ in the supper (not *merely* symbolic). Calvin's disagreement with the Lutherans/Catholics was the "mode" of Christ's presence. W/O the presence of Christ all benefit of the LS is annulled = 'instrumentalism'
- Role of the Holy Spirit (**1 Cor 11:24**) , the Spirit is Christ's spiritual presence (as it is the Spirit who unites us with Christ in salvation and effects to us all his blessings)
- This is how the **Westminster Confession ch. 29** describes it...

"Worthy receivers [of the Supper], outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also inwardly by faith, *really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of His death: the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.*"

(3) Baptist View

- This can be varied in a number of different ways (primarily because Baptists are congregationalists and do not always subscribe to a historical creed)
- **Areas of Consensus:**
 - (1) **Remembrance/Proclamation** (1 Cor. 11:24-25) of the gospel in such a way that we bring 'the past' (and its benefits) into the present (over and over again) = "Remembrance brings renewal" (consider why remembrance was so important for Israelite holidays/feasts)
 - (2) **Communion or Fellowship** - (1 Cor 10:16) - *koinonia* in the body and blood of Christ, in it we recognize our "unity, solidarity, and commitment to one another in the body of believers" (207)

(3) **Proclamation** (1 Cor 11:26) - our confession that the whole of our assurance of life and salvation “rests upon the Lord’s death, that we might glorify him by our confession, and by our example exhort others to give glory to him.” (Hammett) = gospel proclamation

- **Areas under Discussion:**

(1) ***The Nature of Christ’s Presence***: cf. Second London Confession of 1689 arguing for spiritual not “corporal/carnal” presence of Christ.

(2) ***The Lord’s Supper as a Means of Grace***: a place where we are spiritually fed (although there’s no verse to clearly support that, and the elements are symbolic)

DISCUSSION: What evidence is there for a *spiritual presence* view? How necessary is that to the biblical picture of the Lord’s Supper? Is it worth including in a church’s statement of faith: Why or why not?

Could pick one or more of these to discuss also?

- What about those who cannot physically gather with the church?
- How does the LS relate to salvation? Does it *give* salvific grace?
- How often should we practice the LS? Weekly/monthly?
- What should the elements look like? Grape juice vs. wine? Crackers?

NOTE: As you think about or discuss the above questions (particularly the one on people who physically can’t attend the church gathering), consider how the 4 things we concluded the Lord’s Supper represents factors in. *How well do various views on these questions display this biblical picture?*

Session 5 - **Baptism and The L.S - 2 Related Signs**

How do Baptism and the Lord's Supper relate to one another? (and what does that mean for us individually and as a church)

1. **They symbolize many of the same things; albeit in different ways,**
(review of the previous 4 weeks)

Baptism	The Lord's Supper
Salvation/The Gospel: Death to Sin & Newness of Life (Rom 6:1–11; Acts 2:38–41)	Salvation/The Gospel: The Sacrifice of Christ - His Body and His Blood (John 6:52–58; 1 Cor 11:26)
Union with Christ (“in Christ”; Rom 6:1–4; Col 2:11–12)	Union with Christ (“in Christ”; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 10:16; Eph 1:7; 2:13; Heb 9:12–14,18–22)
Union with the Church (Matt 28:19; Eph 4:2–5)	Union with the Church (1 Cor 10:17; 11:17–33)
Passing through Judgement Waters (1 Pet 3:18–22)	Wedding Feast of the Lamb (Matt 26:29; Rev 19:7,9)

2. **They are both signs of the New Covenant.**

- **EVERY Covenant has a sign** of the covenant that signifies who is in the covenant and who is not.
 - a. Adamic covenant = a Son (Gen 3:16)
 - b. Noahic covenant = a Rainbow (Gen. 9:13)
 - c. Abrahamic covenant = Circumcision (Gen. 17:10–13)
 - d. Mosaic covenant = Sabbath (Ex. 31:13) + Circumcision (Ex 4:24–26)
 - e. Davidic covenant = Son on the Throne (2 Sam. 7:12–16)
 - f. **New Covenant = Two Signs**
 - i. **Baptism** - the initiating oath-sign that denotes entrance in the New Covenant (Acts 2:38, 41; Rom 6:1–5)
 - ii. **Communion** - a sign that denotes current participation in the new covenant (Matt. 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20). (This is one of the reason why removal from church membership has been historically referred to as

excommunication—a church is saying to the best of their knowledge that they cannot affirm an individual is part of the new covenant, and that’s why this person is not to take the Lord’s Supper)

3. **They have a proper order. Baptism signifies someone’s entrance into the New Covenant. The Lord’s Supper is then the family meal of all those who *have* already entered.**

- With this understanding in place, it follows that those who have not publicly shown their entrance into the new covenant through baptism ought not take the oath sign of communion that denotes renewal and continuation in the new covenant.
- Beyond this biblical argument above, there is one place in scripture where expanded instructions are given concerning communion (1 Corinthians 11). ***Paul assumes*** that the church he is writing to is baptized (1 Corinthians 1:13–16), which aligns with the proposal that one be baptized before one partakes of communion.

What does church history have to say about this issue?

NOTE: Church history is not infallible (as we might argue especially in regards to paedobaptism), but church history can indicate blind spots that we may have in our century, especially when the view of church history **is united** on a topic.

1. **In this case, virtually all denominations have seen participation in the Lord’s supper as normally subsequent to baptism²**— Presbyterians, Anglicans, Episcopal, Lutherans, Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, etc. For us to continue in our current practice puts us out of alignment with almost every major stream of those who professing to follow Christ.
2. **More specific to us at GCC, Credobaptists confessions and theologians throughout church history have affirmed that Baptism is a pre-requisite for taking communion** (see Appendix A), including: The Baptist Catechism (1695), The New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith (1833), The Abstract of Principles (1857), The Baptist Faith and Message (2000), John Gill, J. L Dagg, A. H. Strong, W. T. Conner, and Wayne Grudem.

DISCUSSION: Read some of the historic catechisms or systematic theologies for your audience. Realizing that this is what the church historically has practiced will likely convince those “wavering between opinions.” **Ask if there are any questions? Share any churches, including our own, that subscribe to these confessions that others may know of.**

What are the practical implications of requiring baptism before the Lord’s Supper?

“There was a young man in our church years ago who would regularly take communion even though he refused baptism. In our current practice, there is nothing to hinder this contradiction. If this young man is a non-believer, then by allowing him to take communion—which is a sign for those who have been joined to the new covenant—we were inadvertently confirming him in his unrepentance in following Jesus in baptism. In the very least, our current practice may inadvertently confirm unbaptized Christians to believe that baptism is not an important aspect of following Jesus.” - Matt W.

Challenges or Questions:

DISCUSSION: If you haven’t already, open up the room to questions and objections. Particularly in this day & age, the idea of closed communion can be difficult for believers to accept and practice as a conviction of the local church. **If questions are not forthcoming**, you can feel free to voice some common objections listed below and **open up the word** to some of the related passages.

(1) The Supper is the Lord’s (not the church’s) and the church has no right to close the Table to any the Lord has received (through saving faith)

- **Response:** Yes, it is the Lord’s, but we recognize that the command to practice this was given to the church, not individual believers, and proper participation involves “discerning (or evaluating/considering) the body” (**1 Cor 11:29**) of the Lord which is the church. Therefore, the Lord’s Supper must give *proper* expression to the body of Christ, and if baptism precedes membership in that church (as is widely accepted) it must necessarily precede participation in the Lord’s Supper.¹⁴

¹⁴ Hammett, John S. *40 Questions about Baptism & The Lord's Supper* (Kregel Publications, 2015), 271

(2) To deny the LS to a fellow believer is to sin against the unity of the body of Christ. (1 Cor 10:16-17)

- **Response:** What *unity* is present in the Lord's Supper? Christian or church *unity*? Do we "approach the Lord's Supper seeking to affirm, renew, and celebrate our unity with all Christians (the universal body of Christ) or with a church (a local body of believers)?"¹⁵ The NT term for the church is overwhelmingly *local* and Paul's criticism in 1 Cor 11 of these Christians' practice of the Lord's Supper is due to a lack of unity *in a local body* (**1 Cor. 11:17-18, 20-22, 33-34**).
- **Response 2:** This objection creates a false dichotomy between the Lord's Supper and Baptism, privileging the former at the cost of the latter. If the Lord Jesus has given us both and commands concerning both, we would do well to heed him *in both* by not subtracting from his word concerning baptism (which also creates the unity of the body **Eph 4:2-5**).

(3) What about visiting believers who are baptized but are NOT members of a local church currently? (universal vs the local body of Christ)

- **Response:** We want baptized believers who are a part of Christ's universal body to be able to follow through in obedience to this command (communion) even if they are.

(4) Were the disciples baptized before they took the Lord's Supper the night of his crucifixion? (a possible justification for Open Communion)

- **Response:** Were the disciples ever baptized? You could infer that they were, either having received John's baptism of repentance or a baptism in Jesus' name (cf. **John 3:5**), but there's no clear indication in the Scripture either way. Only Jesus receiving John's baptism is recorded in the gospels. Even if the twelve are baptized *after* the Lord's Supper, that doesn't necessarily mean that is God's prescriptive practice for all believers. The apostles clearly baptized new disciples *before* they could participate in the LS in Acts.

(5) Literalist Question - "There's not a verse/chapter that specifically says you can't take communion without being baptized."

- **Response:** That's not how we approach the Bible generally. We could use a plethora of examples to prove this point, but the Trinity (God being 3 in 1) is a core one. There is no verse/chapter that fully describes or lays out the idea of one God in three persons (or uses the word Trinity), yet the church for

¹⁵ Hammet, John, 271

almost all history has agreed that the denial of the Trinity is a heresy incompatible with the Christian faith.

(6) Can we be a part of this church if we disagree on this point of doctrine/practice?

- **Response:** Our church tiers doctrinal beliefs and practices between 1st tier issues (necessary for salvation), 2nd tier issues (to be a part of this church), and 3rd tier issues (we could disagree among a local body and still fellowship). We believe this is a 2nd tier issue and if someone disagrees on this point over a continued period of time we would encourage them to covenant with another more like-minded church.

What does this mean for our church's statement of faith?

Possible New Reading of Our Statement regarding the Ordinances

*"We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has given the church two ordinances as revealed in Scripture: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. All who profess repentance, faith, and obedience to Christ should be baptized by immersion. Baptism is an identifying symbol of a believer's union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, and portrays their death to sin and resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ. The Lord's Supper is a regular commemoration of Christ's death **for all baptized believers** walking faithfully with God and one another. The bread and the cup proclaim the Lord's death as we anticipate his second coming and display the spirit of unity he has given to His people." (updated 12/15/22)*

How do Baptism and the Lord's Supper relate to church membership? (may not have time to discuss this :)

- Baptism and the Lord's Supper (unlike circumcision) are *effective signs*. They create the ecclesial (church) shape that they point to. Baptism is the *effective sign* of an individual's inclusion in the church. The Lord's Supper is the *effective sign* of the whole church's existence as a unity.
- **"Baptism binds one to many, and the Lord's Supper binds many to one (Christ)."**¹⁶
- These two signs are what distinguishes a "room full of Christians" from a "church." **Balthasar Hubmaier, an anabaptist theologian and German reformer (1480-1528), puts it simply "What makes a church a**

¹⁶ Jamieson, 122

church?...Where there is no water baptism, there is no church.”¹⁷ or like **Jamieson** “Without a pledge of loyalty to God and submission to God’s people, there is no public people. Without baptism there may be self-proclaimed kingdom persons, but there is no kingdom *people*.”¹⁸

Bibliography of Resources (to share at closing):

- John S. Hammett, *40 Questions About Baptism & the Lord’s Supper*, ed. Benjamin L. Merkle, 40 Questions Series (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2015)
- Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright, eds., *Believer’s Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ*, NAC Studies in Bible & Theology (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2006)
- Bobby Jamieson, *Going Public: Why Baptism is Required for Church Membership* (Nashville: B & H, 2015)

¹⁷ Balthasar Hubmaier, “On the Christian Baptism of Belivers,” in *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, ed. H. Wayne Pipkin and John Howard Yoder, Classics of the Radical Reformation, vol. 5 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald 1989), 127.

¹⁸ Jamieson, 95.

Appendix A: Historic Baptists Voices on the Relationship Between Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Emphases added)¹⁹

The Baptist Catechism (1695)

Q 103. Who are the proper subjects of this ordinance [the Lord's Supper]?

A. They who have been baptized upon a personal profession of their faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance from dead works.

The New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith (1833)

We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a Church relation; and to the Lord's Supper.

The Abstract of Principles (1857)

Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is immersed in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as a sign of his fellowship with the death and resurrection of Christ, of remission of sins, and of his giving himself up to God, to live and walk in newness of life. It is prerequisite to church fellowship, and to participation in the Lord's Supper.

The Baptist Faith and Message (2000)

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal & Practical Divinity*

None but penitent sinners, and true believers, and those baptized, upon a profession of their repentance and faith, are to be allowed communicants at this ordinance; for such only can look to Christ whom they have pierced, and mourn, and exercise godly sorrow and evangelical repentance; such only can eat the flesh and drink the blood

¹⁹ This list was modified from <https://www.puritanboard.com/threads/baptism-lords-supper-questions.59861/page-2>

of Christ in a spiritual sense by faith; to such only Christ's flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; such only can by faith discern the Lord's body, and please him in this ordinance; for without faith it is impossible to please God; wherefore a man, before he eats, should examine himself, whether he has true repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; whether he is truly sensible of sin, and humbled for it, and believes in Christ for the remission of it (1 Cor. 11:28; 2 Cor. 13:5).

J. L Dagg, *Manual of Church Order*

When a church receives an unbaptized person, something more is done than merely to tolerate his error. There are two parties concerned. The acts of entering the church and partaking of its communion are his, and for them he is responsible. The church also acts when it admits him to membership, and authorizes his participation of the communion. The church, as an organized body, with power to receive and exclude members according to rules which Christ has laid down, is responsible for the exercise of this power. Each individual disciple of Christ is bound, for himself, to obey perfectly the will of his Master. Whatever tolerance he may exercise towards the errors of others, he should tolerate none in himself. Though he may see but a single fault in his brother, he ought, while imitating all that brother's excellencies, carefully to avoid this fault. He may not neglect the tithing of mint, though he should find an example of such neglect accompanied with a perfect obedience of every moral precept.

When Paedobaptists complain of our strict communion [which requires baptism before taking communion], we would remind them that they hold the principle in common with us, and practice on it in their own way. If they have aught to object, let it be at that in which we differ from them, and not at that in which we agree. The contrary course is not likely to produce unity of opinion, or to promote that harmony of Christian feeling which ought to subsist among the followers of our Lord.

When Baptists object to strict communion, we would propose the inquiry, Whether they do not attach undue importance to the eucharist, in comparison with baptism. Mr. Hall calls the eucharist a principal spiritual function. In this view of it, he complains that the privilege of partaking in it should be denied to any. Is it more spiritual than baptism? If not, why should baptism be trodden under foot, to open the way of access to the eucharist? When both ceremonies were supposed to possess a saving efficacy, the proper order of their observance was still maintained; much more should it be maintained, if both are mere ceremonies. If baptism were a mere ceremony, and the eucharist a principal spiritual function, the arguments for open communion would have a force which they do not now possess: but our brethren will not defend this position.

A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*

Since baptism is a command of Christ, it follows that we cannot properly commune with the unbaptized. To admit such to the Lord's Supper is to give the symbol of Church fellowship to those who, in spite of the fact that they are Christian brethren, are, though perhaps unconsciously, violating the fundamental law of the Church.

To withhold protest against plain disobedience to Christ's commands is, to that extent, to countenance such disobedience. The same disobedience which in the Church member we would denominate disorderly walking, must, a fortiori, destroy all right to the Lord's Supper on the part of those who are not members of the Church.

W. T. Conner, *Christian Doctrine*

"Our position, then, is that the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance and not an individual matter, and that Baptists cannot consistently invite to the Lord's Supper those whom they would not admit to church membership. The stress has usually been put on the irregularity in baptism as a reason for declining to invite others to the Supper. Baptism certainly does proceed the Lord's Supper, and we believe the argument that Baptists should not invite to the Supper those whom they do not regard as baptized is a valid argument. But we believe that there are other reasons. Any departure from New Testament principles in church polity or other doctrinal beliefs that would make one ineligible to church membership makes him ineligible to the Lord's Supper. We cannot consistently admit one to the Lord's Supper and then deny him the other privileges of church membership. This does not mean that Baptists do not regard members of other religious denominations as being Christians; but it does mean that they regard them as having departed from Christian principles in some respects, and, therefore, Baptists could not admit them to church fellowship. And since the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance, one of the most sacred of the privileges of church membership, no one should be admitted to this ordinance who could not be admitted to church membership."²⁰

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*

"Despite differences over some aspects of the Lord's supper, most Protestants would agree, first, that only those who believe in Christ should participate in it, because it is a sign of being a Christian and continuing in the Christian life...many Protestants would argue from the meaning of baptism and the meaning of the Lord's supper that, ordinarily, only those who have been baptized should participate in the Lord's supper. This is because baptism is so clearly a symbol of beginning to Christian life while the Lord's supper is clearly a symbol of continuing the Christian life."²¹

²⁰ Conner, W. T. *Christian Doctrine* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998).

²¹ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 996.