



The Blue Banner

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A DAY IN ZION

Editor's Note: We thought it would be of interest to the readers of *The Blue Banner* to see what a typical service at FPCR is like, while at the same time sharing some of the excellent teaching we enjoy each Lord's day from Pastor Bacon. The following shows all the parts of a typical service, except that we normally are not baptizing every Lord's day and thus the sermon is a departure from our custom of serial expository preaching through books of the Bible. The order of our service is taken from the *Westminster Directory for the Public Worship of God*. We have adopted an order of services for the Lord's Day which accommodates the fact that most of the congregation travels some distance to come to worship. The morning service begins at 10:30 (giving families plenty of time for devotions, getting ready, etc.). We have lunch from 12:30 or 1:00 to 2:00 when we have the afternoon service. Following that service, after a short break, we have our biblical institute (replacing the morning Sunday school hour). Once a month this hour is devoted to practicing new psalm tunes. The following service is from the morning of January 14, 1996. An asterisk "*" means the congregation stood for that particular part of the service. Welcome and announcements are done before the call to worship.

****Call to Worship: Psalm 78:68-69***

But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount of Zion which he loved. And he built his sanctuary like high places, like the earth which he hath established for ever.

****Invocation***

Father, even as thou didst choose the tribe of Judah to reign over thy people of old, thou hast also given us our Lord Christ to rule over us in these days. As thou hast loved thy Mount Zion forever, we pray that thou wouldest visit us this day. We pray that thou wouldest

meet with us as we worship thy name. We pray that thou wouldest be a covenant God to us. Be to us a God and take us for thy people. For we call upon thee in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

****Singing of Praise***

- 68 But he did chuse Jehudah's tribe
to be the rest above;
And of mount Sion he made choice,
which he so much did love
- 69 And he his sanctuary built
like to a palace high,
Like to the earth which he did found
to perpetuity.
- 70 Of David, that his servant was,
he also choice did make,
And even from the folds of sheep
was pleased him to take:
- 71 From waiting on the ewes with young,
he brought him forth to feed
Israel, his inheritance,
his people, Jacob's seed.
- 72 So after the integrity
he of his heart them fed;
And by the good skill of his hands
them wisely governed.

As we have reminded you so many times,¹ as we sing the Psalms, we should have one eye on David but the

¹ These comments preceded the singing of the Psalm 78:68-72 to the melody Glasgow (FPCR uses the Scottish metrical psalter). We sing through the Psalms in order, some years two psalms (or portions) per service, sometimes three (as we do presently). I believe FPCR has gone through the Psalter twice since we began ordering our services this way.

other eye on Christ. Here as David was chosen to rule over the people of Israel of old, we should be reminded that God has placed Christ in that position over his church in this day. Even as David was chosen to govern his people of old wisely, so also Christ governs his people wisely in this day of gospel fullness.

*New Testament Reading.*²

You may recall from last week, in Galatians chapters 1 and 2 we saw Paul first of all affirming that he has the right to speak as an apostle. Then he reminded the Galatians of his distress at hearing that they had been so soon removed from grace to turn to another gospel: believing that it was necessary for one first to become a Jew by circumcision in order then to become a Christian. In chapter 3, Paul will explain why what they believed was such a terrible thing [Galatians 3 was read at this point].

There is much here. In fact, there is so much here that we could spend, not only the rest of the day but some considerable time, in preaching through this chapter. But the key thing I want you to understand in this passage is that Paul is saying that for us to move from a doctrine of justification by free grace, a justification that we receive by faith alone, into thinking that we can be justified in God's sight by keeping the commandments of the law, is for us to move away from the gospel of Christ. That is the key thing for us to understand in this passage.

Does the law have a purpose then? Of course it does! Paul asks the question, "Wherefore then serveth the law?" What is the purpose of it? What service does it have? He explains to us that the law was added because of transgressions, "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." We need to understand that the moral law (i. e. that which is summarized in the ten commandments), actually reflects the *character of God*. When we say that we want to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, but we are not interested in keeping God's moral law, we are really contradicting ourselves because Jesus himself walked in the moral law. Jesus himself kept the law perfectly. For us to say that we will follow his example is for us to say that we will walk as he walked. Therefore, we must walk in the precepts of the moral law. However, we cannot use the law, either the moral law or any particular aspect of the law that pertained to the time prior to the coming of Christ, as

though by keeping those things we could justify ourselves before God. Paul takes that away from us completely. He says in effect, "If you are to be justified by the law, then you have to keep all of the law perfectly and none of you do." If there were just one time in your life — and of course we would insist that there have been many more times in your life than one — but if there were but one time in your life in which you had transgressed the law of God, how could you stand before the Lord? Does every sin deserve the wrath and punishment of God? If the answer is yes — and it is — then if we are going to be justified by the law, we must keep the law perfectly. Yet we do not keep the law perfectly. We are *unable* to keep the law perfectly. Therefore, we must be justified by promise.

Paul explains that Abraham was justified by promise. If we understand how Abraham was justified before the Lord, then we will understand how we are justified today as well. Paul takes us back to Abraham. Paul explains that in Genesis 15, "even as Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness." God imputed the righteousness of Jesus Christ to Abraham through Abraham's faith, as Abraham received it by believing God. How are we justified today? We are justified in the sight of God the same way that Abraham and Moses and David and Phinehas and all the Old Testaments saints were justified in the sight of God: by believing God and receiving the righteousness of Jesus Christ by grace through faith.

**Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer*

Father, as we read such passages as we have read this day, we once again are overwhelmed by thy grace in adopting us as sons and as daughters. We pray that as we come unto thee that thou wouldest not allow that we should come unto thee presumptuously or complacently, but rather with thankful hearts; praising thee first of all that thou hast adopted us, as sons and daughters of the covenant; that thou hast brought us in, who were once no seed, who were once no people, who once had known no mercy, and because of the Lord Jesus Christ, thou hast broken down that wall of partition, thou hast adopted us into thy covenant, so that there is no longer Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female, to those who have been baptized into Christ. We praise thee that as we are Christ's, so also are we Abraham's offspring; so also are we members of that covenant which thou hast made with thy people, to be a God to us and for us to be a people unto thee. We pray that thou wouldest teach us more and more how thou art our father, and how we are thy children. We ask that thou wouldest make thy name known unto us and through us, that thy name might be

² The New Testament reading was from Galatians 3. According to the *Westminster Directory* we read through the books of the Bible, Old and New Testaments, a chapter at a time in each service. Following the reading, the pastor then makes comments (sometimes brief, sometimes not) on the passage.

glorified, that it might be high and lifted up in the earth; that men might see thy people; that men might see thy works in us; that men might hear thy word, and glorify thy name.

We pray that thy kingdom would be expanded in our hearts and throughout the world; and that thou wouldest teach us more and more to know, to obey, and to submit to thy perfect will. We pray that thou wouldest furnish thy church with officers after thy heart and with the ordinances which thou hast called thy church to exercise. We pray that thou wouldest purify us; that thou wouldest teach us more and more how to walk in the way of thy holiness.

We ask that thou wouldest grant to each of us in our several callings as fathers and mothers, as students, as children, in our several family relations, in our workplaces, and in every other aspect of our lives, that we might do all thy holy will even as the angels who are ever in thy presence do thy will perfectly. We pray that thou wouldest teach us more and more to do all thy will.

We ask that as we do thy will in this earth, we will be more and more enabled by thy Spirit and by thy Word to subdue this present world to the throne rights of our King Jesus. We pray that thou wouldest grant to our hands some measure of success; that we might have a competent portion of the good things of this life along with thy blessing: that we might have food to eat; that we might have shelter over our heads and clothing to wear; for as thou hast clothed the lilies of the field, we pray that thou also wouldest clothe us and feed us and shelter us from the storms of this life.

We pray that thou wouldest teach us more and more to love one another, to forbear with one another, to be patient with one another; that we might be examples unto one another. We pray that thou wouldest teach us to forgive one another even as thou for Christ's sake hast forgiven us, for we have been forgiven, we confess, a debt which is altogether unpayable by us. We pray that thou wouldest grant to us hearts of forgiveness toward one another, that we might also learn to forgive one another even as we have been forgiven.

We ask that thou wouldest cause us to walk more completely in the path of thy righteousness, departing neither to the right hand nor to the left. We pray, keep us by thine almighty hand. Grant to us that we might escape the temptations of the wicked one. Grant to us that we might turn our back upon that which is evil in this present world. Grant to us, we pray, that we might walk with our Lord Jesus Christ.

We ask that thy kingdom, thy glory, thy power, might be manifest in our lives in such a way that men might glorify thee. As we ask for these things — these desires

of our hearts — we confess that in all these things we submit the knee unto thy will, asking that whatsoever thou knowest to be best for us, do for us, we pray. For we ask these things in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who taught us when we pray together to pray . . .

Old Testament Reading³

Psalm 32 is what is called a Maschil, or a psalm of instruction. Psalm 33 is what we call an orphan psalm; that is to say there is no title for Psalm 33. Psalm 34 is a psalm of David that he composed concerning the time when he was running away from Saul and feigned insanity to save his life. (Reading of Psalms 32 to 34).

There is something I particularly want you to notice in Psalm 32. Most commentators are of the opinion — I believe they have the mind of God on this — that Psalm 32 was written on the occasion of David's forgiveness after his sin with Bathsheba. We see in Psalm 32 how a man moves away from his sin toward God. Notice that in verse 1, David speaks of the fact that a man is blessed whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. If we only could hold out hope for those who were perfect, for those who were sinless, then there would be no hope for any of us sitting here. The hope that the Bible holds out is for those whose sins are *forgiven in Christ*. It is only as the blood of Christ is applied to our consciences that we are freed from our sins and transgressions. "Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity."

In verse 3, the psalmist says, "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." As long as David was unwilling to confess his sin before the Lord, he underwent sorrows. I believe he is speaking here of the fact that he underwent physical ailments as well as spiritual ailments. But whether there were physical ailments or just spiritual ailments, we know that a person who is under the conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit, who does not then turn to confess those sins, undergoes considerable sorrow. In David's case we do not know how much time there was from when he first committed his sin with Bathsheba and then covered it up by committing a sin against God by having Uriah killed, and when he confessed his sin. But it was when the

³ The Old Testament Reading was Psalm 32-34. In the Afternoon Service, the OT Reading is before the Prayer, and the NT Reading afterwards. Also, in the afternoon, the prayer does not follow the model of the Lord's Prayer (the Lord's Prayer is also omitted) and the particular prayers and praises of the congregation are offered up by the pastor.

prophet Nathan came to him and said to him, “Thou art the man!” that David finally confessed his sin to God. It is in that confession that we see David’s release from the sorrows and ailments of unconfessed sin.

Read again verse 5. “I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” As long as we attempt to cover up our sin, or justify our sin, or continue in our sin, we will continue under the sorrow and burden of that sin. It is only as we confess it to the Lord and let go of it, and forsake it, and turn to the Lord for forgiveness of it, that the “moisture” is returned to us.

We need to understand that this Psalm was not written here in the peninsula in the middle of Lake Ray Hubbard. This was written in a desert context. We need to understand that in a desert context an oasis and moisture are life; and apart from moisture is only death. When the psalmist writes about being dried up like a drought, he is talking about death. This same type of illustration is used in Psalm 1 which describes a tree planted by the oasis that brings forth its leaf in its season.

David continues to explain that everyone who is godly ought to turn to the Lord for forgiveness. The sin that David committed was certainly a terrible sin. We ought never minimize the sins which God’s people are capable of committing; nor should we ever think that we have reached some point in our lives that sin cannot touch us anymore. Every one of us — every last son and daughter of us sitting here — is capable of sinning the most heinous sin as soon as God averts his eyes from us for a moment. We must therefore, along with David, recognize our dependence upon God’s mercy. We must confess the fact that when we sin, *we have sinned*. We must bring that fact to the Lord. We must lay it before him. We must acknowledge that apart from his mercy, apart from his grace, apart from the fact that he is ready and willing to forgive and delights in showing mercy to the remnant of his people, we have no hope.

Yet, because he *is* a merciful God, we *do* have hope. In fact, when we confess our sins to him; when we no longer keep silence; when we no longer attempt to cover our sins ourselves; but instead turn to him for the covering of the blood of Christ, there is forgiveness and mercy with the Lord.

Holy Baptism

We have this morning the privilege of baptizing each of the children of Greg and Crystal Blanchard. In counseling with Greg and Crystal one of the things we

have discussed is the fact that our children are born into an estate of sin and misery. Our children are *not* innocent. Those of you who have raised children for more than a couple of days already know that. But more important than our experience is the fact that the Bible affirms that our children are born as sinners. Therefore, as we see the baptism of the Lord in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit taking place in our midst this morning, we must not think that we are seeing some confirmation of innocence. The reason our children are baptized is because they are guilty; because they are sinners; yet God has been pleased to cause them to be born within the pale (within the influence) of his covenant. It is because they are *covenant* children that we baptize them.

We acknowledge first of all that they are sinners. We acknowledge second, however, that nevertheless they have been born into the covenant that God has made with his people. We do not believe anything happens “automatically.” We do not believe that getting someone’s forehead wet gives him a ticket to heaven.

Because we believe that our children have been born into the covenant, third, we make a vow in the baptism to raise our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We vow to do all that is humanly possible, to do all that God has *called* us to do, to raise our children for the Lord and unto the Lord, acknowledging that they are ultimately his — and ours only by way of stewardship.

I call not only the parents but all the Blanchard family to come and stand to my left. We baptize publicly. We do not baptize in private. We do not go to people’s homes to baptize. We do not go to hospitals looking for sick babies to baptize. We baptize in the face of the congregation. The reason we do so is because baptism has as part of its nature, the nature of the vow; and a vow is made before the Lord *and* it is made in public.

In the sermon I will explain that we have here a covenant being ratified. For God’s part, the ratification is in the seal of the token of the covenant; for our part the ratification is in our casting ourselves upon the Lord Jesus Christ to call upon his mercy. Our part of the ratification is what we call receiving the covenant by faith.

I address Greg and Crystal Blanchard as the custodians of their children. Just as they have been called upon by God to exercise godly wisdom and godly nurture in providing these children with a place to live, with clothing, with food, and with all the other necessities of this life; they have also been assessed by God with the responsibility of providing for their children’s spiritual welfare. Therefore we call them to account and we require that they make a vow in the face of the

congregation, that they will do the things required of them in the covenant of grace.

Listen now to these questions and answers. In just a moment, I am going to turn to you, the rest of the congregation, and ask you if you will vow along with the Blanchards to assist them as members of the covenant community in raising these covenant children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Greg and Crystal, do you acknowledge that although our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are subject to condemnation, that they are holy in Christ and as members of his church ought to be baptized? Do you?

Blanchards: "Yes."

Do you promise to instruct your children in the principles of our holy religion as revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and as summarized in the Confession of Faith, and Catechisms of this church, and do you promise to pray with and for your children, to set an example of piety and godliness, and to endeavor by all the means of God's appointment to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Do you?

Blanchards: "Yes."

Let us stand and call upon the Lord to hear our vows this day and to ratify his covenant in the water of baptism.

***Prayer**

Father, we come unto thee as needy sinners asking that thou wouldest wash us; asking that thou wouldest cleanse us; asking that thou wouldest purify us by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon our consciences. We pray that thou wouldest cover our sins by the blood of Christ, even as David cried out unto thee in the Psalm we read earlier today. We pray that thou wouldest hear our prayers, even as we acknowledge our neediness. Have pity upon us. Be to us a God, and be to these children a God, and take them as thine. We pray in Jesus Christ's name. Amen.

Children, please line up in order of birth. I want to start with Whitney and work our way up.

For those of you who are not normally with us: this is water. It is not holy water, except in so far as it has been set aside for a holy purpose. It came out of our faucet, right where we keep all the rest of our water. There is nothing special about this water; this is ordinary water. The sign of the covenant that is being administered today is not "magic" and it is not administered with "magic water." What you are seeing today is God setting his name, his seal, upon these children. Just as our hearts, our consciences, are sprinkled by the blood of

Christ in regeneration, so we show that forth here in the sprinkling of water — not by sprinkling blood as was done in the old covenant. Now we sprinkle bloodlessly upon the forehead of these children, acknowledging that God has claimed them for his own, and placing upon them a burden to call upon God not only as their Creator but as their Redeemer as well.

Whitney Lawson Alexander Blanchard, I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Faith Elysse Noelle Blanchard, I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Kelly Annalisa Lorretta Blanchard, I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Charis Melody Praise Blanchard, I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Daniel James Kell Blanchard, I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Jennifer Sharon Erika Blanchard, I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Let us stand and pray once again.

***Prayer**

Father, we confess that we are able to apply water to the forehead, but only thou art able to apply blood to the heart. We pray that even as we have done as thou hast commanded in baptizing these in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, that thou wouldest make it effectual unto them. We pray that thou wouldest grant to them thy peace and thy love. We pray that thou wouldest draw them unto thyself, that thou wouldest embrace them in thy covenant; that thou wouldest give thy covenant good success in their lives. For we ask this in Jesus Christ's name. Amen.

While all of us continue to stand, I am going to ask you, as you have seen the sign of God's covenant applied to these children today, do you now vow before the Lord, according to your several places and stations, to assist these parents in raising these six children and any other children they may have in the future, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, so help you God?

Congregation [with hands raised to heaven]: I do.

You may be seated.

Let me remind the children who were just baptized that in the future as I speak to those who "have the name of the Lord God upon their foreheads," I want you to know I am talking to you among others. There are many here

who do not remember their baptisms. But each of you, even as young as Whitney, should be able to remember this day. You should be able to look back to it, and improve (make use of) the baptism of the Lord, especially in time of temptation. When we are tempted to stray from the Lord, when we are tempted to follow our own devices instead of God's word, we need to remember, "I can't do that. I am baptized! I belong to the Lord, and not to myself." Children, do you understand?

Let's stand and pray for God's blessing upon the sermon.

****Prayer***

Father, even as we have seen with our eyes Jesus Christ and his death and the sprinkling of his blood set before us, we pray that thou wouldest open our ears, that not only by the way of our seeing, but also by way of our hearing, we might know what it is to be part of thy covenant; that we might know how our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died, who shed his blood on our behalf that we might belong to him. For we ask this in his name. Amen.

Sermon: Baptism

I am going to suggest to you that if you have questions about what you just saw, that you take out your pencils and your notebooks, and transcribe at least the *highlights* of what you are going to hear this morning. For many of us who live in the southern United States, not only are we not used to seeing children, and even young children at that, baptized; we are not used to seeing it done in any other way than by dunking the person beneath water. You did not see either one of those things. Although I believe each of these children is old enough to have made credible professions of faith in Christ, you did not see any of them baptized on that basis. You saw all of them being baptized because an entire household came into the covenant on the basis of the affirmation of the faith of the parents. That is what we call covenant baptism, or household baptism. I trust, and I pray with all my heart, for the children of the church, that as they grow older, as they hear the word of the Lord preached in their presence literally hundreds and thousands of times in their lives, that God will convert their hearts and that they will cast themselves upon the mercy and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: that the very thing that is signified, represented, and sealed in this rite will take place in their lives.

Reading of Ezekiel 36:25-38

In this passage God speaks of cleansing his people with clean water. Yet it is not the water that cleanses. He says he is splashing or sprinkling water on them. Yet it is the inward part that is corrupt. It is the uncleanness of iniquity, of sin, that requires cleansing. Therefore, what we have in the sprinkling of clean water is a symbol of the cleansing, the purification, that must take place inside a person for him to be cleansed from his sin. The water is a symbol for that which cleanses inwardly.

You have already heard me say this several times this morning, but what is it then that cleanses us inwardly? As I sprinkled water on the foreheads of these children who were baptized this morning, were there any sins on their forehead for me to wash away? No! That is not where we sin! We sin inwardly. Our sins have, as their source, the inward man. Therefore, it is inwardly that the cleansing must take place. What is it that cleanses us inwardly?

Read with me 1 Peter 1:1-2, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

Notice that the three Persons of the Godhead are spoken of in verse two. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all spoken of in this verse. Note the similarity to the baptism "formula" of Matthew 28:19. As the church goes forth into the world, discipling the nations, we baptize the nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. That is precisely who we have presented before us in verse 2: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.

Also note that we have the very thing which baptism symbolizes presented before us in verse two. The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ is presented in this verse. First, we have the Trinity presented and second, we have the very thing that is symbolized by baptism presented here. What is the other aspect of the Great Commission found in Matthew 28? The other aspect of the Great Commission is that we are to go forth into all the world baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded thee."

Here in verse two, we also see obedience or observing God's commands. Paul tells us the strangers have been sanctified by the Spirit, elect by the foreknowledge of God, sprinkled by the blood of Christ, *unto obedience*. We have all the elements here, all the aspects, of Christian baptism in verse two. We have the persons of

the Trinity, we have the sprinkling of the blood of Christ (that which is signified by baptism), and we have obedience. We have the idea of teaching to observe, the idea of baptizing, and the idea of the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. It is all here. The reason I want us to see this is because of my insistence that baptism is pointing in this passage to the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon the consciences, or upon the immaterial man, of those who are his.

Water does not wash away our sins. Only the blood of Christ can wash away our sins. But how is the blood of Christ applied? By the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ on our consciences by the Holy Spirit! When we speak of the washing of regeneration, how is it we are washed and by what are we washed? Externally, we are washed by water. But we are washed internally by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon our consciences. Therefore there is a correspondence between the sprinkling of blood on the one hand internally and the corresponding sprinkling of water externally on the other hand. Who sprinkles the blood internally? Are we capable of sprinkling the blood of Christ upon our own hearts? Of course not! Only God can do that. However the corresponding sprinkling of water signifies that washing away of sins. It seals that cleansing. It represents that regeneration by the Holy Ghost. We do not believe that there are sins on our foreheads. Our baptism symbolizes the washing of our consciences — our inner man — by the symbolic washing of our bodies — our outer man.

In Ezekiel 36, we are told that there will be a sprinkling of clean water and when that sprinkling of clean water takes place, God will give us a new heart. What is a new heart? Children, what is that big word that means a change of heart? Regeneration! To put it much more simply, it means being “born again;” not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible. Regeneration means being born again. It is not enough to be born of the flesh. One must be born, Jesus said, of the spirit. In John 3, we are told we must be born by the water and the Spirit.

So it is God who places within us a heart of flesh. He takes away the heart of stone and replaces it with a heart of flesh. That is regeneration. In Hebrews 10:22, we see that same thing set forth under this same symbolism. Read with me Hebrews 10:22, “Let us draw near with a true heart ...” We cannot draw near with a false heart — a hypocritical heart. We cannot draw near with a heart of stone — it must be with a true heart. “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” Is the author saying first go take a bath and then come to church? Is he saying do not

come to church without taking a bath first? No! He is speaking about baptism. That is the symbolism. There is the correlation between having our hearts sprinkled and our bodies washed. We cannot apply baptism directly to the heart. However, the Lord can. When he applies it to the heart, he changes that heart. That is regeneration. It is the sprinkling of the blood of Christ from an evil conscience.

As Ezekiel says, God will cause us to walk in his statutes. Read verse 28 in Ezekiel 36, “And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.” That is the principal that runs through out the entirety of Scripture that we call the Immanuel principal. The word Immanuel means “God is with us.” The principal of God being with us is that he has adopted a people to be his people. We who were not a people have been made a people. We who were not mercied, have been mercied. That is the language from Hosea, picked up by Peter in the New Testament, who applied it to us today. God condescends by way of covenant to be our God. We who did not know him are made his people; we who were wild olive trees, as it were, have been grafted into the covenant. Another illustration that Paul uses is of the middle wall of partition that used to be between the Jewish people in the court of Israel on the inside of the wall and the Gentiles on the outside of the wall in the court of the Gentiles in the second temple. Paul explains that the wall of separation has been broken down. It is no longer there. God has taken these two people and made of them one people. We have now become God’s people. What is being signified by the sprinkling of clean water is not just the sprinkling of the blood, but also the breaking down of that wall, so that God is our God, and we are his people. So when I said, “Children, I place God’s name on your forehead,” God is marking you out. God is claiming you as his. You are no longer your own. You belong to God.

Some of us do, and some of us do not, wear wedding rings. I am not suggesting for a moment that a wedding ring is required. I know that some people do not wear them out of conscience. I do wear one because I want people to know that I belong to another. I am not my own. That is what my wedding ring symbolizes. This wedding ring symbolizes that my body is not my own. My body belongs to my wife. That is what my ring symbolizes.

In the same way, when we apply water to our children, or to one who makes a profession of faith in Christ, what that act symbolizes is that they are no longer their own. They now belong to another. That other to whom they belong is God. They are no longer free to do as they will, but they must do as God wills. This is characterized

in Romans chapter 6 as death. That is the Christian life. To summarize the Christian life in just a few words would be this: learn to die.

We see the culmination of that principle in Revelation 21:3. Read with me how the new heaven and the new earth is characterized. “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.” That is the same principal we are talking about in Ezekiel 36. God will be our God and we will be his people. That is the culmination of redemption. Read verse 7, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”

We have seen, first, that there is a symbol and a seal. Then we saw, secondly, that there is a reality to which the symbol points: there is something to which that symbol refers. Now, thirdly, there is an effect: there is an outcome. We see that fact in Ezekiel 36:31, “Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.”

This “loathing of your ways” is virtually the equivalent of repentance. It at least is equivalent of the first part of repentance which is sorrow for sin. There are two things necessary to repentance. Is true repentance just being sorry? No, a person who got caught in his wrongdoing can be sorry. True repentance is being sorry for a particular reason. Why do we hate the things that we have done? Why do we loath our abominations? Because they are abominations in the sight of God. We hate them because God hated them first.

In perfect repentance, we not only abhor our sin, but God also places in us an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ. He teaches us to lean upon him for forgiveness. Sin is an abomination. Our uncleanness is an abomination. We must not sit here in church and think that those in the world sure are sinners, not realizing the extent to which we are still apt to sin. When we walk through those doors, when I walk into the pulpit, there is no magic ray that cures us, that purifies us, from our sins. We are a sinful people, and just as God hates our sins, we must learn also to hate our sins.

We often hear today that man's root problem is that we do not have enough love for ourselves. That idea is from the pit. Self love is the very root of sin. It is because we *do* love ourselves that we sin. It is because we love ourselves more than we love God and his ways that we sin. It is because we are willing to follow our ways rather than God's ways that we depart from the path of his righteousness.

When we say to ourselves, “I hate my nose,” “I just

hate the fact that I have to wear glasses,” “I just hate the fact that I am short or fat or ugly” is it really the case that we hate ourselves? No. What we are really saying is, “I deserve better!” “I know better how I should be treated than God does. This nose that God gave me, these eyes that God gave me, these ears that in my opinion stick out way too far; they are not good enough for me! I am way too good for this nose, these eyes, these ears!” That is what we are *really* saying. That attitude is at root not self hatred but is, in fact, self love. That is a far different explanation from the one usually set before us today. However, self love is at the very bottom of all sin.

When Satan first beguiled Eve in the form of a serpent in the garden, what was the appeal? She looked at the tree and saw that it was good for food. She saw that it was pretty to the eye. It was pretty to behold. Eve said “I deserve that!” Satan was present to whisper in her ear, “You know, if God really had your self interest at heart — if God really cared about you — he would have given you this: the best fruit. The only reason he withheld it from you, is because he is jealous of how great you would be if only you had it.”

Was her response self negation? Did she put her desires to death? No! She said, “You know, you are right. *I need me one o' them!*” All the sin in our lives is of that nature. “I want this *whatever* more than I want to follow God.” We must learn to die to sin. Our baptism demonstrates that we have made a vow to die to sin. It does not matter what our *whatever* is — anything can become an idol. An idol is anything for which we are willing to sacrifice following God. It becomes an idol. And all sin is in that sense idolatry.

Therefore, according to Ezekiel 36:31, repentance involves an abhorrence of self, a loathing of self, and also involves an apprehension of God's mercy. Read verse 38, “As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the LORD.” It is not enough to hate our sin; we must also turn to God. Paul characterizes the conversion of the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 1:9 by saying that they “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” That is the way our conversion must be. We must turn from our idols, that is true. We must turn from ourselves, that is true. We must turn from our sin, that is true. However, we are not talking simply about moral reformation. We are not talking about simply giving up sin for a period of time. We are talking about turning from our sins to God, to following him, to striving to do as he says, to loving him and apprehending his mercy.

Read John 3:23-24. This is a passage that has puzzled many in the past. What was John Baptist doing out there

in the wilderness? He was baptizing. He was doing something very much like what was done this morning. "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison." The people came to John and he baptized them. The people were baptized. He baptized! That was his name. It was how he was known. He was "the Baptizer." Knowing that he was known for baptizing, we would expect that any discussion that might arise to be about baptism. However, verse 25 reads, "Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about *purifying*." It was understood that John was baptizing. He said "I am baptizing you with the baptism of repentance."

However, as he baptized them, as he splashed clean water upon them, there arose a discussion. But the discussion that arose was about purifying! Why? Because the Jews understood what John was doing. Continue on in verse 26, "And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." The Jews were trying to set up a dispute between the disciples of John and the disciples of Christ. John the Baptist answered them in verse 31-33, referring to Christ, "He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true."

In the midst of this dispute about *purifying*, the Pharisees brought up the fact that the followers of Jesus were also *baptizing*. In that context, John tells them that this thing that Jesus is doing is setting his *seal* to the testimony that God is true. What do we see here in the baptism of disciples of Jesus Christ? A seal. As the disciples of Christ are baptizing, John explains that it is a seal.

Children, I want you to understand something. When we talk about a seal in Scripture, you might be thinking about a Mason jar, where you put the seal around the Mason jar, making sure that nothing gets in or out. That is not the kind of seal that is being spoken of here. Don't think of a Mason jar, think of wax and red tape. The kind of seal that is being spoken of here is the kind of seal where the king takes his signet ring that has his name or likeness upon it, and he stamps it into wet wax. When he stamps his ring into the wet wax, it is a testimony in his seal that this letter really is his. According to John, that is exactly what Jesus was doing as his disciples were baptizing: he was setting his seal that the testimony was true.

For our part, how do we ratify the testimony? How does the covenant become ratified on our part? Children, as we grow older we are under obligation because we have God's name upon our forehead. That signet has been impressed upon us in our baptism, therefore, we have a responsibility to cast ourselves upon Christ. We are to bring forth faith, and repentance, and the fruit of the Spirit. How does God signify that his testimony is true? It is in the seal of baptism.

The dispute as it arose had to do with the purifying aspects of baptism. Baptism was not simply everyone going down to the river to cool off. There was a purifying aspect to baptism. The dispute arose about purifying: the washing away of uncleanness with running water.

I want to discuss the meaning of the word "baptism" with you. In Hebrews 9, the author referred to the Old Testament tabernacle and the various religious ceremonies that were carried out in the temple and tabernacle. He explained that it was a figure, a type, that pointed forward to a time to come. In verse 10 we read, "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers *washings*, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." These things were imposed upon them until the coming of Christ. What were these things that were imposed upon them? If you were to look at a Greek New Testament, you would see that the word that we have translated as "divers *washings*" is in the Greek "*baptismoi*." "*Baptismoi*" means "baptisms." The Greek word sounds like the English. That is because we do not translate that word: we transliterate it. To translate a word means to move it from one language to a different word in another language. To transliterate means simply to take that word and move it into the *alphabet* of the other language. So the word "*baptizo*" in Greek, becomes in English "baptize." The title of John, "*baptizate*" becomes "Baptist." The word "*baptismos*" becomes in the English "baptism." Here "*baptismoi*" is translated "washings." "Washings" is a perfectly good translation for the word "*baptismoi*." "*Baptismoi*" means baptisms.

We should study a few of these "divers washings" that took place in the Old Testament. There are some people who would insist that the word "*baptismoi*" itself means to dunk something under water and then pull it back up out of water. Whether they call it *dipping*, or whether they call it *dunking*, or whether they call it *immersing*, or whether they call it *submerging*, or whatever other way they translate it, they claim that the word itself means to place something under water and to pull it back up again.

The writer of Hebrews adduces three “baptisms,” or three “washings,” for us to examine. Let us see how many of them involved submerging or dunking:

Read Hebrews 9:13, “For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer *sprinkling* the unclean, sanctifieth to the *purifying* of the flesh.” The priests did not dunk people under the ashes. They sprinkled the ashes. Read again, “Sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh.” Here again is the idea of purifying. The washing; the baptism; the sprinkling; is a purifying. Remember that the dispute of the Jews with the followers of John the Baptist was also about purifying.

Continue on in verse 14, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” If the sprinkling of the ashy water in the Old Testament (you can study Numbers 19 to find out exactly how it was done) purified from uncleanness in the case of a leper or a menstruous woman, how much more then, the writer of Hebrews argues, will the blood of Christ purge your consciences? The old way *pointed to the blood of Christ!* We have already learned that the blood of Christ is applied to the conscience by sprinkling. So in this passage we have a sprinkling of water in the Old Testament that corresponds to a sprinkling in the New Testament of the blood of Christ by the eternal Spirit.

A second sprinkling is seen in verse 19. You will find that particular sprinkling in Exodus 24:7-8. “For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people.” Why? Because there was an initiation of a covenant. Our baptism also shows the initiation of a covenant as God takes that person to be his son or daughter. Baptism is the initiation of a covenant.

The writer of Hebrews has discussed two divers baptisms: one was the sprinkling of the ashy water, the other was the sprinkling of the blood upon the book and all the people. The third baptism is the sprinkling of the tabernacle in verses 20-22. These verses refer to Moses who sprinkled the tabernacle, “Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.” This is talking about the sprinkling of the tabernacle and all the vessels of the tabernacle in Leviticus chapter 8. Also in Leviticus chapter 16, the high priest had to actually sprinkle blood on the mercy seat on the day of atonement.

The writer of Hebrews tells us that there has to be a washing for all things that are purged, for all things where the remission of sin is involved, for all things that are cleansed from uncleanness. This is symbolized by the various washings in the Old Testament. Remember that the word that is translated “washings” is “baptisms.” However, the various washings that took place in the Old Testament were not to make these things externally clean. It was to set them apart to God’s service. It was to initiate a covenant. In each case it was done either by the sprinkling of water or by the sprinkling of blood. We know that when it comes to the remission of sins that there is no remission of sins apart from the shedding and sprinkling of blood. It is the blood of Christ that must be sprinkled ... and it must be sprinkled upon the conscience.

There are two other places in Scripture that refer to Old Testament “baptisms” that I want us to examine. I believe they will help us understand why it is that we do what we do.

In 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 we read, “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” This is a reference to that time when the Israelites passed through the Red Sea. God looked out at them from the cloud. We are told that Jesus spoke to them from the cloud. It was their identification with the Lord and with his covenant that was involved in this baptism. Let us read about the passing through the Red Sea in Exodus 14:16. God told Moses, “Lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on *dry ground* through the midst of the sea.” In verse 22 we read, “And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea *upon the dry ground*: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.” Read also verses 27-29, “And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon *dry land* in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.”

I have some questions regarding these verses. Who was baptized? The children of Israel or the Egyptians? The children of Israel were baptized. 1 Corinthians 10 tells us very clearly that it was the Israelites who were baptized. The next question is “who was immersed?” The Egyptians were immersed. If baptism meant immersion,

then the answers would be exactly the opposite. If the word baptism meant immersion, then those who were immersed would be the ones who were baptized. But the author of Hebrews does not use the word “baptism” in the sense of dipping, or immersing, or submerging; he uses it in the sense of purifying or cleansing or washing and neither does Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 use the word in the sense of dipping or submerging. We saw also when the controversy came up between followers of John the Baptist and the Pharisees — when the controversy was raised about baptizing — it was a controversy raised about the purification of washing.

I know for some of you this is a challenge: I do not mean for this to be a confrontational challenge at all. I want you to understand what you saw as I baptized these children. I did not dunk any body under water, yet I claimed to be baptizing people.

In 1 Peter 3:20-21, Peter was talking about those of old, “Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.” Let us not be confused by the figure of speech we find in these verses. They were not saved “by the water;” but they were saved “in the midst of the water.” I want you to see how long God’s patience lasted. God’s patience lasted as long as it took Noah to build the ark: about 120 years. Noah, we are told in Scripture, was a preacher of righteousness. Noah preached righteousness by building an ark. As he built that ark, day in and day out, that ark showed the community, “You are sinners; God is righteous; and he is going to judge the world.” Read verse 21. “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” We must understand that it is not because we have water on our foreheads that we are saved, but because we have blood on our hearts that we are saved. However, the water that we have on our foreheads points to the blood on our hearts. It symbolizes the sprinkling of the blood of Christ on our consciences.

Let’s also examine the Old Testament passage that deals with the baptism of which Peter speaks in 1 Peter 3:20-21. This is the baptism of Noah and his family as a figure of the baptism “which doth now save us.” In Genesis 7:20-24, we read, “Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed

which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.” [Why were the others alive? Because they were *with Noah*.] “And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.” I am going to ask you questions quite similar to the ones I asked about the passage in Exodus. Who was baptized? Noah and his family were baptized. Who was immersed? Everybody else. Everyone outside the ark who had the breath of life in his nostrils was immersed. Everyone and everything that had to breath air to stay alive, died.

Once again we need to understand that the point of baptism is not dunking. The point is not submerging. The point is the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. That is why we sprinkle.

Children, I want to come back to you one more time. Baptism is a symbol of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon our consciences. That is why when I placed the name of Christ upon your foreheads, you undertook a special obligation to walk with the Lord. You have that obligation because you are no longer your own. You now belong to him. You have an obligation to flee to Christ, to run to him, not just today, but every day for the rest of your lives. You are required to walk with him as a holy people; to be a set apart people. You are part of the people that God has called to be his people and to whom he has promised to be a God.

Let us stand and call upon the Lord.

***Prayer**

Father, we thank thee that thou art a covenant making and a covenant keeping God. Even as we have placed, in this day, thy name upon the foreheads of these children, we pray that by thy Spirit thou wouldest draw them unto thyself, that thou wouldest sprinkle their consciences with the blood of Christ that they might indeed not only be in thy covenant in name, but that they might be thy people in deed. We pray that thou wouldest convert them, that thou wouldest call them to thyself, and that thou wouldest so strengthen them, their parents, and this church as to assist them in their walk with thee. For we ask all these things in Jesus Christ’s name. Amen.

The Lord’s Supper

Charge for the Lord’s Supper

In the New Testament there are two sacraments. What is a sacrament? The word sacrament comes from the Latin “*sacramentum*” which is a translation of the Greek *musterion*. “*Musterion*” is the word from which we get the English word “mystery.” When we think of a

sacrament, we ought not think of something magical. We ought not think of it as something that operates just by the very nature of its existence. We should understand it in terms of the “*sacramentum*.” That word meant the oath of a soldier. The “*sacramentum*” was taken by the soldier in order to be part of the military unit. When he served under a particular commander, he would take an oath that he would be loyal to that governing officer. It is in our Christian sacraments that we are, as one author has said, “by oath consigned” to our Lord Jesus Christ. We are by oath sworn to King Jesus.

In both sacraments we see the gospel set before us. Our church does not have a cross with a figure of some pathetic looking fellow hanging on it. That is not how we set the death of Christ before our eyes. We have two ways of setting the death of Christ before our eyes and both of them are ordained by God to remain in his church until the end of time. One of them you have already seen. It was baptism: the sprinkling of the blood of Christ as it corresponds to the sprinkling of water.

By seeing baptism, you have seen the gospel set before your eyes in the need of purification. If we were not guilty, we would not need to be forgiven. Just as if we were not dirty, we would not need a shower; if we did not have dirty hearts, we would not need the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. The gospel sets forth, not only who we are, but what our need is and what God’s solution is.

We also see the gospel set before our eyes in the Table of the Lord. This is the sacrament in which the communicant members of the church are about to take part. On the very night that he was betrayed, Jesus gathered his disciples around his table to partake with them of the Passover, the meal of peace. That was the meal that commemorated the time in which the angel of Lord, while he was slaying all the first born of Egypt, passed over those houses where he saw the blood sprinkled. In that very meal, as it was being commemorated by Jesus and his disciples, Jesus said to them as he broke the bread, “This is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me.” Not because you are hungry. Not because you enjoy eating with one another. Not because this table happens to be set fancier than any other. It is to remember the fact that “my body is broken for you.” The supper reminds each of us that he is a sinner in need of forgiveness. The penalty for your sins, as they were poured out upon Christ, is commemorated in this broken bread. As we partake of the bread, we acknowledge that we are a needy people. We need a Savior just like Jesus!

But Jesus did not stop there. He went on to say, as he blessed the cup, that “this cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

Are we sinners? Then we need remission of sins. Is that to be found in the blood of goats and of bulls? No. The writer of Hebrews tells us that the reason they had to keep offering sacrifices again and again and again and again, year upon year upon year, was because *it was not doing any good*. Each year as the high priest put on his high priestly robes, he saw the blood from the year before and from the year before that, and from the year before that. Those sacrifices were not effectual. Their only power was to point beyond themselves to the sprinkling of blood that would be effectual. That is what those ceremonies should teach us. They teach us that nothing we do can help us. We need the blood of Christ.

So as we come to this meal, we come commemorating the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. We come commemorating the gospel. Just as when we see water sprinkled upon the forehead, we should not think water and we should not think forehead. Instead we should think blood and we should think of Christ. So too, when we see bread and wine spread out on the table before us, we should not think bread and we should not think wine. We should think of Christ and we should think of forgiveness of sins. How long do we do this? He told us to show forth his death until he comes. We keep right on doing it.

The word that is translated here in this passage as “showing forth” his death till he comes, is the same word that is translated elsewhere in the New Testament, as “preach.” We preach the death of Christ every time we come to this table. Children, every time you see your parents, your aunts, your uncles, those who have promised to raise you in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, do this, they are preaching Christ to you. Each time you see this done, your parents are preaching Christ to you. They are preaching the death of the Lord Jesus Christ as it is applied to sinners. Week by week, children, week by week, you sit and you hear and you see and God will call each of you to account for what you have seen and heard.

In Matthew 26:26-28, we read, “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

Have we reached that point with David as we read in Psalm 32 where our hearts have been broken by our sin? Then we must repair to Jesus. We must call upon his blood. We must cry unto the Lord for forgiveness. We must beg with David that the Lord, “impute not my transgressions unto me.”

“The Lord’s supper is an ordinance instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ. Until his coming again it is to be observed as a perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death. The physical elements, representing the broken body and the shed blood of the Savior, are received by true believers as signs and seals of all the benefits of his sacrifice upon the cross. They signify and seal remission of sins, and nourishment and growth in Christ; and they are a bond and pledge with him and with each other as members of his mystical body. As signs and seals of the covenant of grace, they not only declare that God is faithful and true to fulfill the promises of the covenant, but they also summon us to all the duties of the children of God and call us to renewed consecration in gratitude for his salvation.

“It is my solemn duty to warn the uninstructed, the profane, the scandalous, and those who secretly and impenitently live any sin, not to approach the holy table lest they partake unworthily, not discerning the Lord’s body; and in so doing, eat and drink condemnation to themselves. Nevertheless this warning is not designed to keep the humble and contrite from the table of the Lord, as if the Supper were for those who might be free from sin.” If that were the case, not a one of us could come. “Rather the Supper is for those who come as guilty and polluted sinners, without hope of eternal life, apart from the grace of God in Christ. As we come we confess our dependence for pardon and for cleansing upon the blood of Christ, upon his perfect sacrifice upon the cross. We base our hope of eternal life upon his perfect obedience and righteousness and we humbly resolve to deny ourselves, to crucify our old natures, and to follow him as becomes those who bear his name. Let us therefore in accordance with the admonition of the apostle Paul, examine our minds and hearts to determine whether such discernment is ours, to the end that we may partake to the glory of God, and to our growth in the grace of Christ.”

I now invite those on the north side of the sanctuary who have been admitted to the supper by the session to please come and take their places at the table.

Prayer

Father, we praise thee and thank thee for thy adoption of us as children that we may sit at the table of the King. As we come, we come commemorating, we come remembering, we come calling to mind, that there is no good thing in us by which we might commend ourselves unto thee. Instead we come praying that thou wouldest apply to us that which is represented here: the broken body and shed blood of our Savior. We pray that thou wouldest indeed remit our sins, that thou wouldest not impute our trespasses unto us, that thou wouldest grant to us, even in this meal, renewed holiness, faith, love,

repentance and obedience unto thee. In Jesus Christ’s name. Amen

Breaking of the bread

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which he was betrayed, having taken bread, blessed and broken it, gave it his disciples, as I ministering in his name give this bread to you, saying “Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me.” (Passing of bread to the communicants)

Jesus said, “Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me.”

Dedication of the wine

Our Savior also took the cup and having given thanks as has been done in his name, he gave it to his disciples, saying, “This cup is the New Testament of my blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Drink ye all of it.” (Passing of the wine).

Jesus said, “This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Drink ye all of it.”

Prayer

Father, we thank thee and praise thee, that even as thou hast caused good things to grow from the earth, and given them to men to eat, that thou hast also given to us abundantly of thy grace, that thou hast given to us a Savior who is right for us, one who came forth from a virgin, one who is both God and man, one who suffered and died on our behalf, who took upon himself the punishment due for our sins. We pray that as we partake of these elements, that thou wouldest also cause us by the eye of faith, to see our Lord Jesus Christ and partake of him by faith. For we ask this in his name. Amen.

You may return to your seats. Now those who have been admitted to the table from the east side of the sanctuary come and take your places now.

Prayer for second table

Father, we ask that as we partake of this meal that thou wouldest indeed impress upon our hearts and minds the necessity we have of a Savior. We pray that thou wouldest grant us new repentance that we might walk day by day with thee. For we ask this in Jesus Christ’s name. Amen.

Passing of bread

Jesus said, “Take eat, this is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me.”

Passing of the wine

Jesus said, “This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Drink ye all of it.”

Prayer

Father, we pray that even as we have come to the table of our Lord Jesus Christ, to commemorate his death, to remember and to reflect, we pray that thou wouldst grant to us faith and repentance, that we might go from the table changed more into his likeness, for we ask this in his name. Amen.

You may return to your seats for the singing of the final Psalm.

**Singing of Praise*

We are going to sing together Psalm 79 to the melody St. Kilda. Psalm 79 follows on Psalm 78 in this respect: Psalm 78 brings us up to the point where God has made David the pastor, as it were, of his people. He takes him from being a shepherd to be a shepherd over his people. Now in Psalm 79, we see that the Zion that David had built has been broken down by the enemies of God. If we remember our Old Testament history, it was not simply because Israel had been overrun by her neighbors that the temple and Jerusalem were broken down. It was God's judgment inflicted upon his people. As we sing Psalm 79, we should reflect upon the fact that we are singing in the same sense as God's people of old. We need to acknowledge that if we see his church broken down, then we need to confess our sins. We need to repent and turn to him. For God has promised to be a bulwark round about his people when they follow him, but he has also promised to tear down the ramparts when we do not.

Singing of Psalm 79

1. O GOD, the heathen enter'd have
thine heritage; by them
Defiled is thy house: on heaps
they laid Jerusalem.
2. The bodies of thy servants they
have cast forth to be meat
To rav'nous fowls; thy dear saints' flesh
they gave to beasts to eat.
3. Their blood about Jerusalem
like water they have shed;
And there was none to bury them
when they were slain and dead.
4. Unto our neighbours a reproach
most base become are we;
A scorn and laughingstock to them
that round about us be.
5. How long, Lord, shall thine anger last?

Wilt thou still keep the same?

And shall thy fervent jealousy
burn like unto a flame?

6. On heathen pour thy fury forth,
that have thee never known,
And on those kingdoms which thy name
have never call'd upon.
7. For these are they who Jacob have
devoured cruelly;
And they his habitation
have caused waste to lie.
8. Against us mind not former sins;
thy tender mercies show;
Let them prevent us speedily,
for we're brought very low.
9. For thy name's glory help us, Lord,
who hast our Saviour been:
Deliver us; for thy name's sake,
O purge away our sin.
10. Why say the heathen, Where's their God?
Let him to them be known;
When those who shed thy servants' blood
are in our sight o'erthrown.
11. O let the pris'ner's sighs ascend
before thy sight on high;
Preserve those in thy mighty pow'r
that are design'd to die.
12. And to our neighbours' bosom cause
it sev'n-fold render'd be,
Ev'n the reproach wherewith they have,
O Lord, reproached thee.
13. So we thy folk, and pasture-sheep,
shall give thee thanks always;
And unto generations all
we will show forth thy praise.

**Benediction*

Now bless God and receive his blessing.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.
Amen.

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