

## Baptism

March 2, 2025

### Romans 6:1–6 (ESV)

6 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

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### Introduction

Baptism is a sign of our union with Christ, symbolizing our participation in His death, burial, and resurrection. It marks the believer's death to sin and new life in Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit. While baptism itself does not save, it is an act of obedience and public identification with Jesus, testifying to faith in His redemptive work. It also signifies the believer's entrance into the covenant community, the body of Christ.

### Reflection Question:

- How does baptism help us understand our relationship with Christ and the church?

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### 1. The Meaning of Baptism

**Key Verse:** *"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death..."* (Romans 6:4)

- **Baptism symbolizes our spiritual death and resurrection with Christ.**
  - Baptism is a picture of the gospel—Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.
  - The water of baptism symbolizes Christ's tomb. As we are submerged, we partake in His death—dying to our old selves and the dominion of sin. Coming out of the water represents our resurrection

to new life, empowered by the Holy Spirit, as Christ was raised by the Father's glory (Romans 6:4).

- The Greek word *baptizō* (βαπτίζω) means "to immerse" signifying a complete submersion in water.
- **Baptism is an outward symbol of an inward change.**
  - Baptism is a Protestant sacrament—a **visible sign of an invisible grace**. It signifies not just external washing, but the profound transformation that happens when we are united with Christ. As Paul writes, we are "buried with Him" (Romans 6:4), symbolizing our total identification with Christ. Baptism sanctifies the soul and marks the believer as part of the new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).
  - Baptism points to the **already-but-not-yet** nature of salvation—while we are spiritually raised with Christ (Ephesians 2:6), we await the final, physical resurrection, when we will fully share in His glory.

### Reflection Questions:

- How does baptism shape the way you live as a follower of Christ?
  - Does your daily life reflect the reality of being united to Christ in His death and resurrection?
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## 2. The Importance of Baptism

**Key Verse:** *"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"*(Romans 6:3)

- **Baptism is an ongoing command (ordinance) from Christ.**
  - In **Matthew 28:19**, Jesus commands, *"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."*
  - Baptism is foundational to the Church's mission—it is not optional but a mandate to proclaim the gospel and make disciples who visibly identify with Christ's saving work.
  - Baptism, as commanded by Christ, is an act of obedience that testifies to the world of our union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.
  - Theologically, baptism underscores obedience as an outworking of grace. While baptism does not save, it marks the believer's entrance

into God's family, symbolizing a transformed life and the obedience flowing from faith in Christ (Romans 6:16–18).

- **Baptism publicly signifies our commitment to follow Christ.**
  - This declaration is a witness to the Kingdom of God, acknowledging faith in Christ and moving from the kingdom of darkness to light (Colossians 1:13).
  - Baptism also connects believers to the **covenant community**, the Church, marking entrance into the body of Christ. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.
  - Baptism is not only a personal decision but a corporate act, calling the believer to live out their faith within the Church. It fosters mutual encouragement, accountability, and growth among the church.

### Reflection Questions:

- Why is it important for believers to publicly profess their faith through baptism?
- How does your baptism reflect your ongoing commitment to live out your faith in the context of the Church?
- How does baptism speak to your role in the broader mission of God's Kingdom?

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### 3. Who Should Be Baptized?

- **Baptism is for believers** who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ.
  - **Acts 2:41** – *“So those who received his word were baptized”*
  - **Mark 16:16** – *“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved”*
- Baptism is a **public declaration** of one's faith in Jesus Christ and marks a believer's entrance into the covenant community of faith.
  - **Acts 8:12** – *“But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”*
  - **Acts 16:31–34** – *“And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them*

*the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.”*

### **Reflection Question:**

- How does baptism mark a believer’s entrance into the community of faith?
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### **4. The Mode of Baptism: Immersion**

- **Baptism by immersion** is the biblical mode that best symbolizes the believer’s identification with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.
    - **Colossians 2:12** – *“Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.”*
  - **Acts 8:38–39** provides a clear example of baptism by immersion:
    - *“And he commanded the chariot to stop. And they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more.”*
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### **Conclusion & Application**

- Have you been baptized? If not, what steps might you take?
  - How does your baptism remind you of your commitment to Christ and His church?
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### **Confession: BFM 2000 Article VII**

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.

## 1 Corinthians 11:23–34 (ESV)

<sup>23</sup> 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, <sup>24</sup> 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.” <sup>25</sup> 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.” <sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

<sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup> That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. <sup>31</sup> But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup> But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

<sup>33</sup> So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another— <sup>34</sup> if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

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## Introduction

The Lord's Supper is a reminder of Christ's sacrifice and an ordinary means of grace for believers. Christ is *spiritually* present in the Supper, just as He was *physically* present at the first, nourishing us by faith. It serves as a time of remembrance, reflecting on His atoning death; a proclamation, declaring His gospel until He returns; and a moment of self-examination, ensuring we partake in a worthy manner. Through the Supper, we are strengthened in our union with Christ and with one another, demonstrating our shared life in Him and commitment to the body of Christ.

## Reflection Question:

- Why do we celebrate the Lord's Supper regularly as a church?

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## 1. The Meaning of the Lord's Supper

**Key Verse:** *"Do this in remembrance of me."* (1 Corinthians 11:24)

- **It is a reminder of Christ's body broken and His blood shed for us.**
  - The Lord's Supper is a memorial of Christ's atoning sacrifice. Jesus instituted it during the Passover meal, where He reinterpreted the bread and wine as symbols of His body and blood (Luke 22:19-20).
  - The bread represents His broken body, and the wine symbolizes His poured-out blood. The Supper reminds us of the cost of our salvation, not only in Christ's physical suffering but also in the spiritual reality of His substitutionary atonement.
  - The bread and wine do not transform into the actual body and blood of Christ (*transubstantiation*) but serve as symbols pointing to the reality of His sacrifice.
  - In partaking, believers renew their understanding of the grace given through His death, affirming their union with Him and His victory over sin and death.
- **It is a proclamation of the gospel.**
  - The Lord's Supper is an act of proclamation—a declaration of the gospel until Christ returns. Every time we partake, we publicly declare Christ's death for the forgiveness of sins and His promise to return. This ongoing proclamation testifies to the finished work of Christ and the hope we have in His return.

### **Reflection Questions:**

- How does the Lord's Supper deepen your understanding of Christ's sacrifice?
- How does partaking in the Lord's Supper strengthen your relationship with Christ and His body, the Church?

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## **2. The Proper Attitude in the Lord's Supper**

**Key Verse:** *"Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup."* (1 Corinthians 11:28)

- **We should partake with reverence and self-examination.**
  - The Lord's Supper is not a casual meal but a holy ordinance. We must partake considering the weight of His sacrifice.

- Paul calls believers to examine themselves before taking the Supper (1 Corinthians 11:28). This self-examination involves confessing sins, seeking reconciliation with God and preparing our hearts to partake in a worthy manner. It is an opportunity to align our lives with the reality of Christ’s sacrifice and reflect on whether we are living in obedience to Him.
- The call to examine ourselves underscores the seriousness with which we approach this ordinance. The Supper is an ordinary means of grace that strengthens our walk with God, as we invite the Holy Spirit to search our hearts, revealing any unconfessed sin, bitterness, or disunity within the body.
- **It is a time for reflection and repentance, both personally and communally.**
  - The Lord’s Supper also serves as a moment for communal reconciliation. Paul reminds the church that partaking requires a proper relationship with one another (1 Corinthians 11:17–22). If there are unresolved conflicts or unrepented sins, they must be addressed before participating.
  - The act of coming to the table calls for reconciliation—both with God and with each other. This is why church discipline, rightly exercised, is essential to preserving the purity and unity of the body of Christ (Matthew 18:15-17).

### Reflection Questions:

- How does the Lord’s Supper challenge you to seek reconciliation within the Church?
- Are there any areas of sin or division in your heart that you need to address before partaking in the Supper?

### 3. The Significance of Communion

- **It unites believers in Christ.**
  - The Lord’s Supper is a communion (*koinonia*), a shared participation in the body and blood of Christ. As believers partake, they reaffirm their union with Christ and one another.
  - This visibly demonstrates the unity of the Church, as all believers share in the same spiritual nourishment and hope of resurrection (1

Corinthians 10:16–17). Just as the bread is one loaf, we who are many are one body in Christ.

- “We are what we Eat.” We symbolically take in Christ, symbolizing the truth of our transformed self. Since we all partake of the same bread and cup, we are joined together symbolically as we are spiritually.
- Communion with Christ through the Supper is also a foretaste of the eternal communion believers will share with Him in the fullness of the Kingdom. It points forward to the **marriage supper of the Lamb** (Revelation 19:9), where Christ will dine with His bride, the Church, in perfect fellowship.
- **It strengthens our faith and hope in Christ’s return.**
  - The Lord’s Supper is an act of **eschatological hope**. We remember Christ’s first coming and atoning work, while looking forward to His return. Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 11:26 remind us that we are proclaiming His death until He comes again.
  - The Supper strengthens our hope in the promise of His return and reminds us that we live between the "already" of Christ’s first coming and the "not yet" of His second coming. This anticipation gives us strength to endure and live faithfully in the present.

### **Reflection Questions:**

- How does the Lord’s Supper encourage a deeper fellowship within the body of Christ?
- In what ways does the Supper renew your faith and hope in Christ’s second coming?
- How does participating in the Lord’s Supper deepen your faith?
- What does this ordinance teach us about Christ’s love and sacrifice?

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### **Confession: BFM 2000 Article VII**

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.