

# Reinvigorating Baptist Practice of the Ordinances

## Introduction

By common agreement the ordinances have fallen on hard times in Baptist churches. It seems most of us have seen people come into the church, see the table prepared for communion, and moan that the service will be long today. Probably the two primary emotional responses to the ordinances are confusion and apathy- what do they really mean and why do we bother? In this situation, controversy over these practices is almost welcome because at least people are talking and thinking about these important items again. After all, these were not dreamed up in Nashville, or even Westminster, Geneva, Wittenberg or Rome. These were given to us by Christ Himself. We would do well then to think carefully about how we can properly obey our Lord in this area.

My aim in this paper is to address this situation particularly in Baptist churches. I will, therefore, assume some basic Baptist positions in order to move ahead to my two main objectives: to consider briefly why we have come to this situation and then more fully to provide some thoughts and suggestions on improving our practice. I will seek to do this by advancing two main arguments, one for each ordinance.

## Neglect of the Ordinances

Why have we come to the place that so many Christians do not “feel” the value of the ordinances? Most know that the Bible tells us to do these things, but they are not gripped by the value and importance of them. Why is this? Surely there are various reasons but I want to briefly suggest four reasons which I think are central to the problem.

1. We have bought our culture’s line that ritual is bad. We typically do not have the ability to see the value and beauty of traditional practices. Instead we tend to think that spontaneity and change are always best. But we should examine critically this assumption. Why do we assume that having a regular pattern to our worship is necessarily bad and that “changing things up” is necessarily good? Probably part of the reason is that generations before us failed to think through for themselves, and thus to teach to us, why we did what we did. As a result we may have seen empty tradition and ritual. However, we must not let a bad example turn us away from the real thing. As you search the Scriptures you find that God is quite favorable toward tradition and ritual- properly done. Paul warns us not to let our man-made traditions obscure Scripture, but Scripture itself gives us some rituals, particularly baptism and communion.<sup>1</sup> We must seek to recover the value of community traditions, things done regularly with rich meaning. This is what the two ordinances are supposed to be, visible reminders or portrayals of the gospel. These are the divinely ordained dramatic and illustrative portrayals of the gospel.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul warns against the encroachment of human traditions in Col 2:8, as does Jesus in Matt 15:1-9. However, Paul calls for obedience to God-given, apostolic tradition (1 Cor 11:2; 2 Thess 2:15) and calls for discipline against those who disregard apostolic tradition (2 Thess 3:6).

2. This leads to a second and related point. Our culture has largely lost its ability to appreciate symbolism. In short we have lost our poetry and as a result have little appreciation for the symbolic. As people are realizing this, many try all sorts of ways to integrate the use of the symbolic and dramatic into our worship all the while missing that Christ Himself has instituted for us two symbolic practices which are dramatic portrayals of the gospel.  
Our general failure to appreciate symbols is seen in the language used when baptism or communion is described as a “mere” symbol. “Mere”?! Why “mere”? These are not “mere”, but Christ-ordained, holy, precious symbols which portray for us the gospel.
3. We have had a serious downgrade in substantive biblical teaching in the Church. The ordinances, precisely because they are symbols were never intended to exist apart from the word- Word and Sacraments.<sup>2</sup> In a day when biblical teaching is at a low in the church, there should be no surprise that the ordinances are not prized. Without strong, intentional biblical teaching confusion sets in and people are unable to appreciate what they do not understand.
4. Our entertainment driven worship services cause us to view baptism and communion as things which take up too much time and get in the way of our show. They do not make for good television. This is why communion particularly has often been bumped to evening services, and increasingly ignored all together. Too often events commanded by Christ are viewed merely as impediments to things desired by us.

Now we turn to some thoughts about solutions.

### **Baptism- What is it? Why is it important?**

In our efforts to argue against those who make too much of baptism we may have undercut ourselves. Probably more of our people know more about what baptism does not mean than what it does mean. So, we need to return to the New Testament and notice the importance attributed to baptism. We need not revisit verses referring to the command to baptize. That is unquestioned. What we need to revisit are verses which underscore the importance of baptism, because oddly enough for *Baptists* it is these verse which disturb us. Such passages include the following:

**Acts 2:38- Repent and be baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of your sins**, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 22:16-** (Paul relating what Ananias said to him)- And now why do you wait? **Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.**

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<sup>2</sup> I use the term “sacrament” here in a Protestant sense (as did B. H. Carroll, A. H. Strong, etc.) without intending Catholic overtones.

Mark 16:15-16- And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever **believes and is baptized will be saved**, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.<sup>3</sup>

Other passages could be mentioned (e.g. Gal 3:26-27; 1 Pet 3:21), but these will suffice. Too often we have viewed these verses simply as passages to be explained away, items for debate with our Church of Christ neighbors. However, we must not only explain what the verses *do not* mean; we must also explain what they *do* mean. We do right in arguing that the act of baptism cannot earn salvation, but why do the apostles give baptism such a prominent place in the gospel call?

It is important first to note that the typical apostolic call for response to the gospel is "Repent and believe." With that in mind we can note that "be baptized" in Acts 2:38 replaces "believe." Why is that? Because baptism is the public demonstration of this belief, it is in essence a shorthand for "believe." So also, then, in Acts 22:16, Ananias calls on Paul to get up and show he believes by being baptized. In Mark 16 baptism is listed along with belief to stress the public profession of this faith.<sup>4</sup> Thus, baptism is the public profession of faith.<sup>5</sup> Paul also mentions internal belief and external confession in Romans 10:9-10:

"if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."

The "confessing with our mouth" here, I believe, is intended to refer to baptism. When Paul calls on Timothy in 1 Tim 6:12 to hold fast remembering his good confession in the presence of many witnesses" he almost certainly is referring to Timothy's baptism.<sup>6</sup> Baptism is the God-ordained way of declaring to the watching world that you are a follower of Christ. It is Christ's "brand" by which He marks his flock. It is the "mark" of Christ.

What then are the implications of this?

1. Baptism should follow immediately after conversion, or as soon as possible.<sup>7</sup> We should not wait weeks. Note the pattern in Acts (2:41; 8:12, 36-38; 9:17-19; 10:48; 16:15; 16:31-34). People are always baptized right after they come to faith. The church would not be sure of someone's conversion if they were not willing to take baptism. It is the "profession of the mouth." This is why in the New Testament there is not such category as an "unbaptized believer." The fact that we do have this category has led to various problems.

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<sup>3</sup> I know this passage is not in the best mss, but for arguments sake I address it here. It at least represents an early understanding of the gospel call.

<sup>4</sup> This also makes sense in Gal 3:26-27 where baptism and faith are used in close parallel.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. also John Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), 266-67.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. I. Howard Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 661.

<sup>7</sup> Robert H. Stein, "Baptism and Becoming a Christian in the New Testament," *SBJT* Spring 1998: 6-17, argues along similar lines. Stein argues strongly for "immediate" baptism.

2. Thus, one reason baptism is less appreciated today is that we have replaced it with our own man-made ordinance- walking the aisle. Now, a public invitation is not in itself wrong, but too often this invitation is equated with making one's faith "public." In other words, people are urged to "step out and come forward" as **the** way to profess their faith.<sup>8</sup> "Walking the aisle" is equated with one's "public profession." This is wrong and unhealthy. In a "come-forward invitation" we must call for people to come in order to talk with someone further about the gospel and receive help. The coming forward is in no way organically tied to coming to faith. No biblical support can be given for arguing otherwise. The New Testament does call for a public profession but the God-ordained means for doing this is baptism.<sup>9</sup> When we provide an intermediate substitute we vitiate baptism leaving people wondering what the point is. If someone has been converted and wants to let the world know they are a Christian, let them be baptized!

Having argued this position for sometime, I recently was pleased to find an affirming quote from Wayne Ward, a professor at Southern Seminary writing in the *Review and Expositor* in 1968:

Public confession of Jesus as Savior and Lord should be closely connected with the act of baptism. The tendency in many churches, especially Southern Baptist, has been to substitute "walking down the aisle" for the New Testament sign of baptism. The typical understanding is that one becomes a Christian by walking down the church aisle and telling the pastor that he is trusting Jesus as his personal Savior. This is a public act of confession, and it is perfectly proper to call for this kind of response to the proclamation of the gospel. However, it is most unfortunate when the baptism is considered a secondary adjunct, often delayed unnecessarily, and interpreted as "just something we do" because Christ commanded it. Of course, we do baptize because Christ commanded it, but it does have *meaning*. It should be emphasized as the divinely ordained, scriptural way in which a believer in Jesus Christ declares his death to the old sinful nature and his resurrection to walk in a new life with his Lord.<sup>10</sup>

Exactly! Indeed I was very interested to find that a student in Hersey Davis' (A T Robertson's lead student) New Testament class at Southern Seminary in 1939 took down this quote from the lecture:

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<sup>8</sup> We ought to listen carefully to the language that is used in some of our invitations. We appeal for people to come to the 'altar' to find God there. What are we doing with altars anyway in the New Covenant? We use sacramental language about our invitations in a way which is unorthodox and embarrassing. We need to return to the apostolic wording and simply call upon people to repent and believe.

<sup>9</sup> Where have we found the authority to supplant Christ's ordinances and create new ones? People who claim to be cessationists in regards to spiritual gifts, apparently feel that it is permissible to continue creating ordinances!

<sup>10</sup> Ward, Wayne E. "Baptism in Theological Perspective." *Review and Expositor* 65.1 (Winter, 1968): 46.

... baptism was the divinely appointed means by which men declared their repentance for sin and commitment to the New Order, the Kingdom of God ...<sup>11</sup>

Thus, we must maintain the place of baptism as **the** public profession of faith. B.H. Carroll made a similar point identifying baptism as the public profession of faith and calling for it to be done quickly. He wrote:

Our baptism is a profession or declaration, public and visible, of our faith in Jesus, as the Sent of the Father and the Anointed of the Spirit, to be our Prophet, Priest, and King. . . .And as we should speedily and candidly profess what we honestly and heartily believe, we are not surprised to find baptism so closely associated in time with the faith which it professes. In apostolic days there was nothing like the modern interval between them.<sup>12</sup>

3. So, upon someone's credible profession of faith we should baptize them quickly. There should be as little temporal separation between conversion and baptism as possible. Some in the desire to make sure the profession is credible have required new believers to go through a long series of instruction before baptism. This practice emerges fairly early in the history of the church. However, all that should be required is that an individual understand the basic gospel and profess faith in the finished work of Christ. Upon such a profession we are to baptize them. Some may say, "But what if we then baptize and welcome into membership people who in fact were not converted?" That indeed is a problem, but that is what church discipline is for. Note the account of the great ingathering of Samaritans in Acts 7. Simon professes faith and is baptized. Later he shows that he has not truly been converted when he seeks to buy the Holy Spirit. Peter rebukes him, telling him he has not truly been converted. Sure, we should be circumspect. But if it is clear that as best we can tell an individual does trust Christ we should baptize them. Then, teach them and if necessary discipline them. Is this not the pattern of the Great Commission- baptize, then teach? Again Wayne Ward aptly wrote:

The idea of postponing baptism for a time, in order to check up on the personal habits and the Christian growth of the believer is a dangerous distortion of the meaning of baptism. Baptism is not the sign of Christian maturity. It is the sign of Christian *beginning*.<sup>13</sup>

4. This close connection temporally between conversion and baptism is part of the basis for the requirement for one to be baptized before partaking in communion. Only believers are to partake of communion, and the NT again has no concept of an unbaptized believer. To be a believer is to be baptized. If one refuses baptism he should not be admitted to the Table. However, we create trouble when we delay baptisms. We end up with new believers who have professed faith, whom the church has acknowledged as believers, but they are kept from the Table for

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<sup>11</sup> Franklin Owen, "Pastoral Dilemmas in Baptismal Practice: A Symposium," *Review and Expositor* 65.1 (Winter 1968): 77.

<sup>12</sup> "Baptism in Water," p. 25-26, in *The Three Baptisms*, Ages Digital Library.

<sup>13</sup> Ward, "Baptism in Theological Perspective," 46-47.

weeks or even months while they await baptism. We should not be barring true believers from the Table by delaying baptism. This problem is easily settled by acting more quickly with baptism.<sup>14</sup>

### **Communion**

As with baptism, having often heard it argued strenuously that communion does not mean ‘that much’, our people have reasonably asked, “Why do it?” I asked this question as a college student and in my first year in seminary without receiving much in answer. In fact I served in a church where we went for about a year without celebrating communion. No one seemed to really miss it, and it seemed the leadership found in unimportant. The best answer I could find as to why celebrate communion came from a friend who shared my quandary. He said, “Because Jesus told us to.” This is helpful and crucial and can help us at least go on in faith. However, surely there is more that can allow us to go on in faith with some understanding.

Without rehashing the basic arguments, I am convinced that Scripture teaches us that communion is primarily a memorial, while also upholding the spiritual presence of Christ at His table.<sup>15</sup> Scripture is clear that communion points us back to the Cross and forward to Christ’s return (1 Cor. 11:26). Isn’t this important? What could be more central to the church? These were the two driving truths for the early church, though sadly in the church today both are often conspicuous in their absence. For this reason alone we should see the importance of the Table.

Again, let us turn to some key passages in the New Testament to see the value placed on communion. I will highlight some texts which show the centrality of the Lord’s Supper to Christian worship in the early church.

First, Acts 2:42, following the great ingathering of Pentecost, describes the activity of the church.

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

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<sup>14</sup> Recent controversies have arisen over the IMB trustees’ statements on what constitutes a valid baptism. They require the immersion of a believer, which fits well with what has been argued here. They also disallow baptisms which were done with the idea that the baptism itself secured salvation. I have not dealt with that issue here but that does make sense since it changes the meaning of baptism. However, controversy has arisen over the assertion that a baptism is invalidated if the administering church does not hold to eternal security. Many have argued that historically Baptists have not connected in such a way the doctrine of eternal security and the validity of baptism. Debate continues, with this being the key point of contention. The argument, given here, that baptism is the profession of faith in Christ not a statement of allegiance to any denomination or final statement of one’s positions on various points of doctrine, may have some bearing on the conversation.

<sup>15</sup> For this article I will argue from the memorial perspective since that appears primary in the scripture. For spiritual presence cf. the Baptist Confession of 1689, 30.7. Millard Erickson wisely and winsomely notes:

Out of a zeal to avoid the conception that Jesus is present in some sort of magical way, certain Baptists among others have sometimes gone to such extremes as to give the impression that the one place where Jesus most assuredly is not to be found is the Lord’s Supper. This is what one Baptist leader termed ‘the doctrine of the real absence’ of Jesus Christ. (*Christian Theology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books], 1123)

The four activities listed here are not four separate things but the four elements which characterized a Christian gathering.<sup>16</sup> One of the key things the early church “devoted” itself to was the “breaking of bread,” i.e. the Lord’s Supper.<sup>17</sup> The wording suggests that each of these activities occurred when they gathered.

Perhaps the most striking reference to the frequency of the Lord’s Supper occurs in Acts 20:7.

On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

Paul, on his way to Jerusalem has stopped at Troas. Here “on the first day of the week” he meets with the local church, and Luke directly states that the purpose of their gathering was “to break bread,” i.e. to celebrate the Lord’s Supper!<sup>18</sup> Marshall writes:

“The breaking of bread is the term used especially in Acts for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper (2:42; cf. 1 Cor. 10:16), and this passage is of particular interest in providing the first allusion to the Christian custom of meeting *on the first day of the week* for the purpose.”<sup>19</sup>

This passage need not mean the Lord’s Supper was the only purpose of their gathering but it certainly is one prominent purpose and the one emphasized here. These early Christians meet *weekly* to celebrate the Lord’s Supper.

Of course the longest discussion of the practice of the Lord’s Supper is in 1 Corinthians. Many issues can be raised here but simply the fact that abuse of the Lord’s Supper is such a problem in Corinth strongly suggests the Supper was held frequently. Could it have been such a problem if it only occurred quarterly. Is this the sense which arises from the passage? Notice the wording of 11:20:

When you come together, it is not the Lord’s supper that you eat.

It is widely agreed that the terminology “come together” here is used as a technical term for gathering as the church.<sup>20</sup> This wording suggests that when they gather they do eat a meal which they intend to be the Lord’s Supper. Though they are abusing the Supper, their practice (which is not considered odd by Paul) is to celebrate each time they gather. Even the wording in 11:25, “As often as you drink,” which is often used to suggest frequency is unimportant, in context actually suggests a frequent celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Commenting on this verse, Gordon Fee notes, “This addition in particular

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<sup>16</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 83.

<sup>17</sup> It is widely agreed that “the breaking of bread” is a technical term in Luke-Acts for the Lord’s Supper. So F.F. Bruce states, “The ‘breaking of bread’ here denotes something more than ordinary partaking of food together: the regular of the Lord’s Supper is no doubt indicated” (*The Book of the Acts*, revised, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 79). See also Marshall, 83; and John B. Polhill, *Acts*, New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1992), 119.

<sup>18</sup> The construction is an infinitive denoting purpose. Cf. W. D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 306; H. E. Dana and J. R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1927), 214.

<sup>19</sup> *Acts*, 325.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 535f. and David Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 539.

implies a frequently repeated action, suggesting that from the beginning the *Last Supper* was for Christians not an annual Christian Passover, but a regularly repeated meal in ‘honor of the Lord,’ hence the *Lord’s Supper*.<sup>21</sup>

From these passages a clear pattern emerges of a weekly celebration of communion in the New Testament.<sup>22</sup> I am not here arguing that weekly celebration is a direct biblical command so that if we fail to do this we sin. I am arguing that this is the pattern in the New Testament and therefore would be best practice. In our man-centered age where so many services are shamefully devoid of any meaningful reference to the cross, could we not benefit from a move to a regular use of the Christ-ordained means for reminding us of the cross? In a day when we are so captivated by the allures of this age and seemingly interested merely in *Our Best Life Now*, do we not need regularly the Christ-ordained means of reminding us of the Lord’s return and the wedding feast of the Lamb? Might not the Bride be more pure if regularly reminded of the coming wedding?

Questions will quickly arise on how to do this. Some doubt that this can be done well. My church does this and has for about three years. Many of the Baptist churches in Scotland do this, and the practice flourishes.

A typical argument against this idea is, “If we do this so often it will become less meaningful.” At first this has the appearance of wisdom; but with just a little pondering the illusion fades. Do we apply this reasoning to other means of grace? Are we worried about praying too frequently? Reading the Bible too much? Shall we be safe and make biblical preaching less frequent? Well, perhaps some are using this reasoning! These practices become rote not because of frequency but because of laziness of mind and heart on our behalf and the lack of robust biblical proclamation alongside the ordinance.

In our church we always celebrate communion at the close and climax of the service. If the word is rightly preached, then no matter the text, the gospel is expounded. Communion is then a fitting response. It gives us a way to respond to the Word- a biblical way, without creating something from our own minds. Having heard the word preached, we come again to the table, confessing again our need of a savior, our faith in this Christ, and our intention by His grace to live out His commands, including the portion just preached. Rather than an altar call it is a table call, allowing each of us, in a sense, to rededicate ourselves each week.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 555.

<sup>22</sup> Though Hammett does not argue for weekly communion, he does conclude with this statement: “For most of Christian history, the Eucharist or Lord’s Supper has been the central act of Christian worship” (*Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches*, 294). If it is “the central act” of our worship, should we not do it each Lord’s Day?

<sup>23</sup> Two practices which are less helpful ought to be addressed briefly here though they do not fit in the flow of the main article.

First, it is very clear from Paul’s discussion that this is a *corporate* event. We lose the point if our practice is anything less than corporate. Therefore I do not think the practice is helpful where everyone waits until they are ready and then they go and get it individually. We are to take it together, mindful of the body all at once.

Also, some, in the desire to emphasize the place of families, have each father go and get the elements to serve his own family. I affirm wholeheartedly the importance of the family and the role of the father. I like



If that day the Word has been particularly convicting and we have seen our sin exposed, then with communion we are tangibly reminded again that atonement has been made for our sins. The pastoral value of this is too rarely considered. It is deeply meaningful, having been rebuked and humbled and perhaps being tempted with despair by a condemning conscience to see again the physical reminders of Christ's body broken and His blood spilled for us. We are not simply told again of His sacrifice but we are reminded visibly, tangibly that for the repentant Christ has decisively dealt with our sin. Often a misunderstanding of 1 Cor 11:27-32 has kept us from making much of this aspect of the supper.<sup>24</sup> The Supper is not for those who have it all sorted out. In fact, it is for sinners only. By taking the elements we confess we are sinners in need of a Savior and we confess again that we take Christ, with his work at the cross, as our Savior. Among the many benefits of this practice is that it keeps us from even sounding legalistic and after the rebuke of sin allows us to close on the note of sins forgiven.

If that day the Word has been especially encouraging, then communion roots that encouragement in the work of Christ. Why is it that we can have any encouragement, hope, or peace? Because Christ's body was broken and his blood spilled for us. Our hope is tangibly rooted in the work of Christ.

Furthermore, this use of communion at the close of the service is powerfully evangelistic. An unbeliever sitting in the service will have heard the gospel expounded and will have been called to repent and believe. The elements will have been explained with a call to repent and believe but a warning that if you do not repent and believe the elements are not for you. Then the elements of Christ come to him and he is forced to encounter the symbols of Christ's body and blood. Week after week he is confronted with the work of Christ. The symbol of the broken body of Christ will be passed by him and he must say, "I refuse to trust in this Christ! And again comes the symbol of Christ's poured out blood and again the unbeliever must say, "This is not for me, I will not receive!" I think it is more powerfully and properly evangelistic than many other things that we do, as well as deeply edifying to believers who at the close of each time are reminded, this is what has been done for me.

Weekly celebration was the practice of Charles Spurgeon years ago, and he defended it against the charge that frequency would dilute intensity:

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the Puritan idea of each father serving as the pastor of his family. However, when we gather together as the church we are the *church*, and the whole point of the discussion of communion in First Corinthians is to not allow divisions. We must celebrate communion together.

<sup>24</sup> Far too often people think that they should not partake of communion if they are struggling with sin. In this case we have turned this amazing reminder of grace into an ogre of legalism. The warning in 1 Cor 11 is against partaking in an unworthy manner, referring to the unrepentant self-centeredness of the Corinthians ignoring other members of the body. No one is worthy. That is the point. In the supper we are reminded again that Christ died for sinners like us. The requirement is that we come in faith and repentance.

Too often, having stripped the Supper of any positive meaning we are left only with the threat of divine judgment if we do it incorrectly. Judgment is real, but so is the truth of grace for the repentant. No wonder many do not want to have communion more frequently.

So with the Lord's Supper. My witness is, and I think I speak the mind of many of God's people now present, that coming as some of us do, weekly, to the Lord's table, we do not find the breaking of bread to have lost its significance—it is always fresh to us. I have often remarked on Lord's-day evening, whatever the subject may have been, whether Sinai has thundered over our heads, or the plaintive notes of Calvary have pierced our hearts, it always seems equally appropriate to come to the breaking of bread. Shame on the Christian church that she should put it off to once a month, and mar the first day of the week by depriving it of its glory in the meeting together for fellowship and breaking of bread, and showing forth of the death of Christ till he come. They who once know the sweetness of each Lord's-day celebrating his Supper, will not be content, I am sure, to put it off to less frequent seasons. Beloved, when the Holy Ghost is with us, ordinances are wells to the Christian, wells of rich comfort and of near communion.<sup>25</sup>

Amen! May the Lord stir up faithful, fervent practice of His ordinances in His Church that the Church might be renewed, the gospel proclaimed and souls won.

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<sup>25</sup> “Songs of Deliverance,” Sermon no. 763, July 28, 1867. Accessed <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0763.htm>. Spurgeon is preaching from Judges 5:11- another reminder that any passage properly preached points to the Gospel, and therefore to the Supper, God’s ordained means for portraying the gospel.