

Turning Our Eyes on Jesus

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning, church. We are continuing on in our series on ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church.

This morning, we will be observing the Lord's Supper at the end of the service. And so we are taking this opportunity to talk about the ordinances of the church.

The Lord's Supper is one of the two ordinances in a Baptist church. And we're going to dive into both of those ordinances today and talk about them. And by way of recap, we have adopted some statements, some sentiments that we can agree on as a church.

And so let's try to go through these by way of reminder and say them together. Ready? We don't just go to church. We are the church. That's certainly true. And then secondly, the church is not about me. The church is about God.

And then thirdly, don't let what is secondary become primary. Can we flip that in reverse as well? Don't let what is primary become secondary.

[1 : 08] Let's say that one too. Ready? Don't let what is primary become secondary. Both of those are true. And of course, Jesus is primary. We want to keep him at the head.

So finally, let's say this one together. Ready? We gather, we grow, we give, and we go. And that is something that we should all be keeping in front of us.

And you can kind of see the actual motto that the church has adopted there on the logo that Tabitha designed. Loving God, seeking truth, serving people. And these are the ways that we do that as a church.

We gather, we grow, we give, and we go with the gospel of Jesus. So, today, we're going to talk about the two church ordinances. Number one, baptism. And number two, the Lord's Supper.

All kinds of different churches will add in different things. But in the Bible, in the New Testament, when God established the local church, we see that these are the two ordinances that he gave to the church to continually observe.

[2 : 14] Today, we're going to look at that. Why did he give them to us? What purpose are they supposed to fulfill? And what should they do in terms of helping us be better followers of Jesus?

Often times, I'm asked what version of the Bible I read from or preach from generally. And usually, it is the Christian Standard Bible. That is the Bible that the Southern Baptist Convention, their publishing arm, Brodman and Holman publishers put out.

How many of you guys remember the old Holman Christian Standard Bible? Anybody have one of those? That one's been around for a while. This is kind of an update to the Holman Christian Standard. They dropped the Holman part and just said it's the Christian Standard Bible.

But there are some significant updates in terms of more accurate language, etc. And it's my personal favorite in terms of striking a balance between readability and faithfulness to the original text.

But whatever Bible you have in front of you, as long as it's one of the mainstream translations out there, should be just fine and should be very similar to what I'm reading. Probably my favorite study Bible is the Christian Standard Study Bible.

[3 : 22] Absolutely outstanding notes that have been included in that. So I just wanted to let you know that's what I'm generally reading from. Luke chapter 3. Go to Luke chapter 3 if you would. Luke chapter 3.

We'll read a couple of verses here and then get into the sermon today. Luke chapter 3 verse 15. Would you mind standing with me if you're able to? I know we've stood up and sat down a couple times.

If you're able to stand easily, join me in standing if you would. And let's read these two verses together and then you may be seated after that. Luke chapter 3 and verse 15. Now the people were waiting expectantly. And all of them were questioning in their hearts whether John, talking about John the Baptist, whether he might be the Messiah. Everybody familiar with what the Messiah was? The long-awaited deliverer, the coming king that the people of Israel were promised back in the Old Testament and awaited for thousands of years. [4 : 25] And so they're saying, is John this great apostle who's going around and, you know, prophet I should say. Apostles weren't a thing yet.

But the great prophet John who was going around and baptizing people, talking about the coming Messiah, the kingdom of God. Is he the Messiah? So John answered them in verse 16. I baptize you with water, but one is coming who is more powerful than I. One who is more powerful than I am is coming.

I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

So there's a distinction there in two kinds of baptisms. We're going to refer back to that in just a moment. There's that water baptism and then there is the Holy Spirit baptism.

[5 : 25] So this morning, I hope what we can take away from this today is we are the church and we must turn our eyes upon Jesus.

Everything we do as a church should be pointing us back to Jesus. If it's not, we shouldn't be doing it. So even the ordinance of the church, baptism, the Lord's Supper, these things should be pointing our eyes back to Jesus.

Let's pray together and then you can be seated. God, I pray that you would bless the reading of your word today. I pray that you would cut through the darkness of our own hearts. Let the Holy Spirit in those who are your children in this room this morning speak loudly to us today.

Show us exactly what we ought to do. And it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. You may be seated. Turning our eyes upon Jesus.

So how does that relate to the ordinances of the church? Number one, baptism does point us to Jesus. Baptism points us to Jesus. We just saw that John the Baptist was going around baptizing and he was using that activity to point people to the coming Messiah.

[6 : 41] The church has the same job description. We should be, according to Matthew 28, the great commission given to the church, we should be baptizing people and we should be doing that to point people to Jesus.

So John chapter one in verse 33, I myself did not know him. John is speaking. He said, the one who sent me to baptize with water told me the man on whom you see the spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.

Here's those two baptisms we're talking about. This is talking about Jesus. John says, I didn't know who it was going to be. But the one who sent me, which is God, sent him to baptize with water said, here's the one who's going to baptize with the Holy Spirit.

It's the one on whom the spirit comes down and remains. And we see in the scriptures that actually play out in the spirit in the form of a dove coming and resting on Jesus.

And he is the one who then baptizes with the spirit. So baptism, water baptism as practiced by a church is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

[7 : 52] These are two different things. Sometimes different man-made religions will get these confused and they'll try to equate those two together and say, you're not baptized with the Holy Spirit unless you're baptized with water, et cetera.

But those are two different things. Jesus came to baptize with the Holy Spirit. That is talking about reconciling man with God. That's talking about the forgiveness of sins. We call it salvation, being saved from the punishment of your sin and born again into God's family.

If that hasn't happened for you this morning, then you don't have to worry about anything else I'm talking about. That's the number one thing you need to get rectified before you leave today. You must find peace with God by repenting of your sins and turning to him for forgiveness and placing all your faith and hope in Jesus for salvation.

So that is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That's what Jesus came to do. He said, I came to seek and to save those who were lost. He wanted to baptize them with the Holy Spirit.

That means the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, the spirit form of God in you at all times. And if you have put your faith in Jesus, then you have that baptism of the Holy Spirit.

[9 : 09] But then John was baptizing with water. What's this water baptism about? Well, the church has been tasked with water baptism. The church baptizes with water after salvation.

After that baptism of the Holy Spirit, at the moment of salvation, placing their faith in Christ, then the church baptizes with water. See, God baptizes with the Holy Spirit at salvation.

So these are two distinct baptisms. Watchman Nee, great theologian and was persecuted for his faith, wrote many, many books that have been a benefit to preachers throughout the decades.

He said this, baptizing is an outward expression of an inward faith. There's no reason to get baptized publicly in a church in the water if you have not yet put your faith in Jesus.

You could probably actually do damage to someone by baptizing them if they haven't put their faith in Jesus. Because then the significance of that moment and everybody clapping and applauding and telling them good job, that could possibly sneak into their minds and convince them that they are a child of God when they have never put their faith in Christ and repented of their sin and turned from it.

[10 : 23] So baptism should only be an outward expression of something that has already happened. You're putting your faith in Jesus. God opening your eyes, bringing you from darkness into light.

Then you can stand up and publicly testify, express that faith outwardly through baptism.

Colossians chapter 2, you don't have to turn there unless you'd like to, but I like how the New Living Translation phrases this.

It says, you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him, you were raised to new life. Thank God Jesus came back to life.

When we baptize them, we don't have to hold them under the water. It would probably hurt attendance if we did that long enough. With him, you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God.

That's talking about that Holy Spirit baptism. That's talking about putting your trust in the saving power of Jesus who raised Christ from the dead.

[11 : 26] Put that faith in God and then you are raised to new life. So baptism is a picture of that. That's why we stand them in the water, we bury them, and we lift them out.

Acts. Did I miss one? I did. Hold up a minute.

Okay, here we go. I'm just going to read this one. I think the slide isn't on there and I should have put it on there. Acts chapter 8 and verse 12. When they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Here it is. Acts chapter 8 and verse 12. When they believed Philip, Philip the evangelist, was out preaching the good news of the kingdom of God, the name of Jesus, they were baptized, both men and women.

That happened after they believed. So they put their faith in Jesus first and then they were baptized. So baptism is an important step to publicly identifying yourself as a follower of Jesus.

[12 : 33] Is it necessary for salvation? No. Is it necessary for sanctification? If God has commanded you to be baptized, and if he has provided the means and opportunity for baptism, and you say no to the Holy Spirit of God, then that is limiting your sanctification or your growth as a believer and follower of Jesus.

Now, that doesn't mean that everyone who has ever put their faith in Jesus and hasn't been baptized for extenuating circumstances and different reasons, that doesn't mean they can't grow as a Christian.

But for those who have the opportunity to, who are encouraged to do so, and read in the scriptures where God commands us to do that, then if you say no to that and say, I'm just too embarrassed or I just don't want to do that, then yes, that is wrong.

You should be following the word of God in that way. And so it's an important step in publicly identifying yourself as a Jesus follower.

Baptism is an important step to publicly partnering with the local church. The ordinance of baptism was given to the local church. Let's look in Acts chapter 2.

[13:42] Acts chapter 2. Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day about 3,000 in all. Can you imagine adding 3,000 people to our church in one day?

We might have to find a different venue to meet. That would be just about all the people in Henrietta, wouldn't it? No, that's true.

There would be a couple hundred left over. You're right. It's like, nope, I think there's more than that. Those who believed what Peter said when he preached the gospel to them, they were then baptized and in so doing added to the church.

That is the pathway that God has often set forth in the New Testament for partnering with a church is through being baptized into that local body of believers.

Again, this is not a part of salvation. It is a public testimony. It's a public identifying. Say, I'm not only identifying as a Jesus follower, I'm identifying with this group of Jesus followers.

[14:49] So when you see people moving these waters up here in the baptistry, getting baptized, they are being baptized into our assembly of believers. Here's the meaning.

You see Jesus on the cross, and of course we stand him up in the baptistry. He died. He was buried. We died with Christ. We're buried with Christ. And then he was resurrected and raised to new life.

So baptism points us to Jesus. Number two, the Lord's Supper points us to Jesus. The Lord's Supper points us to Jesus.

Jesus is present with his Father. He is not in the communion elements. How many of you all think that's kind of obvious?

Like when you pass these out and you eat them, you didn't see Jesus in that cup. Listen, this, believe it or not, has become a point of contention among many different religious assemblies and churches across the world.

[16:00] Jesus said, take, eat, this is my body. Drink the cup, this is my blood. And so sometimes people would take that literally and say, okay, this piece of bread that we tore off the loaf or this piece of bread that, you know, we crisped up and we're eating it, this is actually the physical body of Jesus who died on the cross, was buried.

Here's the problem. The Bible teaches us that Jesus is with his Father. John 16 and verse 28. I came from the Father and entered the world. Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.

John 16. It is to your advantage that I am leaving, for if I do not leave, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

See, Jesus had to leave this world because the Holy Spirit of God was the one who was supposed to then go with us, all of us, all over the world. When Jesus was physically walking around on this planet, he couldn't be everywhere at once.

He couldn't be everywhere all the time in his physical person. But when the Comforter came, when the Holy Spirit came, the Healer, the Helper, now he can go with us everywhere.

[17:18] So he said it's better this way. How many of you guys have wished that Jesus was still physically with us like he was all those years ago? I've wished that before. Like, man, they have so many questions.

There's so many things I need help with. And I'm sure, and we went through the series on Wednesday nights, The Chosen, and of course, no theatrical portrayal that man puts together is going to totally capture the essence of the Christ walking around on this earth.

But they did about as good a job as you could hope to, probably. And they did an outstanding job of trying to capture what we read in the Bible and how Jesus was when He walked around with His disciples and healing people and teaching and all this.

And so it's an incredibly magnetic person. It's an incredibly magnetic personality. And you're drawn to that. I'm thinking, man, if Jesus was just here, He could solve all these problems.

He could end all these disagreements. He could fix everything. But then we remember the Holy Spirit of God is actually here. God is here, just as present with us as Jesus was with those He walked with on this earth.

[18:28] And so we have access to just as much of God, even more so because He's with us wherever we go. How many times do you read in Scripture where Jesus would go off, and the disciples would be wondering where He is?

We don't have to wonder where God is. Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, is always with us. If we have put our faith in Christ, then He goes everywhere with us.

Now, that doesn't mean that we're eating His body when we eat the Lord's Supper. We're not drinking His blood when we drink the Lord's Supper. And this is one of these items that is not a first-level doctrinal issue.

That means you can still go to heaven if you believe that you're eating Jesus' body and drinking His blood. I believe, according to the Bible, you're wrong about that.

But as long as you put your faith in Christ for salvation, the forgiveness of your sins, you can still go to heaven and be wrong about something else. I am confident that I have done that thing, that first thing, that most important thing, the primary thing, and I've gotten that part right.

[19 : 39] Now, the secondary things, I think I'm right, but I might be wrong. I might absolutely be wrong. And there have been things that I've come across in my life and found out I was wrong about and had to change my position on things.

But as a church, we believe that Jesus is present with His Father and the elements, the bread and the juice that we take at the Lord's Supper are symbolic of Jesus' body and blood.

They remind us. The communion elements remind us of Jesus' sacrifice. They are reminders. They point us back to Him. They point our eyes back on Jesus because it's so easy to let the cares of this world get in the way of our relationship, our most important relationship.

And so we put our eyes back on Jesus when we take communion. Say, what's communion? I thought we were calling it the Lord's Supper. Communion, Lord's Supper, basically we use them interchangeably.

They kind of come different terms, theological terms that have been passed down through different types of churches, etc. You might have heard it called the Eucharist in some churches.

[20 : 53] Anybody grow up taking the Eucharist? That's usually more of a Catholic term. But basically these things are all talking about the Lord's Supper, which Jesus modeled for us, and we'll read some scripture about that later.

But these elements, the bread and the juice, remind us of Jesus' sacrifice. So 1 Corinthians, here we go. 1 Corinthians 11. Would you turn over there in your Bibles if you could? 1 Corinthians 11 and verse 23.

We'll spend just a little time there and then we will be done today. 1 Corinthians 11, verse 23. For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you.

Paul is writing to the church in Corinth and he's talking directly about the Lord's Supper. On the night when he was betrayed, Jesus, the Lord Jesus, took bread and when he had given thanks, broke it and said, this is my body which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, he also took the cup after supper and said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

[22 : 08] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. You see that last part? You proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

That is a job. When you see these kinds of phrases in the Bible, as you're reading through the Bible, let them pop out to you like big bright flashing lights. Proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

That sounds like something the church is given to do. It is. That is our mission. When we talked about going last Sunday, we talked about spreading the gospel last Sunday.

That is what this is about. So when we take the Lord's supper, it points our eyes back to Jesus and we remind ourselves and anyone present about the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross, which is an essential part of the gospel.

So that is one of the things that the church is given to do, remind ourselves of Jesus' sacrifice, and then go out and proclaim it. And part of the way we do that is through the Lord's supper.

[23 : 15] So the communion elements inspire us to reflect and renew. Reflect and renew. Still back in 1 Corinthians. Let's go to the next few verses.

Verse 27. So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sin against the body and the blood of the Lord. Catch that?

If you do this, what we're all going to do in just a moment, if you do this unworthily, you will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord.

Let a person examine himself. In this way, let him eat the bread and drink from the cup. We are supposed to examine ourselves. Before we go on to this, I want to stay here for just a moment longer.

We are supposed to reflect back on what God has been teaching us and working with us through.

[24 : 11] There might be failures going on in your life. There might be problems. There might be sin that you are continually giving into time and time again. There might be things you haven't repented of. There might be things you haven't confessed and made right.

But this is a time to reflect on those things and let God renew you from the inside out. Let God make your heart right.

There's not a 10-step program of penance that you have to go through to get right with God. It is simply putting your eyes back on Jesus, saying, God, I confess it.

I'm sorry. Please forgive me. Thank you for your forgiveness that you've already promised. I know your blood has already washed it. You've already cleansed it. It doesn't affect my standing with you as a child with this father.

But God, I know that I did what is wrong. I know I chased after the flesh and not the Holy Spirit. I know I let this bitterness get in my way or this selfishness get in my way. Whatever this sin is, we must make ourselves right before God before we then remind ourselves of His sacrifice and take these elements.

[25 : 25] So we should examine ourselves and then we can eat the bread and drink from the cup. Here's the key thought. The church ordinances are part of God's mission, not man's tradition.

Y'all, it doesn't matter what the church has always done. Okay? It doesn't. It doesn't matter what the Catholic church has always done. It doesn't matter what the Baptist church has always done. It doesn't matter what First Baptist church of Henrietta has always done.

unless it's what God has given to the church to do. Then it matters. There are good traditions that churches have adopted.

You know why? Because they came from the Bible and God commanded them to do it. And then you build a rich legacy and tradition and heritage of obeying God and fulfilling His mission for the church.

And that matters. So it matters that we've continually for 140 some odd years continued to gather in Henrietta, Texas and worship God and lift up Jesus.

[26 : 26] That's a tradition that matters. It matters that we have always tried to go out and spread the gospel to those around us. That matters. The church ordinances matter not because we've always done them.

I pray that in another hundred years First Baptist Henrietta if God hasn't come back by then will still be carrying on these church ordinances. That they'll still be preaching the gospel.

That they'll still be sending out people into the community to be a light in the darkness. I pray that they will be fulfilling God's mission not just man's tradition. So that's our key thought.

What's our takeaway for today? These church ordinances we've been having quite a few people baptized this year. we're taking the Lord's Supper in just a moment.

These church ordinances remind us to turn our eyes upon Jesus. When you see somebody stand up and fulfill the picture of Jesus hanging on the cross being buried and then rising back from the dead and you see them in that baptistry let's point our eyes back on Jesus and say God thank you.

[27 : 38] Thank you for your sacrifice. Thank you for your salvation. Thank you for the value you place on our lives that allows us to begin a new life with you.

Old things are passed away. All things can become new with the Spirit of God. When we take this bread and juice in just a moment let's examine ourselves let's refocus our eyes on Jesus Hebrews chapter 12 says looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith.

So we're going to have a moment of quiet prayer and reflection. come on up and play a little bit on the piano.

Let's do that right now. Let's bow our heads. I'm going to ask a couple questions because I never want to let a Sunday go by without giving someone an opportunity to put their faith in Jesus Christ. For the rest of us in the room I pray that we would take this moment for quiet reflection to re-center our focus back on Jesus. whether it's family or work or relationships or whatever it is that might be competing for your focus.

[29 : 04] Ask the Holy Spirit of God to resist the devil and he will flee from you. Ask the Holy Spirit of God to forgive you of your failings.

Claim that forgiveness and say God I repent of my wrongdoing increase my faith in you.

Help me to walk more closely with you hand in hand. Show me what I need to do to make something right that I may need to. Let's do that right now at these moments.

We'll give you just a few moments of personal quiet prayer. with everyone's heads bowed and eyes closed.

Let me ask this question. If there's someone here today who knows that they need to put their faith in Jesus for salvation and forgiveness of their sins, would you slip your hand up right now? Nobody else is looking.

[30 : 18] Just slip your hand up. Thank you. Thank you. For everyone else, I pray that God would continue to penetrate our heart.

God indwells us with his Holy Spirit but our hearts are still dark. Our flesh is weak. We are corrupted by sin. We need God to overwhelm that with his grace, with his goodness and turn our eyes back on Jesus.

God, we thank you for speaking to us from your word. I pray that you would be with us as we observe this ordinance of the Lord's Supper as you did so many years ago.

Help us to turn our eyes back on you. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[31 : 25] Amen. Amen. Amen.